



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name **Scott HALLETT**
Address Known to the Royal Commission
Occupation Project Manager
Date 5TH SEPT 2016

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. My full name is Scott Marcus HALLETT. I am 51 years old.
3. I was born in Hornsby and my birth mother at the time was only 14 years old. I was taken from her without her knowledge and given to my adoptive family. I have an older sister from my adoptive family who is also adopted. In 1967, my parents divorced and my sister and I moved to Newcastle with my mother. While my mother was Catholic, she was not overly religious and we did not attend church when I was young. I recall going to church occasionally with my Nan, but most of my memories of attending church are through school.

Primary school

4. In 1970, when I was four years old, I began school at Gateshead Primary School, the local State school. Shortly afterwards, we moved to The Junction, a suburb of Newcastle near Merewether. I changed schools and completed Kindergarten at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (St Joseph's).

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 2 of 13

5. When I started at St Joseph's, I was required to attend mass along with all of the other kids. Church services were held at St Joseph's Catholic Church (**St Joseph's Church**) which was located on the same grounds as the school. At the time, the parish priest was Fr COTTER.
6. In 1975, I was in fifth class. I recall that my teacher was Mr HALLINAN. Mr HALLINAN was very tall and was a basketball player. He encouraged me and another boy, Gerard McDONALD, to get involved in basketball. Gerard and I became good friends.

Sexual abuse by Fr RYAN

7. During 1975, Gerard and I became altar boys. I was nine years old. Most of the Year 5 boys were altar boys - it was just something that nearly everyone did. It was a privilege to be one. At the time, my mother was single and was not well. I would hang around the school most days kicking a ball, or just hanging out as I had nothing better to do. I began to spend a lot of time in the church. I performed altar boy duties nearly every morning and also on Sundays when asked by Fr COTTER.
8. I also went to altar boy practice every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon after school. Usually there were four or five boys at practice. The practice was held at St Joseph's Church.
9. When I began altar boy duties, Fr COTTER was still the parish priest. I recall he did not talk very much and was not very friendly. He seemed to me to be very regal and I remember thinking that he was the next best thing to God. During 1975, Fr COTTER was promoted to a position where he supervised other priests. I think he became a

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 3 of 13

Monsignor. Another priest, Fr Vincent RYAN, took over Fr COTTER's duties at St Joseph's Church.

10. Fr RYAN was far more talkative and interactive with me and the other boys than Monsignor COTTER. Fr RYAN used to play a game with us at altar boy practice. He would chase us around the church and into a cupboard in the vestry where we stored our robes. On the days when I hung around after school when there was no altar boy practice, I would often spend time with Fr RYAN.
11. At altar boy practice Fr RYAN also used to give us altar wine. The more we went to altar boy practice, the more we got to drink. We never drank very much but at my young age it was enough to affect me.
12. On one occasion, at altar boy practice, Fr RYAN chased me into the cupboard. He then came into the cupboard and started to tickle me around the waist and fondle my genitals on the outside of my clothing. He was saying something to me, but I don't recall what it was. Over the course of the next few months, Fr RYAN regularly chased me into the cupboard at altar boy practice and fondled my genitals.
13. I also recall that on one occasion, Fr RYAN chased another altar boy around the vestry and tickled him in the same manner on his genital area. It was like a game, and we were all laughing at the boy, and he took off crying. Fr RYAN gave him a hard time about leaving. The boy did not attend another altar boy practice.
14. Around the middle of winter in 1975, I was at altar boy practice with the other boys. I was sitting in the main area of the vestry on the kitchen bench, and the other boys were sitting or standing nearby. I don't recall exactly how it started, but Fr RYAN said

Signature:



Witness:



Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 4 of 13

something like, 'I've got something to show you.' I then saw Fr RYAN undo his trousers and pull his penis out through his fly. He then began to masturbate in front of us. His penis became erect and after a short time he came towards us and said, 'who wants to have a go?' He encouraged us to masturbate his penis. He also said, 'if you spit on your hand it makes it slide good'. I masturbated him, and so did Gerard McDONALD and one of the other boys.

15. After we had a turn, Fr RYAN continued to masturbate himself until I saw some white stuff come out of his penis and land on the floor. I know now that he ejaculated. Fr RYAN then told us to pull our pants down. I was sitting next to Gerard McDONALD and another boy. We pulled our pants down. Fr RYAN then approached Gerard first and put his mouth over Gerard's penis and performed oral sex on him. He then moved onto the next boy and did the same thing. I don't recall if he went to any other boys, but he got to me last and also put my penis in his mouth. I remember I had an erection. I don't recall if he said anything during this, except after he had finished, he said, 'Don't tell anyone, this is our little secret.'

16. Fr RYAN then encouraged us boys to have anal sex with each other. I remember he told one of the boys to get on his hands and knees on the floor. The boy had his pants off. Fr RYAN then got Gerard to try to penetrate this boy. Fr RYAN was telling Gerard what to do. I saw Gerard try to put his penis, which was erect, into the boy's bottom from behind. It didn't work so they stopped. Then Fr RYAN got Gerard to try to penetrate me. I was also on my hands and knees and I felt Gerard's penis push against my backside, but it didn't go inside. Fr RYAN then got us to reverse so that I tried to penetrate Gerard. Fr RYAN was telling me what to do. I tried to put my penis into Gerard's bottom. I

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

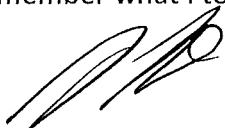
Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 5 of 13

pushed a couple of times but it didn't work, so I stopped and backed away. I saw I had poo on the end of my penis, and everybody started to laugh and call out 'Poo knob, poo knob'. Fr RYAN laughed along with the others.

17. Fr RYAN then got behind Gerard and put his erect penis in between Gerard's bum cheeks. He thrust a few times before he moved back and pulled his pants up. Fr RYAN then said again, 'Don't tell anybody, this is our little secret'.
18. At the time, I didn't know that what Fr RYAN was doing was wrong. I was a young boy. I knew nothing about sex. To me it was a game and we were just having fun.
19. At some point I think near the end of 1975, I discussed the incidents with the other boys from altar practice and we agreed to tell our parents about what Fr RYAN had been doing to us.
20. I couldn't tell my mother what had happened so I decided to tell Mr HALLINAN about Fr RYAN. He had become sort of a father figure for me.
21. At the time I made my statement to the Police in 1995, I was very emotional and upset. At that time I had not recalled the conversation with Mr HALLINAN and Sr Margaret Anne. I told Mr HALLINAN that Fr RYAN had done something to us. I think he picked up on exactly what I meant because he began asking me questions about what had happened. I don't think I gave him any details. He did not seem shocked. I think Mr HALLINAN must have told Sr Margaret Anne, the school principal, because she came to the classroom. I don't remember if this was the same day or the next day.
22. When Sr Margaret Anne came to the classroom, she asked me about what happened, but I can't remember what I told her. I don't think I would have told her much because I

Signature:



Witness:



Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 6 of 13

was scared of her. I also remember Sr Margaret Anne telling Mr HALLINAN to stop asking me about what happened.

23. In 1976 my teacher was Sr URSULA. She was also the new school principal. Very early on in the year, I decided to tell Sr URSULA about Fr RYAN. I dragged one of the other altar boys with me and we were sitting on some benches at the front of the school. Sr URSULA was there and I said to her, 'Fr RYAN has done naughty things to me and the altar boys. He has been touching us'. She just was straight into me, 'You're a liar. How dare you say that? Making up stories about other people will get you in trouble'. She ranted and raved and gave me a hard time. I don't know why, but after I told Sr URSULA I spent a large amount of time sitting in her office, answering the phone, and going to the shops to purchase things for school. I remember at the time thinking it was pretty cool, but in retrospect I wonder if I was being isolated from my classmates so I could be monitored by Sr URSULA.

24. I don't recall seeing Fr RYAN around the school or the parish after I told Sr URSULA in early 1976. I now know he left the parish at the end of 1975, before I told Sr URSULA. After Fr RYAN left the parish, I think that Monsignor COTTER initially replaced Fr RYAN until Fr BAILEY arrived at the parish.

25. At the time that all of this happened no one ever suggested to me that I should report the matter to police. No one came and asked me any more about what happened. In fact, after telling Sr URSULA about Fr RYAN, the incident was not mentioned again to me by anyone in the Catholic Church until 1995.

26. As a result of what Fr RYAN did to me and the other altar boys, I began to hate the Church and to hate being an altar boy. I gradually stopped attending altar boy practice.

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 7 of 13

I began to take out my anger on the Church by doing everything I could think of to hurt it. I started stealing money from all of the poor boxes, and also from the petty cash tin. I recall in 1976 I defecated in the garbage bin where the holy water was stored, and I also broke into the school on a couple of occasions and defecated in some library books and on the piano in the school hall.

Marist Brothers Hamilton

27. In 1977, I started High School at Marist Brothers Hamilton. It has since changed its name to St Francis Xavier's College.

28. In Year 7 I was walking into the school hall to attend my first mass of the school year.

I walked up the stairs and recognised the back of Fr RYAN's head. I thought, 'You've got to be fucking kidding me.' I was fuming.

29. After the mass finished I went out of my way to get behind Fr RYAN because I wanted to push him down the stairs. I wanted to kill him. I remember thinking when Fr RYAN left that maybe he had been sent to gaol and I would never see him again. To see him so soon afterwards was pretty devastating.

30. I didn't do anything to Fr RYAN that day and I didn't see him again afterwards.

31. I had no problems with sexual abuse at Marist Brothers Hamilton, though on a weekend camping trip in 1977 with a classmate, a Brother forced his tongue into my mouth for about 10 minutes while I pretended to be asleep. I was a very good student and found school work to be quite easy. In high school, I started drinking, got into drugs, doing break and enters, yet I was still able to complete my school work and stay in the top class.

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 8 of 13

32. At the end of Year 12 the Class Master said some nice words about each of the students.

When he got to me he just said, 'I think Scott will do what he wants to do'. He nailed it.

Life after school

33. After I left school, I got a job detailing cars. I moved from there to selling cars, and ended up in management. I then went to work for NSW Rail and applied for an apprenticeship, but was told I was too old so they gave me a job as a machinist. I went on to get other qualifications, like tickets for driving cranes and forklifts. After that I moved into the steel and construction industry and have also worked in air conditioning and electrical.

34. I haven't usually lasted too long in jobs. I will start somewhere, work my way up into management, but then get restless and either leave, or have disagreements with higher management.

35. I never spoke to anyone else about what Fr RYAN had done until about 1985 when I told a close friend about the abuse.

Reporting to police

36. In 1994 I attended the funeral of the partner of a friend of mine. At the funeral I saw Gerard McDONALD. After the funeral, I approached Gerard because I wanted to speak to him about what had happened. I asked him if he remembered Vincent RYAN. He looked at me in shock. We both broke into tears and hugged each other. He told me he had wanted to come and see me for a while. Gerard then said, 'It's about time we did something'.

37. I also went home and told my wife about the abuse. I never told her before as I thought that she would not have married me.

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43



Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 9 of 13

38. I spoke to a solicitor I knew and he recommended that I call the Child Protection Unit at Newcastle Police. He gave me a lady's name and told me she was expecting my call. I rang the police and arranged for Gerard and me to go in to the station.
39. In 1995, about a week after the funeral, Gerard and I were interviewed by Senior Constable Troy GRANT. After that, more victims came forward and the police charged Fr RYAN.
40. The matter went to court, but I was not required to give evidence. I found the experience to be very daunting. A lot of people were calling me a liar and did not believe what Fr RYAN had done. Others were telling me to just get over it. This was a distressing time, as I hate being in the spotlight.
41. Troy GRANT and the other police were fantastic. They really looked after Gerard and me, and made the whole process a lot easier. They really understood what it was like for us and they made me feel welcome and supported.
42. Fr RYAN was convicted of child sexual abuse against 33 victims. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison. That's less than five months per victim. I do not think that is enough for what I go through on a daily basis, and the damage it has caused everyone.

Civil litigation

43. Very soon after Fr RYAN was convicted, I engaged a lawyer to assist me in obtaining compensation from the church for the sexual abuse. Around May 1995, Bishop MALONE asked to meet with us. I was happy to meet him. I attended a meeting with Gerard McDONALD and Bishop MALONE at Noah's, a motel on the beach in Newcastle. We met at the motel because it was neutral, not part of the Catholic Church. The first thing

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 10 of 13

Bishop MALONE did was put his hand out for me to kiss it. I said, 'You're kidding aren't you?'

44. Bishop MALONE's action got me off side straight away. I remember saying during the meeting that, 'You are just the new guy coming in to clean up the mess and make the Church look good'. Bishop MALONE said, 'No, I'm here to sort it all out. To make sure it doesn't happen again'. I felt that Bishop MALONE sounded more like a politician in an election campaign. At no stage did Bishop MALONE offer an apology or to provide for counselling.

45. At the end of the process, I received \$360,000 from the Church. The money was great, and it really helped at the time, but it was never about the money. The money can't compensate me for what happened and what I have lost.

Impacts of the abuse

46. The abuse by Fr RYAN has caused me to lose my faith in God and the Catholic Church. Since I saw Fr RYAN give mass at Marist Brothers in 1977, I have only attended church for family functions and weddings. Fr RYAN stole my innocence. I had no relationships with girls until the age of seventeen. I have had difficulties with sexual relationships. I always thought that I wasn't good enough, you know, why would girls be interested in me. I have very low self-esteem.

47. The abuse has affected my ability to relate to other people. I find it very difficult to trust anyone and have problems with people in authority. If people make decisions I don't agree with, I will often just think, 'I'm not putting up with this crap' and just walk away.




Signature: Witness:

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 11 of 13

48. The abuse has affected my career opportunities. I should have had the chance to go to university and get a proper education. I always loved maths and science and I did a test once that placed me in the top one percent in Australia for maths. I went to TAFE and studied structural engineering. I ended up tutoring the other students in maths. I would have loved to have been an engineer, but I just did not get the opportunity because of the effects of the abuse.

49. In either late 1995 or early 1996, I tried to commit suicide. I had an argument with my wife, following which I went to work and set up a bed. I then took 24 zoloft tablets and waited to die of an overdose. As I waited, I remember thinking that I wanted to see my children one last time, so I drove home. The next thing I remember is vomiting all over the garage floor.

50. The doctor at the hospital wanted to send me to Shortland Clinic, a Psych hospital. I had heard bad things about Shortland Clinic and I didn't want to go there. I told the doctor that I wasn't that bad, I was just having a bad day. He told me that I had to see a psychiatrist the next day, and if he heard that I hadn't, he would have me scheduled.

51. I realised that I had not dealt with the abuse. I saw a psychiatrist which helped me to start coping with the effects of the abuse, and helped me to realise that I have a great family and that my home is a castle where I can shut everybody else out when I need to.

52. My wife had to answer questions from our neighbours as to why an ambulance had taken me to hospital. She could not tell them the real reason. She also had to endure me burning myself with cigarettes on my forehead many times. I did this to punish myself for not being a good person, so when I looked at my face it was a reminder that I was bad.

Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43

Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 12 of 13

53. Eighteen months ago, my wife went on a holiday with her sister whose husband had just died. While she was away, I had several meltdowns in the presence of my children, and was physically ill for the five days she was away. This is the legacy I have from the abuse.

54. I still get into dark moods. Sometimes when I am driving I think to myself, 'you could easily drive under that truck', or 'it would be easy to just drive off that cliff'. Or I think, 'If I had a gun I could do it right now'. But I am getting better at remembering the good things that I have. I have also developed my own way of identifying when I am starting to go downhill and how best to manage it myself.

55. What I am worried about is when my kids have their lives sorted out and have left home I might start thinking, 'Right, everyone's good, I don't really need to be here anymore'. I probably do need to start seeing someone about that.

56. I have been diagnosed as suicidal, with depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I constantly grind my teeth, I scrub myself all over every night in the shower, and I will often rearrange cupboards, or re-hang a line of washing if I think it hasn't been done right.

57. I still see Gerard McDONALD about every second day and we support each other.

Initially, we made a pact with each other not to talk about Fr RYAN, but after speaking to the Newcastle Herald, I have decided to be more open in talking about my experiences of being abused.

58. I tend to keep to myself and don't really socialise much. I have my inner circle, which is my family, then another circle of a few good friends, and then everybody else I keep outside that.


Signature:  Witness: 

Statement in Case Study 43


Statement of Scott Hallett continued

Page 13 of 13

59. I'm still very shy and don't feel comfortable talking about the abuse, but I have got to the stage now where I just think, 'You've got to get the word out there so people are aware of what can happen and make people more vigilant about protecting kids'. If I can help people understand that if a child says something that's not quite right, ask a question. Just ask a question. Usually, there is a window of opportunity during the grooming stage where we can act before the point of no return. Once a child is broken, they can't be fixed.

Signed: 

Date: 5TH SEPT 2016-

Witness: 

Date: 05-09-16