

Recd. 11/11/20

**Witness Name:** Maurice Thomas Vincent Reidy

**Statement No.:** WITN0027001

**Exhibits:** WITN0027002

**Dated:** 21/09/2020

**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE**

---

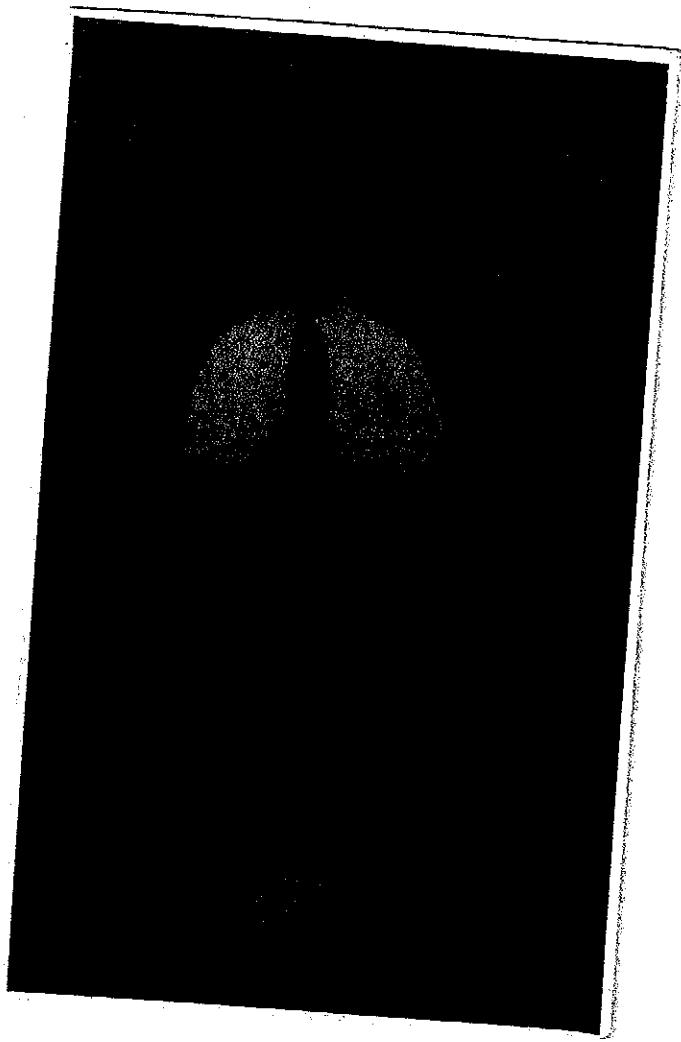
**WITNESS STATEMENT OF MAURICE THOMAS VINCENT REIDY**

---

I, Maurice Thomas Vincent Reidy state -

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. My name is Maurice Thomas Vincent Reidy. I was born on 19 July 1942.
- 1.2. I was sexually abused by Magnus Murray, an Assistant Priest at my church in Forbury Parish, Dunedin, who also taught part-time at my high school, the Christian Brothers High School, Dunedin.
- 1.3. During my high school years, 1956 to 1960, Murray sexually groomed me.
- 1.4. In my final year at high school, Murray strongly recommended that I become a priest instead of studying law at Otago University. I consequently spent eight years studying at seminaries in Christchurch and Mosgiel.
- 1.5. In 1967, when I was at the Holy Cross College seminary in Mosgiel, Murray sexually abused me. This occurred when I was on vacation, with other seminarians, at the Queenstown parish visiting Magnus Murray who was on a locum there.



### *Early life*

- 1.6. My family was devoutly Catholic, especially my mother. We were fully enculturated in the Catholic Church community and I was raised to have enormous respect for priests as a class apart.
- 1.7. As a family we went to Mass every Sunday as a minimum, and often during the week as well. At night, as a family, we prayed the rosary. I was the only child and at night we would kneel down and pray. Growing up, I had my First Holy Communion at St Bernadette's parish by Fr ~~Arday~~, when I was about seven years old. I have a photograph of that day. I then went on to be Confirmed ~~in front of~~ *some years later.* *Arday*  
*by*

### **Refer exhibit WITN0027002 – Photograph of Holy Communion**

- 1.8. During this time my mother became quite depressed. My older sister had died at about age 10 years, just before I was born. She died in the Home of Compassion, Island Bay, Wellington. Her death certificate states "Hereditary Dwarf". My mother had also had at least one miscarriage before I was born. There was an undercurrent of sadness at home while I was growing up.
- 1.9. Along with this, I was very special to my mother and she would confide in me about her difficulties with my father. I often heard from my bedroom my parents arguing violently. One night I got out of bed, grabbed my father and told him that I would kill him if he ever hit my mother; I think I was 12 or 13 years old at the time.
- 1.10. My first school was St Bernadette's primary adjacent to the presbytery. This was run by nuns from the Sisters of Mercy. I remember the nuns as strict, some to the point of sadism. I remember Sister GRO-B putting me in the broom cupboard at the back of the room which was a smallish room. I was left in the room in the dark after having done something wrong.
- 1.11. Another memory is when I was naughty I was punished and not allowed to perform in the school play which involved paddling a waka. This cut really deep and despite a three-way conversation with Sister Barbara and my mother I was not involved even though Sister Barbara was very sympathetic.
- 1.12. My biggest criticism of the Sisters of Mercy is their anti-sexuality. Even at primary school as a young boy the kids were getting messages of sex that were entirely

anti. Every day we had Christian doctrine class usually before lunch. In these classes there were sexual topics. One sister told us that when we go to sleep at night we should have our hands crossed across our chest to ensure that our hands never came in contact with our genitals.

1.13. The sisters also suggested that the pleasure of sex was simply a compensation of having children. This happened at primary school where we were aged between 5-8. We were prepubescent well and truly and the message was clearly inappropriate.

1.14. From primary I went to St Edmund's intermediate starting at age nine. The Brothers were tough. I cannot talk about any sexual misbehaviour but most of the Brothers were very tough disciplinarians, although there were some other Brothers, like Brother Mills and Brother Boreham, who were kind.

1.15. After ~~intermediate~~, I attended Christian Brothers High School in Rattray Street for my secondary years, and then joined the seminary after high school. *primary*

## 2. THE ABUSE

2.1. At 13 years of age, during my Form Three ~~Year~~ at Christian Brothers High School, I experienced some kind of breakdown and refused to attend school.

2.2. I felt low and did not want to get out of bed. I knew something had happened to me, but I have no memory of what. Later, in 2003, when reading about a court case against Magnus Murray, I began to wonder if I had blocked out memories of abuse similar to the abuse inflicted on boys who had gone to court against Mr Murray.

2.3. I remember being taken by my parents to a really serious interview about this with my form teacher, Brother Whiteman. Somehow, I recovered from this experience, managed to pass my examinations and went on to Form Four in 1957.

2.4. My breakdown happened at the same time that my relationship was developing with Murray.

2.5. Starting in my first year at high school, Father Magnus Murray began to take me for swimming and squash outings, to concerts by the National Orchestra, to help me at home with my piano lessons and to try (unsuccessfully) to teach me Greek during visits to the presbytery, where I mowed the lawns.

- 2.6. The swimming included skinny dipping. Murray frequently took me along Portobello Road after sunset to the vicinity of the Glenfalloch Restaurant. He would ask me to take off all my clothes to swim. I can also remember Murray regularly taking me on my own to a bach in Karitane, which was used by the Dunedin priests on their Mondays off duty. I have vague memories of sun-bathing with him during these outings. Frequent visits to the Logan Park Squash Club in Anzac Avenue, during quiet times of the day, included conversations alone with Murray in the changing room, both of us naked. The evening orchestral concerts in the Town Hall were followed by conversations sitting in Murray's Škoda car, during which he would fondle the back of my neck with his hand. This made me feel uncomfortable but also powerless to ask him to stop.
- 2.7. The piano playing, and Greek lessons were also one-on-one experiences. I can recall Murray taking me upstairs to his room in the presbytery on several occasions: all I can remember in any detail is that the Parish Priest, Father **GRO-B** saw us from the door of his own room on at least one of these occasions. All of these encounters felt oppressive in some way that I was not able to understand or put into words. I felt uncomfortable during them, but I also felt privileged to be in the personal company of a priest. Today I understand we would likely label such individual attention to a young person from an adult in a position of power and authority as grooming.
- 2.8. I allowed this feeling of being privileged to overcome any discomfort that I felt, although I was always relieved when we parted, and I was able to return to my "normal" life.
- 2.9. These contacts with Magnus continued with regularity during my five years at the Christian Brothers High School.
- 2.10. In my final year of high school, I considered studying law at Otago University immediately after leaving high school.
- 2.11. I discussed my plans with Magnus Murray as he was my trusted "priest friend". Mr Murray strongly recommended that I instead study for the priesthood. He provided me with the enrolment forms to study at Holy Name Seminary in Christchurch. Because of Mr Murray's authority in the Catholic Church, I had virtually no ability to resist his recommendation. I considered the possibility that it was God's will that I become a priest.

- 2.12. I was a Seminarian at Holy Name Seminary, a Jesuit college, in Riccarton, Christchurch for 5 years, from 1961 to 1965.
- 2.13. I then studied at another seminary, Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, until 1968 when I was 26 years old.
- 2.14. There were various incidents at Holy Name Seminary, which only some forty years later could I even begin to understand, was pathological sexually, emotionally and intellectually. The culture was both a homophobic environment (for example, the Jesuit Rector, Father Gerard McGinty, ordering the breakup of play-fighting in mud after a rugby game) and misogynistic. The same Jesuit Rector discouraged my contact with a female friend, labelling her as a "black tracker" – that is, a woman who deliberately set out to seduce men who wore the black cassock. Holy Cross College was very Vatican orientated and re-enforced this "rigid" sexual morality.
- 2.15. It was during a vacation, when I would have been aged about twenty-five, in about my seventh year in the seminary (1967), which was now Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, that a small group of us seminarians stayed a night in the presbytery at Queenstown. This was on our way to the head of Lake Wakatipu for one of our regular deer-stalking trips in the Dart and Rees River valleys. We were the guests of Magnus, who was in the Queenstown parish on a locum.
- 2.16. My colleagues that went to Queenstown with me were John Perriam, who became a priest but has now left, Brian O'Neill, who we called Baldy and became parish priest in Bluff but then died in office, Ray Leonard from Tuatapere, who <sup>also</sup> left the priesthood and Anton Maclean, who was ordained in 1968 and became the military chaplain.
- 2.17. There was also a staff member called Rom Barry who was a Vincentian Father from the seminary who came on the trip. It was the Vincentian Fathers that taught at the Holy Cross College and it was the Jesuits who taught up in Christchurch.
- 2.18. As we were placing our sleeping bags around the living area after dinner, Murray asked me to bring my bag upstairs to his room where he said I would be "more comfortable" on the bed. The old trapped feeling came back, yet I acquiesced.
- 2.19. When I was settled on the bed, he told me to get out of my bag and get under the sheets. I complied and pretended to sleep. Sometime later, I felt his erect penis in the area of my bottom. I simply froze.

- 2.20. As my friends and I drove to Glenorchy the next morning, I experienced more shame and unworthiness to be in their company than words can describe. I cannot remember ever feeling worse about myself. I was overcome with self-loathing. I also began to blot out any detailed memory of what had happened in that bed the night before. I don't think the shame that I felt that morning has ever left me.
- 2.21. Around the time of the abuse by Magnus Murray, my mother had died in April 1967.
- 2.22. In 1968 I experienced enormous depression. After meeting with my bishop in Dunedin, John Kavanagh, at his suggestion I completed my academic studies for that year, then left the seminary to "experience ordinary life" for a year or two before returning to Holy Cross College for my final year and ordination.
- 2.23. Whilst I do not remember all of the conversation the suggestion was I go to Nelson to do some hop picking. In fact, I didn't go to Nelson I went to Wellington which is where I met Fred Leach. At the end of our meeting the Bishop and I had a prayer together and I felt very honoured that the Bishop and I prayed together before I left. He said the words, "oremus pro invicem" as we parted.
- 2.24. I left the seminary at age 26, but I was mentally and emotionally immature. During my three years at Holy Cross College, I had become sexually confused: I suppressed my heterosexual predilections, while having consciously asexual emotional preoccupations with one or two of my fellow seminarians. These could be called "crushes".
- 2.25. I never returned to the seminary. I think it must have been about 1970 that I wrote to Bishop Kavanagh in Dunedin and said that I wanted to return to the seminary. He replied that he felt my vocation was not to the priesthood, but to be a good layman. I was utterly devastated by his response.
- 2.26. I carried my disappointment at not attaining the priesthood for at least twenty years, before I finally began to allow myself to become both angry at the Catholic Church and also very sad at my loss of normal sexual development.
- 2.27. At the seminary I saw myself becoming a priest to make the whole Catholic Church better and to improve the situation. I think that's why maybe I suffered such depression because the theology we were taught was not that different from what we <sup>had been</sup> were taught by the nuns in Infant School.

2.28. I remember the previous Rector, Dr Courtney who we called the Bulla because of the importance he placed on Papal Bulls. His view was that anything that came out of Rome was to be taken as gospel. He was an honourable man but very strict and old school and unbelievably wedded to these peculiar moral ideas. As an example, I once asked him in class if a man was away from his home on business and he thought of his wife and experienced an erection, would that be a sin.

2.29. The answer was that as long as he had his wife in mind at most it would be a venial sin. I know this type of teaching was getting to me and it was likely that Rector Mannes, who we called "Bunny", would have briefed Bishop Kavanagh before I met him. There are no records of eight years in the two seminaries in the Dunedin Diocesan Chancery.

### **3. IMPACT OF ABUSE**

3.1. I experienced depression, as described earlier, in my first year at high school. I have also described the feelings of discomfort and oppression that I experienced from the sexual grooming while at high school. I also experienced deep shame and enormous depression following the sexual abuse in Queenstown.

3.2. Even now, part of me wonders whether my memories about Murray's interactions with me, however sickening I may now find them to be, are really about abuse. All I know is that these recollections bring up feelings of exquisite sadness, a sadness that has been semi-latent for sixty-five years. The tears come very easily now. I feel my life has been a failure. I feel I have never been really happy since I was pre-pubescent. I am deeply depressed and quite lonely now.

#### *Abusive relationship with Fred*

3.3. After leaving the seminary, I started flatting with Fred in Wellington in 1969. Then he lived with me in my own house until 1972. I had met Fred a few years earlier through mutual friends from the seminary.

3.4. Fred was older than me and told me that he had been consecrated a bishop "in petto" (secretly). He led me to believe that this had been in connection with work he had done facilitating the escape of Jews from Europe during the Nazi occupations in World War II. The only evidence for all this was a photograph of



Fred as a seminarian in an Irish seminary. However, I felt unable to query his story in any detail, as he portrayed himself as having made me privy to a few aspects of his life only inadvertently and without any conscious intention. He construed his self-revelations as "accidental" in the context of our close relationship. Fred's was a very clever strategy.

- 3.5. Living with Fred, I was now in the company of a "superior" within the ecclesiastical system that I had become part of, and one did not question one's superiors. Fred alleged that he was in regular contact with the archbishop in Wellington along with the other bishops of New Zealand, including my own. He implied that he was somehow working with them. He also portrayed himself as being extremely well connected socially in both Europe and New Zealand. He would classify people according to whether or not they "belonged" to his status group. I can now see that Fred's "cover story" was contrived to persuade me to accept our relationship, whatever form it took, as somehow sacred.
- 3.6. I felt privileged to be privy to all this and felt that my time with Fred was part of some grand plan with regard to my clerical career. Fred began a sexual relationship with me as part of what he explained as "training", which I understood to be a form of initiation, something special.
- 3.7. In 1972 I met Helen (not her real name), who was to become my wife and the mother of my two sons. When Fred provided the usual reasons for her unsuitability for me (he said she was "on drugs"), I was finally able to reject his reasons as completely untrue. He had over-played his hand. I had just read a novel called *The Magus* by John Fowles, which explored the theme of deception in relationships. I realised with blinding clarity what Fred's whole "modus operandi" had been with me. Without further ado, I asked him to leave my home and my life.
- 3.8. I felt both angry and deeply ashamed when I thought about the people who knew the two of us while we were living together and who would have assumed we were in a consensual homosexual relationship. I still feel this shame, as I had absorbed the homophobia, which is so strong within the Catholic sub-culture, when I was growing up. In fact, Fred's abuse was a continuation of Murray's abuse. I have now come to realise that Fred created an abusive relationship with me as a "vulnerable adult", incapable of adult consent.

*Failed relationship with Helen, my first wife*

- 3.9. My relationship with my first wife, Helen, started going downhill only a few months after we were married, when we arrived in London in 1974. I had enrolled as a PhD student at the University of London and I had a position as a part-time teacher and tutor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. My thesis began an exploration of what I called "non-church religion", but I was only able to complete a couple of chapters over two academic years. I jumped at the opportunity to return to New Zealand by applying successfully for a lectureship in sociology at the Wellington Clinical School of Medicine of the University of Otago. Living in London did not agree with me and I had become depressed once again. This feeling worsened during the subsequent six years lecturing medical students in a subject which did not interest them because they did not regard it as "real" medicine. I now think I must have been suffering from the "imposter syndrome": I felt somehow vulnerable and didn't quite believe I deserved to be where I was, a university lecturer completing a PhD thesis (which is still on the "for action" area of my desk).
- 3.10. I had many sessions with a psychiatrist, Dr John Hardwick-Smith, but they did not seem to help. The solution seemed to lie in me exiting academic life and our moving to a lifestyle block in Waimauku, which was Helen's dream. We purchased the lifestyle block in 1984, some twelve months after I had resigned as a lecturer owing to difficulties with selling the Khandallah property. (I had begun my new career in personnel/training while boarding/flatting on my own in Auckland for a year.)
- 3.11. I found the corporate environment to be completely alien, with its backstabbing and petty jealousies that seemed to dominate everything that took place. Between 1983 and 1994, I worked for five different organisations and experienced three terminations. Two resulted from senior management failing to support the personnel training function and one resulted from the 1987 stock market crash.
- 3.12. During this time Helen and I converted what had been the homestead paddocks of a dairy farm into a productive unit for fattening dry stock. This meant that for some ten years we were working, either in paid employment or at home, seven days a week as well as parenting our two sons, born in 1982 and 1986. Helen

became increasingly antipathetic towards me and I began to sleep separately in a basic hut which was on the property.

3.13. My only relief was having a few beers sitting on the back porch before dinner alone each evening. This all work and no play scenario continued until Helen finally took our sons to live near her parents and family in New Plymouth in 1992.

3.14. I was devastated once again, but I did begin to do some "New Age" personal development work at this time and somehow survived until I met my second wife, Jane (not her real name), in 1994. It took me three or four years to recognise, on the unsolicited advice of a lawyer friend, that I even had a right to 50% of Helen's and my assets. Nor did I have any idea that I had the right to question Helen taking my sons to live 300 kilometres away from their father.

3.15. Jane and I married in December 1996 and I financed us into a very successful business providing accommodation and support for people with serious mental illness, and life became relatively enjoyable for some ten years. However, my penchant for allowing myself to be manipulated and taken advantage of by those close to me was illustrated once again when I admitted myself into Hanmer Springs in 2001 or 2002 at the behest of Jane (who could not drink alcohol and must have resented me enjoying it in the evenings), and one of her daughters. They convinced me I had a drinking problem. Many months later, very close friends of Jane and I told me that they disagreed entirely that I had a problem and I gladly discontinued the Twelve Step Programme and began to enjoy a wine before dinner, something which I do to this day.

#### *Failed relationship with Jane, my second wife*

3.16. By 2004 I had left Jane. I felt she had come to take advantage of me and was just using me as a bank account for her daughters' and her friends' travel and other projects. I now wonder how much the revelations in the previous year about my first abuser may have influenced my sensitivity to being taken advantage of by Jane. At the very least, I was coming to question whether my lack of normal sexual development had impacted on my ability as an adult to form healthy, functioning and lasting relationships with women. My two failed marriages were not abusive but rather were a reflection of my inability to make good choices about relationships, manage relationships or keep myself safe in relationships.

*Loss of relationship with my Catholic faith and the Catholic Church*

- 3.17. Spiritual trauma is worse than psychological, emotional or physical abuse, because being attacked by clergy, the priest holds a powerful position, because a priest is closer to God. Abuse discounted all the sureties of life that I had been brought up to take for granted. God was in Heaven; you knew what would happen after death; you knew how to live a good life. Everything was certain. The process of being subject to abuse by a priest meant my parting company with the Catholic Church. I reached a point in 1992 where I could no longer take part in even Christmas eve midnight Mass; I no longer believed in the ritual. I had to paddle my own canoe and go it alone. My view of God has changed. Technically I am now a heretic because I see Jesus as a great teacher which is a heresy in the Catholic Church (Arianism).
- 3.18. Related to this, because the Catholic Church says the only appropriate sexuality is heterosexual within the sanctity of marriage, where do you go if a priest perpetrates sexual abuse?
- 3.19. To remain inside Catholicism is to blind oneself to the pathological nature of a lot of Church teaching. The doctrine of original sin makes people inherently evil and is often used as a justification for priests to abuse. And sexual abuse is seen as a sin, not a crime. Forgiveness is important in the Catholic Church. If a person refuses to forgive then they become a sinner.
- 3.20. It's clear to me now that my Catholic indoctrination had been so total and so intense that I had not been able to stand back from it and see it for what it was. The abuse had started when I was young and was so sustained that I lost my sense of what was appropriate, where to set boundaries. I was not equipped to allow any sense of personal agency to develop. I could not even see Fred's sexual abuse, with its accompanying lies, false associations and delusions, for what it was. What I am trying to do now is to take back the personal power that I lost to Catholicism. (I finally relinquished any contact with the Church in the early 1990s, soon after Helen had taken the boys away and left me.) I still feel as if I have a guilty secret that I must hide. I feel people would despise me if they knew what I allowed to happen to me. How could I ever explain why I so passively accepted what I saw as imperatives from my Catholic upbringing?

#### 4. REDRESS

- 4.1. In 2003, I became aware that Magnus, the "friend" of my adolescence and seminary years, had been convicted on 10 charges against four Dunedin boys between 1958 and 1972. (He was to serve less than three years of a five-year sentence. He is currently living in a Catholic retirement home in Epsom suffering from dementia and was not defrocked as a priest until 2019.) His case was a momentous revelation for me.
- 4.2. The media accounts of Magnus's trial re-awakened the memories that I had repressed for almost forty years, memories of events that still assume a dream-like quality. Prior to his conviction, I had even continued my "friendship" with this man. For example, I remember telephoning him during a visit to Sydney in 1974 and visiting him in Ngaruawahia about 1990. I thought of him as an old friend until the publicity about his conviction. I had no inkling prior to this that his behaviour towards me constituted what we now refer to as abuse.
- 4.3. I had also attended a school reunion in Dunedin in 1999. When at least two of my contemporaries told me about how they had been abused sexually by priests in the 1950s, one by Magnus, I was simply incapable of relating their accounts to anything that I had experienced personally until the news of Magnus's trial and conviction four years later.

#### *Counselling offered in 2006, conditional on not suing the Church*

- 4.4. In about 2006, I confided in Monsignor Paul Cronin (the Parish Priest at Ponsonby) and he first introduced me to the notion that I had been "groomed", a concept that was completely new to me, by Murray. Paul Cronin was empathetic with me and facilitated payment for counselling that I had arranged with Dianne May, on the condition that I would not sue the Church. He also authorised payment for me to attend a Men's Group in Massey, which was run by Colin Wrennall and Stefan Nagler.
- 4.5. I was never advised of the A Path to Healing process nor was the National Office for Professional Standards ever mentioned to me.
- 4.6. In 2008, Peter Williams, of the Auckland Catholic Sexual Abuse Committee, contacted me several times to discover how much longer I needed to continue with counselling. I was irritated by his question and could not answer it, I refused to meet with his Committee and I asked Dianne May to respond to them on my

behalf. I found Peter's approach to be bureaucratic at best: his concern was purely to limit Church expenses and he explained inappropriately, in my view, that he would have to ask the Dunedin Diocese to pay my counselling bills (rather than Auckland). I felt quite unsupported by this Committee and neither Paul Cronin nor they ever followed up to find out how I was doing. The Church certainly needs to change such processes. It has been much more humane in its treatment of Murray than his victims.

- 4.7. I still feel I need to speak with the Bishop of Dunedin about this and to receive his recognition for what happened to me all those years ago. I attempted to approach Bishop Colin Campbell through his Administrator, Father John Harrison, both fellow seminarians with me. My purpose was to receive some kind of vaguely articulated recognition while I was on a trip to Dunedin in March 2018, or earlier. John was polite but defensive about Bishop Kavanagh's responsibility and Colin was unavailable.
- 4.8. While I have no wish to take a side in the current politics of priestly abuse in the Catholic Church, I would state that many of us Survivors feel not only unheard by both the Bishops and their Flocks but also that we feel we are seen mainly as threats to the Church both financially and morally. Threats to be dealt with rather than human beings to be ministered to. While I can excuse the Bishops, who were on the scene at the time of my abuse, I cannot do that in respect of their successors, Len Boyle, Colin Campbell along with Cardinal Dew (Wellington) and Patrick Dunn (Auckland), who is President of the Bishops' Conference, which seems to have a predilection for communicating with us through public relations practitioners supported by lawyers. I would like to have thought that these gentlemen had been consecrated bishops because of their leadership qualities rather than their organisational skills.
- 4.9. I don't want my testimony going to them because the Bishops Conference has been publicly represented by the PR representative Lindsay Freer, and others. Whenever I have heard her talk about the topic of abuse I found she had no understanding of it. I would feel demeaned by being talked about by somebody like that. I believe the revelations and comments about abuse should be given to the public by the Bishops. It's a defensive public relations approach rather than a "coming-to-terms-with-the-issue" approach.

- 4.10. I don't think that it's any accident that the public relations person is a woman. I am not anti-woman but it's an attempt to provide a politically correct response to a matter that needs to be done directly by the Bishops.

*What redress should look like*

- 4.11. If somebody reports to the Catholic Church I think they need to listen. To be listened to is critical for survivors. I can talk to this from my own experience of someone who was trying to get out of being a victim to become a survivor.
- 4.12. It is critical to be listened to by the Catholic Church. That is why it is irksome that people like Lindsey Freer are the front persons for the Church, because I want to be listened to by the people in the Hierarchy. They need to ensure that counselling is provided. Again, though even counselling is a bit of a Dodge on behalf of the Bishops. The Bishops need to take ownership of the problem.
- 4.13. I do feel that the hierarchy is still absent from the process. Their leadership job requires them to be very much part of the process, but I think they are dodging that because on one hand people like Lindsey Freer are the front to the public about the abuse and on the other hand survivors are passed on to specialists either through ACC or others to receive counselling.

## **5. LOOKING FORWARD**

- 5.1. The purpose of these reflections is to make healing possible for me and to assist other survivors towards the same. I know I need to forgive myself for allowing myself to be abused by Magnus and Fred, and also for having failed in my relationships with Helen and Jane. I have to acknowledge that I was simply not equipped to assert myself and to have my own need for respect as an individual with personal rights met by any of these people. In particular, I did not know how to prevent my rights to my sexual identity and to my sexual integrity from being violated by Magnus and Fred.
- 5.2. I had been educated to be obedient above all, a people pleaser, and had never learned how to say "No". Obedience was the highest virtue in the seminary. 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' Catholicism is, among many other things, a belief system that involves cocooning its adherents from any exposure to sexual behaviour outside marriage. This sub-culture considers that physical heterosexual expression may only occur with God's approval within marriage.

Therefore, for the single man, women are simply "occasions of sin" and for this reason are to be feared. This sub-culture is a breeding ground for abusive sexual relationships by priests and compulsory celibacy is definitely a contributing factor.

- 5.3. I am forgiving myself for being naive enough to believe that I was somehow obliged to accept what I now know was abuse, because priests were to be trusted, and to accept that whatever happened to us was ultimately the will of God.
- 5.4. My main challenge now is to accept that I was not responsible for what any of these people did to me and to admit that I did not know how to deal with any of them in a way that served my needs. Although I have done my best to forgive the people who harmed me, and words cannot capture how much I now detest Magnus in particular, my main challenge is to forgive myself for not having been able to take personal agency, protect myself and maintain my own integrity. This is work in progress, even in my late 70s.
- 5.5. The changes that need to be made in the Catholic system need to be discussed openly by the bishops with the people that have experienced abuse otherwise they will repeat themselves going forward. Whilst the abuse is probably diminishing among the Pakeha and Irish clergy that I experienced, who's to say it is not going to re-emerge with the current group of immigrant priests that are from a different part of the world, such as with the influx of Filipino priests.

**Refer Annex A – A Signpost for Change**



**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed

Dated:

**GRO-C**

*21<sup>st</sup> September, 2020.*

## Annex A

### A signpost to change

by Vincent Reidy

The Dunedin approach to human behaviour in the Catholic Church was, in my opinion, very much informed by Jansenism. This is a French philosophy that got to be popular in Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a lot of the Irish priests were trained in French seminaries at the time as well as Maynooth Seminary, which was influenced by Jansenism.

Jansenism is described as putting a lot of emphasis on dualism. Dualism would say for example that human nature left unaided is inherently evil and follow the doctrine of original sin going back to Augustine in the fourth century believing that everyone is born sinful. Meaning that they are born with a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God. When he became saintly in his life he had a real downer on sexual behaviour and was openly anti-sex.

This tradition found its expression by Jansen in France and was transferred to Ireland. The Irish Catholic church was "reformed" critically by Cardinal Cullen who was an office in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Dublin at about the same time that a significant of Irish immigrants came to places like Dunedin and the goldfields and the West Coast and so on.

Cullen had a lot of influence in Rome and I do not believe it was any coincidence that his nephews were the first two Bishops of Dunedin, Bishop Moran and Bishop Verdon, who would have bought more clergy from Ireland so that there was a sort of chain migration from ~~his~~ home. They were all in this Jansenistic tradition in which without grace the human being is doomed to eternal punishment. The only thing that could save human beings from themselves was the divine grace of God. This tradition is probably dying out now.

I think the bishops could look at where theology is going and what sort of image of the church they need to develop it into, a healthier integrated way of dealing with life. To do that, they need to go right back to the pre-dualistic, or pre-Augustine church which is truly Catholic, not Roman or hierarchical, but simply more mystical in its approach to life.

A lot of this was expressed in the Gnostic Gospels that were ~~recently~~ discovered in recent years. They need to look at the theology that surrounds Jesus. When we were brought up in Catholicism Jesus was seen to be some kind of cult hero. The word Christ was added on to ensure we knew he was divine. It can be argued that when Jesus was talking about Christ he was talking about the Christ and everybody and that Christ had been in creation for the billions of years before Jesus arrived on the planet. He was just trying to point out a kind of mysticism that got itself transformed into a controlling moralistic theology of human baseness around about the fourth century. This theology came to be expressed in formal rituals, and the spirit of contemplation has been lost.

I do believe the way ahead for the leaders of the Catholic Church is to look at this all history, see where it went wrong and try to put it right. It is my belief that's what John XXIII instinctively tried to do and that the current Pope Francis is intuitively in the same mould.

Unfortunately, there is an incredible conservatism built into Catholicism around the hierarchy of Cardinals and in Rome which has got nothing to do with religion and certainly has nothing to do with spirituality.

This is the line forward for what happened in one of the Churches worst examples of abuse that happened in Dunedin. Whilst it has happened in other parts of New Zealand it was particularly bad in Dunedin.

I am just learning from experts in this field, the likes of Matthew Fox a Dominican in the United States and a person named Richard Rohr who is a Franciscan, who know this topic much better but it's a far cry from the defensiveness and organisational protectiveness that exist with the Bishops in the Catholic Church of New Zealand today.