

SUE COX - SURVIVORS VOICE - EUROPE.

To provide evidence in request that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child takes into account in its forthcoming examination of the report by the Holy See.

I write in my capacity as co-founder of Survivors Voice Europe. We are an International charitable organisation of people who were sexually abused by catholic clergy in our childhood.

We support many people across the globe coping with the effects of this appalling crime. Although our organisation does not operate in the same way as many others, in as much as we won't supply names or details of those we support, largely because we quite often don't know them.

However, in England suffice to say we support many of the victims abused by the clergy mentioned specifically in the submission by the lawyers who have written to you, especially of David Greenwood . a child abuse lawyer who is specialises in this field.

We support many many more who have not sought legal help, or indeed have only just found the courage to talk about their abuses.

Our experience however leads me to believe that we should add our very powerful voices to this deposition, while remaining a confidential service.

We have members in several European countries, Holland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland and England. More recently we have had pleas from Columbia, Australia, Hawaii, Malta, and Russia. Regardless of the country where the abuse victims live, and without those people having any knowledge of each other, the story we hear time after time is so strikingly similar that there can only be one conclusion made: That the catholic church worldwide has created a culture where abuse is easy, and cover ups are guaranteed. The approach by the church follows the same process each time and in all of the countries we know about.

They show little or no compassion towards the victims of their criminal clergy, and their only remit is institutional self preservation, with the clergy abuse victims seen at best an irritant, and collateral damage.

There methods follow the same pattern each time, and our members and colleagues have almost all experienced this process.

1. First line of defense is to **stall** - they do this by suggesting that the survivor who has found the immense courage inside to speak to them contact their officers and/or specialist department and/or bishop and/or diocese office to talk to someone about this.

2. Secondly the default position is always to start by calling the victims "**liars**" demanding proof, questioning their understanding of the experience(s), dismissing their recollection of their rape and torment. There is no greater insult to someone who has suffered the worst betrayal of body and trust than to be disbelieved, when they finally are able to find their voice.

3. Secondly they try "**appeasing**" the victim while at the same time not acting on the very credible evidence that is provided. Keeping things "in house" is the imperative.

4. The next ruse is "**victim blame**": the suggestion that the victim somehow "asked for their abuses" or were complicit in them. This is a particular reprehensible attack, especially when it takes a vast amount of courage to speak at all, and the victim is probably so damaged that they are easily bullied. Discrediting victims is a very common weakening tactic.

5. If abuse victims chose the church to speak to initially, largely because they don't know where else to go, they are often referred to a "Child protection Officer" who, in our experience are ill equipped, unprofessional, and clearly biased. (In England at least three of those Child Protection officers have been prosecuted for child abuse offenses) The victim believes, incorrectly, that these

people have their best interest at heart, and because of their vulnerability are easily manipulated at this stage. Their emotional fragility means they are further abused.

6. The church rarely reports these abuses to the correct authorities, and uses every delaying tactic possible. One man presumed that his complaint had been reported to the Police only to find that the "Child Protection" officer of his diocese had actually reported it to the Health authority, and other, took 9 months and seven letters before admitting there had been an "oversight". Small lies are undermining to someone who is so damaged. (Birmingham Diocese alone, at least four victims victims complained about this approach)

The church repeatedly facilitates further abuse of the victims, by moving the suspected clergy from parish to parish, or even to another country, They have failed in their duty of care, knowingly sending predatory pedophiles into areas where vulnerable children are ready prey (Fr. Brendan Smyth, Fr, Robinson, Fr. Oliver O'Grady et al)

It is a common knowledge among clergy in England that suspect priests are sent to small out of the way parishes so as to "limit" the damage they might do.

In the USA Bernard Law, the cardinal implicated in the case of Fr. Birmingham in Boston was whisked away to Rome and given a prestigious post. A similar case was in Holland where after the Deetman report, which despite being quite flawed and incomplete, showed a huge amount of catholic clergy abuse spanning decades, and the archbishop concerned there was once again whisked back to Rome and has been made a Cardinal.

These cases further abuse victims, who feel that they are ignored while the churches hierarchy gets rewarded.

They continue to intimidate those people who are seeking justice, even negating the longterm effects they will inevitably experience. If, on the rare occasion, they are forced to admit responsibility, they often silence victims, either legally or informally when compensation is sought. Further intimidating vulnerable people.

If a pedophile or institution is prosecuted, then the court cases are drawn out, with the church using every legal loophole, every delaying tactic they can find in order to avoid their responsibilities and often victims who are ill or elderly, will die or commit suicide before they get any kind of justice.

I call on the United Nations to challenge the Vatican headed by every pope in it's history including the current outgoing pope Ratzinger and his successor and all of the facilitators of the catholic man-made infrastructure on several articles in contravention of the Rights of the Child.

Specifically **Article 3**

Article 6-

Article 16 (both 1 and 2)

Article 19 (both 1 and 2)

Article 23 (specific reference to the Provolto institute for the deaf, and the Magdalen laundries)

Articles 32- 33- 36

Article 41- regarding the dichotomy between laws of the lands and canon law.

Regarding article 39.- I must accuse the church of extreme negligence.

The failure to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse.

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