

Witness Name: John GRO-A

Statement No.: WITN0023001

Exhibits: WITN0023002 - WITN0023008

Dated: 26.08.2020

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF JOHN GRO-A

I, John GRO-A state: -

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My name is John GRO-A. I was born on GRO-B 1968 in Christchurch Hospital. I now live in GRO-B with my wife and children.
- 1.2. I was sexually abused by Kevin Ronald Waters (Br Giles), a Marist Brother who was my school principal, over two years in approximately 1980-1982.

Early life

- 1.3. I came from a stable home consisting of my Mum, Dad, brother and sister. My mother's name is GRO-B and she is a Kiwi. My father was of Dutch descent and his name was GRO-B but he was known as GRO-B. He passed away in May 2019. My father was a commercial painter who ended up in the building industry. My parents did really well buying old properties, renovating them and then selling them on.

- 1.4. My sister's name is **GRO-B**. She is my half-sister from my father's first marriage, but I have always regarded her as my full sister. **GRO-B** is about 65 and works as an **GRO-B**. She's done really well with her life. She has several rental properties and a brand-new home. My brother, **GRO-B** is ten years younger than me. He is married and lives in Australia. He is an Executive General Manager at **GRO-B**. He has a lot of commercial property and owns a **GRO-B** and a **GRO-B**, so he's done really well with his life, as well.
- 1.5. When I was young, we lived at **GRO-B**. I went to kindergarten at Cashmere Kindergarten, a secular kindergarten and then I went to St Peter's School, the primary school attached to St Peter's Church, for all my primary school years. It was primarily run by religious sisters, with some lay teachers. At school, we spent a lot of time at St Peter's Church and the priest actually lived on-site. I enjoyed primary school. I had lots of friends who lived near me and I used to go to sleepovers and school parties. I was good with my schooling, as well, and I remember my teacher making a special effort with me. The only negative I can remember from St Peter's School is that every Friday, about 10 of us were bussed to the dentistry college in town and the dental nurses would use us for training. This went on for months before my parents realised, I was going there every Friday, and they stopped it. I've never had any trouble with my teeth since then.
- 1.6. My family was heavily involved in St Peter's Church, which was our parish church. I had my First Holy Communion at St Peter's, when I was 8 or 9 years old, and I served as an altar boy there. The only reason my parents left that church was that there was a fire in the presbytery area. We moved then to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament (the Cathedral) in town. My parents were heavily involved in that church as well, and I was an altar boy at the Cathedral, too. My parents sent me to Xavier Intermediate School because it was connected to the Cathedral.
- 1.7. After that, my family moved, and we began attending our new parish church, Our Lady of the Assumption Church. My younger brother went to the primary school attached to that church, which we lived directly across the street from. I think it was at Our Lady of Assumption that I was Confirmed.
- 1.8. My parents later moved to Burnside, Christchurch, and my parents attended Christ the King Church there. My father was heavily involved in that Church in his retirement. **GRO-B**

GRO-B

. My father's retirement years were fully devoted to religion and to the Church. He would go to Church two or three times a week, at the end, and he was well-known in the religious community in Christchurch. He would work on repairs and maintenance in the Church and he was basically there at their beck and call. He would do whatever the parish priest wanted.

- 1.9. I had a very happy home life growing up. I was very close to my parents. Mum and Dad would pick me up from school on a Friday night, our caravan already to go, and we would head off to Lake Coleridge or to the Rakaia Huts. Through the summer months we were always away. I would walk up and down the rivers with my father. The only negative memories I have of my family life growing up started when I confessed to my father about what was happening with Br Giles.
- 1.10. We were a very religious Catholic family and I have very positive memories of faith as a child. We would go to church every Sunday. I would always be dressed up on Sunday in nice clothes. As an altar boy, my first job when I got to church would be to check if the priest needed me and 90% of the time he would, so my role was up in front of the church. I was the "go-to" altar boy because I was always happy to serve. Mum and Dad would talk to people after church and go to friends' houses for coffee. My parents went through a stage of going to prayer meetings during the week, with holding hands and speaking in tongues.

2. THE ABUSE

- 2.1. In about 1980, when I was about 12 years old, I started intermediate school at Xavier College Intermediate School in Christchurch, which was run by the Marist Brothers. I was at Xavier Intermediate for two years.

Refer exhibit WITN0023002 –Photo of John at age 12

- 2.2. Xavier Intermediate had a single school building, which was set quite high off the ground, so you couldn't see in the windows from outside, and a square concrete courtyard where we spent our morning tea and lunchtimes. We weren't allowed to go anywhere else. The school was surrounded on all sides, and there were monitors on all the entrances, so you were basically locked in when you were there. On one side was Sacred Heart College, the girls' school, which was separated by a big fence. At the back of Xavier Intermediate was the bus depot, where all the Christchurch buses were parked. And on the right side was Xavier College, the boys' school that was also run by the Marist Brothers. You had to go through Xavier College to get to the intermediate school. On the final side, in front of Xavier Intermediate, was the Cathedral, which was separated from the school by a chain-link fence. To get to the Cathedral you had to go through a gateway in the fence, down a concrete path that went through the houses where the nuns and priest lived.
- 2.3. That has all changed now. The Xavier Intermediate school house was demolished before the Christchurch Earthquake.
- 2.4. There were only three teachers at the school, who had a class each. Br Giles was Principal. He was a very loud, big man and he used fear and intimidation to get what he wanted. There were also two lay teachers. One was Mr Peter Callahan, a genuinely nice guy in his 30s, but who also used yelling to control his class. The other was my teacher, Mrs Loretta Brett Turner.
- 2.5. Br Giles used his position as Principal to take me out of class to abuse me. I think he knew that I was a "pleaser" because he would attend the Masses at which I was an altar boy.
- 2.6. At lunchtime we would all sit along the front of the building and we weren't allowed to leave until Br Giles or another teacher had checked our lunchboxes to make sure we'd eaten our lunch. Within the first couple of weeks of starting school, he singled me out, saying he wanted to talk to me, and sent me to wait outside his office. That's how the abuse started.

- 2.7. When he arrived, he took me into his office. It started out with Br Giles sitting on the other side of his great big desk from me. Sometimes he would have his cane sitting on the desk to intimidate me. He explained that my parents had sent me to this school to help me become a man and it was Br Giles' job to make sure that happened. He would sit there and talk to me about male parts and my body. Br Giles said he would teach me everything I needed to know to do with my body, puberty, masturbation and ejaculation. He would use words like "masturbation" and "ejaculation" all the time as part of the conversation. He would catch me in the yard and say things like, "Have you been practising like I told you?" I didn't take too much notice of this at the time, because Br Giles was the principal and I respected his authority but looking back I can see that he was grooming me.
- 2.8. Then I went into his office one day and realised that all the furniture had been changed. Br Giles moved from sitting behind the desk to sitting beside me. Then one day he pulled out a magazine with pornographic pictures of naked women. It was called "Best Nudes" and I can still picture it, because I had to look at it so many times. He asked me to look at the pictures and he left the room. Br Giles would ask me into his classroom at lunchtime but then it would go into class time and he would have a monitor watching his class while he was with me. He'd leave me with the magazine and check on his class. When he returned, he would ask what I was feeling about looking at the pictures, how my body was reacting. I would have to say what he wanted to hear. I was twelve and I knew nothing about sex. I had no experience, and no feeling down there.
- 2.9. Next thing I knew, he was trying to show me what to do. Then he started making me leave my pants at the door when I came into his office. It just escalated from there. Next, he was using his hands, and using his finger to penetrate me. He would stand behind me and masturbate and make a mess on my back.
- 2.10. He wore a big black robe with a white collar, and a rope around his waist. Often, he would use that rope to tie me up or tie my hands. I was so small compared to him. He would grab my penis or scrotum with his hands and really squeeze if I didn't do what he wanted, or if I was crying or upset. He would also grab the skin on my back to hold onto me. I would always worry about him ripping the skin because he was so forceful.

- 2.11. Br Giles would also use force to march me off to his office, if I wasn't doing what he wanted or had ignored him. He would come up behind me and grab that bit of skin under my upper arm, where it hurts, and he had such a good grip.
- 2.12. I was riding through town on my bike with a friend one weekend, a few months after starting school at Xavier Intermediate, and we rode through school thinking there was no one there, but Br Giles was at school and he spotted me. He told me he wanted me to come inside, and he told my friend that I'd be busy for a while. I was there all day and by the time I came out my friend was gone. That was the first time he actually penetrated me. I'll never forget that. He'd been using his fingers to try to penetrate me but because of my age, it wasn't going to happen. But he finally got what he wanted. He spat on my back and used that for his lube.
- 2.13. Once he was getting what he wanted from me, it started happening more and more often. When he was grooming me, it was about two or three times a week, but once the sexual abuse started, it would sometimes be even a couple of times a day. Other times, there would be two- or three-days break. I never knew whether it was going to be today or tomorrow or the next day. This kept going for two years, and only stopped because I left that school at the end of Form 2. I begged my parents for the whole time I was there not to send me back to Xavier. Eventually my parents bought a shop on Raleigh Avenue, so they were quite happy to send me to Hillmorton High School.
- 2.14. He mostly abused me in his office, but abuse happened in other places too. We would often have sports days at Waltham Park, and he would send all the boys to walk over there but tell me to go with him in the car to help him. He had a key to the pool as well. Br Giles would know that he had a bit of time before all the boys got there, so he would have his way with me in the Waltham Pool changing rooms. He abused me at the Cathedral, too. There was a small room near the back entrance to the Cathedral that he abused me in.
- 2.15. Sometimes he would trick me. I was an altar boy at the Cathedral, so I often served at weddings or funerals during school time. Sometimes Br Giles would send one of the boys to tell me there was a Mass at the Cathedral and he wanted me to go over to serve.

Trying to stop the abuse

- 2.16. I told my father early on that I was being abused. This was only a few weeks into school starting, before Br Giles had raped me. I remember that it was raining one day, and Dad came and picked me up in his work truck. I was sitting outside crying. He asked what was wrong and I told him that I was having issues, that I was scared of Br Giles. I said that the things he was teaching me related to the body were inappropriate. I told him that I thought the things that were going on in Br Giles' office, that he was getting me to do, were wrong. My father didn't believe me. He said words to the effect of, "A man of the cloth would never do anything wrong. I don't want to hear about this ever again." That was the end of that conversation.
- 2.17. After that, there was a total change in my relationship with my father. He was no longer the same with me. Everything about the way he talked to me, the way he reacted to me changed. Before the abuse I was very close to my Dad and we had a great relationship. He was still a father and he still acknowledged me in relation to day-to-day stuff, but when it came to being affectionate with me or taking me with him to jobs, he was completely different. He stopped hugging me and telling me he loved me. He was really into his music, and when I was little, I would sit on his knee listening to his records with him, but that all stopped. He would give me a standard sort of hug, but he wouldn't really embrace me or have me close to him like he used to. Dad used to take me with him to jobs, and I would sit in the car for hours waiting for him. He would also take me fishing and on other activities. But after I told him about Br Giles, my dad pushed me away. He didn't want me around him. This caused me a lot of heartache. I couldn't talk to him. Our relationship become one of conflict later on as I became very angry and rebelled against authority. I felt trapped, because my father didn't want to know. My family was super religious, and I didn't want to bring shame on them.
- 2.18. There was no one else in my family that I felt like I could talk to. My mum was busy, and my brother was so much younger than me that I couldn't talk to him about it. I was close to my sister, but not close enough to talk about that kind of thing. I tried to deal with everything myself.

- 2.19. I didn't try to tell anyone else as I was fearful of repercussions from Br Giles. He was the principal and we were all very scared of him. He was a very big man and would use his cane. Sometimes when I went to his office the cane was on his desk. It was like he was sending me a message. I feared him. I was also confused and ashamed about what was happening. I felt totally trapped.
- 2.20. I didn't talk to my teachers, but I really wish they'd been concerned enough to raise questions about my behaviour, like being away with the fairies when I came back from Br Giles' office and wetting myself at school. Perhaps they did talk to someone, perhaps they talked to Br Giles as the principal and it of course would have gone no further. I'll never know.
- 2.21. I did not complain to the Church about the abuse at the time that it occurred, and I didn't know of others abused at the time. I have now spoken to some guys that I knew from school. One of them said that they all thought Br Giles was creepy. Another said that Br Giles asked him to come into his office and Br Giles said that because he didn't have a dad, Br Giles would be happy to help out with puberty and masturbation if he wanted. This guy refused and wasn't abused by Br Giles.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE ABUSE

- 3.1. Once the rapes started, I was scared to go to school on Monday and relieved when the weekend came. Before I had to go back to school on Monday, I would be wide awake all night trying to make the night last as long as I could because I was so scared of going back in the morning. When I got to school, I would go through Xavier College and then stop at the fence and try to look around and see if there were any teachers. I would then hide out behind the school building until the bell rang and rush to class to avoid Br Giles. I didn't walk around the school or meet up with friends. I was just waiting for the bell to go so I could race into the classroom and be safe.
- 3.2. At morning teatime, I would try and leave class in the middle of a bunch of boys. I was always on the lookout for Br Giles and would try to mingle with groups of boys that were as far away from the building as possible, so he wouldn't see me. But Br Giles could always get me at the lunchtime lunchbox check. Sometimes I would defy him or pretend I didn't hear him, but eventually he would send someone to my class to get me.

- 3.3. Br Giles would also sometimes send for me from class. It was very hard for me to avoid him. I was in constant fear and would pray on the weekends that I wouldn't have to go back to school. I even tried holding my breath, so I would pass out and die.
- 3.4. I was always in fear, always in pain, and always trying to hide from Br Giles. He would do what he wanted, then leave me there to sort myself out and go back to class. I would constantly be in tears, but Br Giles didn't care.
- 3.5. When Br Giles raped me, I couldn't ride my bike home. I was also unable to concentrate in class. My schoolwork suffered, and I would be constantly told off by my teachers. Sometimes I would be sitting in class in pain after being raped, away with the fairies. The teacher would be asking me questions and I simply wasn't mentally present. She stopped bothering with me.
- 3.6. At primary school, I had lots of mates, but I was still a bit of a loner in the sense that I was also content to be by myself. When I moved to Xavier Intermediate, I had a small group of mates in my class to start with as it was a new school. When Br Giles started to rape me, I would have to return to class with wet pants from his semen dripping out of me and in so much pain. As my fear of Br Giles and the thought of the pain grew, I also started to wet myself at the thought of knowing what was going to happen. This made me a target for bullies. Boys started to ridicule me, and other boys didn't want to hang out with me because I was the kid that pissed himself. I had no friends.

Long-term impacts

- 3.7. I could not wait to leave that school. I left with no qualifications. I left broken and not the same boy I was two years prior. I talked my parents into sending me to Hillmorton High School, where I got with a bunch of kids who would skip school. We would sign in first thing, go to the "dog house" in the square, and then return in time for afternoon roll call. A lot of the time, I'd get caught and get the cane as punishment. I didn't want to be at school again and I was rebelling against authority and my teachers. I went from being a very good student to a very bad one. As soon as I could, I left school and got work with a company cleaning truck filters. I didn't tell my parents. I had been working for months before they realised, I'd left school. I have been involved in largely manual work because I never completed my education.

- 3.8. While I was living at home, I still went to church and did what I was supposed to, but my faith completely changed. I have a daughter from a previous relationship, and my dad got angry with me because I wouldn't send her to a religious school. We argued about that to the point where I once had to physically remove my father from my house because he came in laying down the law about what was going to happen. I caved to keep the peace and put my daughter in GRO-B
- 3.9. I wanted to always be away from people growing up, always seeking solitude. I largely withdrew from people and became quite a loner. I have had trouble forming relationships. I could not commit to the first long-term relationship I had. My daughter hasn't spoken to me for nine years because of what happened between me and her mother, and I blame myself for that. I finally married GRO-B-1, my second long-term relationship, about 10 years ago. I do not have a lot of friends and have tended to choose work that was solitary. I can be friendly, but I don't let people get too close to me.
- 3.10. I attempted suicide twice in my 30s. The first time, although I was in a relationship, I was depressed and lonely. I felt that I was a broken man. I planned it and was ready to do it. However, as I contemplated the next step, I realised that I'd leave more pain behind me. In my relationship, I was the father figure to my partner's kid. I also knew that suicide would devastate my parents due to their staunch Catholicism. The second time was related to stress in my relationship at the time. By this time, we had a child together. GRO-C in our bach, but I couldn't leave my daughter with the pain of losing her Dad, so I endure.
- 3.11. I take antidepressants now to manage my depression. I have suffered from depression for a long time and I have now been on medication for the last 10 years. Since my teens, I've also always had a very quick temper.

4. REDRESS

- 4.1. A couple of years ago, I told my brother about being abused and first thing he said was that it explained a lot about why I am the person that I am. I didn't go into detail, though. My wife was the first person I ever told about the full extent of the abuse.
- 4.2. When my Dad died in May 2019, I got very angry because he was gone, and we'd never repaired our relationship. I felt completely gutted that there was no hope for this anymore. My anger was affecting my relationship with my wife GRO-B-1 and our

kids. I do not hit my kids or my wife, but I was finding I was just going off at everything. My whole demeanour was angry. In late June, I ended up telling GRO-B-1 about my painful experiences as a child and the effect it was having on me. I was fearful that it could end our marriage, knowing that it was me with another man. I felt disgusted. I knew that it would either make or break our relationship.

- 4.3. GRO-B-1 wrote an email in a rage to the National Office of Professional Standards (NOPS) and has supported me through the complaints process.
- 4.4. I complained because I was looking for answers. I wanted to know: Were others abused? How could this happen? Why was it allowed to happen? I was hoping they had a process for handling this sort of thing.

NOPS Complaint Investigation

- 4.5. GRO-B-1 first wrote to NOPS on 23 June 2019, using the email address she got from the NOPS website.

Refer exhibit WITN0023003 –First email to NOPS

- 4.6. We got a reply the next day from Jacinta Stopforth, who has been nice and helpful. Jacinta was apologetic in a general sense for what I'd experienced. She sent us the Te Houhanga Rongo – A Path to Healing document and asked if we wanted to make a formal complaint. When we said we did, she sent through the form that we had to sign to say that we wanted to make a formal complaint. I can't recall being offered any support at this stage
- 4.7. We were sent an email from NOPS to say that two investigators would get in touch with me, but only one actually made contact. His name was Pat Coady and he was in touch very quickly. Pat was excellent. He was very nice and very supportive. He conducted an interview at our first meeting on 22 July 2019. He flew to GRO-B and we picked him up from the airport and spent most of the day with him. He captured my story in one sitting. Pat offered the option of counselling but didn't turn up with a support person. He was mindful that this was a traumatic thing for me and kept asking if I was okay and if I wanted to continue. Pat recorded our conversation and sent me a copy to review.
- 4.8. Pat then went away to begin his investigation. He was in regular contact, about once a week or fortnight, even if he didn't have anything to update us on. He interviewed my teachers as witnesses and the school receptionist. Pat tried to talk to my teacher, Mrs Turner, but she was in a rest home and had dementia. He also spoke to the other lay teacher, Mr Callaghan, who said that he remembered me

but that he had no idea that I had been abused by Br Giles. Pat also tried to talk to one of the other Brothers, but that was refused due to his illness or age. I'm not exactly sure. The investigation took about 6 to 8 months.

4.9. Pat submitted his report to the Sexual Abuse Protocol Committee (the committee) on 11th February 2020. I did not receive a copy of the report. We were getting anxious at this stage, wondering what would happen next. Communication slowed down.

4.10. GRO-B-1 contacted NOPS to see whether counselling was available for her. The Marist Brothers agreed to pay for 12 joint sessions or individual sessions each. We didn't take this up.

Engagement with the Marist Brothers

4.11. We seemed to wait quite a while for the complaints committee to meet. We didn't actually get a response from that committee because the next thing that happened was that the Marist Brothers contacted us directly through Br Peter Horide (the delegate). That was when the process went to shit. It felt NOPS was closing the door on us and leaving it up to the Marist Brothers to deal with.

4.12. Br Horide came to meet us. We picked him up from the airport and spent the afternoon with him. He brought a sheet of paper with him that had some basic information about other allegations of abuse made against Br Giles.

Refer exhibit WITN0023004 – Information of other complaints

4.13. These complaints were laid against Br Giles both before my time at Xavier Intermediate School and after. According to the Marist Brothers, another boy was abused by Br Giles in the 1980s, but no lawyer was involved in the complaint process. I was also told that there was a second complaint against Br Giles, after he abused me. A lawyer was involved in this complaint, and Br Giles was pulled out of school and transferred to an administrative role. However, I don't know if that is true or if Br Giles moved somewhere else and continued to teach. Certainly, much later in his career, when retired, he was involved in children's sport at Sacred Heart College, Auckland. I have also been told that there is a man who is older than me going through the Church's redress process now in relation to a complaint against Br Giles.

4.14. I had wanted to know if there were other victims who had gone through the same thing as I did, and this confirmed that there were and made me feel less alone. I felt that this was a step in the right direction.

4.15. However, Br Horide went away and then communication started to crawl. We were chasing him all the time to find out what was happening. During Covid-19 lockdown we went 6 weeks without communication. Even though Br Horide has access to a computer, he didn't bother to see if I was all right. This was very distressing. It was also really odd because in lockdown, no one could do anything, so we were wondering what was going on. We were trying to get him to respond. GRO-B-1 had to email Jacinta from NOPS again to find out what was going on before we got any response from Br Horide.

4.16. When Br Horide finally contacted us again his emails became quite confusing to read. His language was weird, and his arguments were difficult to follow. He used a lot of big words. I'm not a well-educated person and I found this difficult.

Refer exhibit WITN0023005 – Emails from Peter Horide

4.17. Eventually Br Horide emailed and presented me with an apology from the head of the Marist order, an offer to discuss a holiday for my family and me, an offer of an ex-gratia payment of \$15,000 and a Deed of Release that I would need to sign.

Refer exhibit WITN0023006 – Settlement agreement

Refer exhibit WITN0023007 – Letter of apology from the Marist Brothers

4.18. I rejected the offer as it was an insult for what I had been put through as a child. I told Br Horide it wasn't enough. He said he would take my request back to the NZ Marist Brothers Trust Board. I asked who was on this Trust, but I didn't get a response. I asked who had come to the decision to offer \$15,000 but he said that couldn't be discussed with us. I asked if the people on the Trust had even read my file. The response was very confusing and I'm still not sure how much information they have seen. I want them to read my whole account, so they can fully appreciate what I have been through.

4.19. In the meantime, I asked if they would cover my legal fees to examine the Deed of Release. The Deed of Release is of great concern to me. First, the Marist Brothers believe they have no vicarious liability for the actions of Br Giles. I don't accept this. Nor do I accept that they took proper responsibility at the time that the Marist Brothers became aware of his offending. I can't prove this because they won't provide me with the information. Second, I think the Deed is saying that the Marist Brothers believe that legal limitations would prevent me taking a criminal or civil claim against them. Br Giles is dead, so I'm really in a bind here. Third, the Marist Brothers believe that the ACC legislation protects them from a civil claim.

- 4.20. Br Horide returned with an offer of \$20,000. It was still an insult, even more so given the tiny increment. My whole life has been affected by Br Giles. And Br Giles had a good retirement and had everything he wanted. He lived in a nice home, and I'm still struggling to get my own home. How much would his car, and funeral, and headstone have cost? He went overseas every year to different retreats. In our face-to-face meeting, Br Horide provided some background about the Marist Brothers and sort of boasted about all of the property they own. Now he's sending us emails talking about the Marist Brothers being a charity and saying that they take a vow of poverty and they do not have much money.
- 4.21. We again told Br Horide that the ex-gratia payment offer is too low for what I went through and still go through daily. That's when he started trying to push us to get a lawyer. Br Horide ended up offering \$1000 for legal fees and saying it would be better to discuss this lawyer-to-lawyer. In order for me to take this further, I realised I would have to engage a lawyer. This simply isn't right. The pathway to healing could rapidly become a pathway to stress and debt.

Refer exhibit WITN0023008 – Request to engage a lawyer

- 4.22. On my own account and doing I've engaged a lawyer through Shine Lawyers in Christchurch, who met with me and drafted a letter to the Marist Brothers. This letter has not been sent yet.
- 4.23. I am also unhappy about the letter of apology. When I read the letter from the head of the Marist Brothers, my first thought was, "Who is this man? I don't know him. What are they playing at?" I phoned Br Horide to complain that it had no meaning me. It was impersonal, like it was a computer-generated letter from a total stranger. I told Br Horide that if it had come from him it would have had more meaning because I have at least met him. I have never spoken or had contact with the head of the Marist Brothers. In my eyes, the effort should have been made for them to contact the Pope, the highest power in the Church, and asked for him to write to me with an apology. That would have meant so much, as a part of me has always respected religion even though I am not sure why, since it has also caused me a lifetime of trauma thanks to Br Giles.
- 4.24. Another thing that made me quite angry about the Deed is that if I were to die right now, my wife and children wouldn't get anything. They're not thinking about GRO-B-1, who's been going through this with me.

- 4.25. Br Horide raised the idea of counselling again and again. He said I could get ACC counselling and the Marist Brothers would pay for it. I found this very confusing because my understanding is that ACC counselling is paid for by the ACC system. I was also wary of the fact that he kept on pushing me towards this. I got annoyed at Br Horide for this and told him that this was not something that they could pass off to a government department to deal with. If the Marist Brothers want me to have counselling, they should pay for it.
- 4.26. The Marist Brothers have not answered many of my questions. Br Peter Horide has sometimes not been very responsive to emails and this has caused me distress. I feel like the process isn't survivor-focussed. I feel let down. The Marist Brothers are also refusing to provide me with the file created by the investigator. Br Peter says that it is the property of the Marist Brothers. I am now seeking that file under the Privacy Act 1993. Why should I need to take steps like this?
- 4.27. The whole process seems to be about the Marist Brothers denying any knowledge of what Br Giles was doing and protecting themselves, but Br Horide showed me the list of other peoples' complaints about Br Giles. My abuse seems to be the worst but there are other victims. He was a serial offender. He was moved around the country a lot, in my opinion. He was never stopped. I believe they allowed the abuse to happen by moving him rather than stopping him.

Meeting with Bishop Martin

- 4.28. We have now met with Bishop Paul Martin, the bishop of Christchurch, via Zoom. We did this to find out about the Bishop's responsibility both for the Marist Brothers operating in the Diocese and the fact that I was raped many times at the Cathedral. The residence was directly opposite the main entrance, so they could see anyone coming in or out. Why didn't they do anything about a brother taking a young boy into the Cathedral when no-one else was there?
- 4.29. GRO-B-1 emailed the Bishop, saying we wanted to have a call with him and giving him a brief outline of what had happened to me. We met with him within a week. It was absolutely awful. He was really patronising. Bishop Martin said the bishop was only responsible for diocesan priests and that bishops don't have responsibility for the Marist Brothers. He said that he doesn't see that the Diocese has any responsibility for what happened at the Cathedral. He provided an analogy: "If a person came into your house and molested another person, would you expect to

be held responsible for it?" I do not accept this because the Cathedral is not another person's house, it is on consecrated ground.

- 4.30. I understand that in canon law the bishop is responsible for everything that happens in his diocese. I also understand that the Marist Brothers should have reported to the bishop when they became aware of other abuse after mine. I believe that Br Giles was moved after this abuse was reported.
- 4.31. Despite providing Bishop Martin with permission to read my file before the meeting, and asking him to read it, he didn't bother to. I find that insulting and question whether he actually wants to know. The Bishop had also not consulted the archives when we met. He said he would get the archivist to look at the documents from that period, but he didn't expect to find anything. I'm confused by that, because it's almost like he knows the documents of the time and has already looked. I also don't understand how the archivist can view the secret files, as I thought only the Bishop could do this. I am concerned that what I understand would be secret archives are available for the archivist to look at.
- 4.32. My understanding is that now that I've spoken to the Bishop, he should open a file about my case. I am unsure if he will. I am also unsure whether the Marist Brothers notified the Bishop when they started looking at my case, as I believe they're supposed to.

5. LOOKING FORWARD

- 5.1. My journey is still in motion and I'm angry and frustrated. I feel stuck and extremely disappointed. Communication from the Marist Brothers has been extremely poor. I've had to push, push, push to get answers and still they don't provide them. They've made no attempt to keep dialogue open. Now we've got to lawyers talking to lawyers. I can't afford that, but I can see that they can. The involvement of lawyers is also intimidating. This is supposed to be a pastoral process, but I'm not feeling that. It's like they're leaving it up to me, the individual, to figure out the healing. I get that, but the whole thing feels wrong. I think their main objective is to get me to sign their Deed of Release. At the end of the day, I think they put the phone down and that's the end of their day. For me, it's very different. I wonder if they experience true empathy or whether they want to protect themselves more than a survivor.

- 5.2. I can see that Br Horide has dealt with cases before, but there needs to be a better structure, a better plan. They need to provide better support at each of the steps. I'm not talking about counselling. I'm talking about someone explaining the next steps in an understandable way. The six-week period with no communication hit me really hard. If I wasn't strong enough and didn't have the support of my wife, I could see that I might have done something drastic. There is simply not enough consideration for the re-traumatisation that takes place going through this process. Reliving my abuse experience is very stressful. What would have been really good for healing would be for my whole family to be able to go away somewhere peaceful, where food and accommodation were taken care of, to just be able to relax and take onboard what's happening in the complaint process. It wouldn't need to be fancy.
- 5.3. They need to put all of the documentation on the table. We all need to have the same information in front of us. I don't like the fact that I don't know who else is looking at my case, that I don't know them, that I don't know if they've been shown everything, so they can understand my pain. I don't think they should be controlling this process. I think it needs to be independent of the Church.
- 5.4. They also need to be better at providing information about other complaints. I'm not asking for names, but it's important for healing to know that I'm not the only victim of Br Giles who's come forward. Ultimately it would be nice to sit down with those people and ask them how they've dealt with it in their lives.
- 5.5. I hope that the Royal Commission will be able to make sure the next person who comes forward to say that they've been abused has a better experience than I have had.

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

GRO-C

Dated

1-9-2020