

Witness Name: Dr Christopher Evan Longhurst

Statement No: WITN0237001

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ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF DR CHRISTOPHER EVAN LONGHURST

I, Doctor Christopher Longhurst, will say as follows: -

Introduction

1. My full name is Christopher Evan Longhurst. I was born on the [REDACTED] 1968. I currently live in Ahuriri/Napier Aotearoa/New Zealand.
2. The contents of this Statement are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

SECTION 1

About Me

3. I do not identify as a victim. I am a person who has survived clerical child sexual abuse and other kinds of abuse at the hands of Catholic priests and members of the clergy, including bishops, and I am proud to have survived that abuse. I advocate for persons who are victims and who have lost their voice and power to speak up and defend themselves as a consequence of faith-based and institutional abuse.
4. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
5. I was trained in theology to the terminal level in the Roman Catholic system. I hold the Doctorate in Sacred Theology *summa cum laude* from the Pontifical University of Saint

Thomas Aquinas (The Angelicum) in Rome, Italy. This includes credentials in Canon Law, Ecclesiology, Pastoral Theology, and Social Justice.

6. I am a Catholic theologian who teaches and researches in my fields of knowledge. One of the areas of my research is institutional reform required in light of systemic clerical and religious child sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church.
7. I am a member of various associations in New Zealand, Australia, Europe and the United States that study religion and theology.
8. As a Catholic theologian I am currently employed to lecture in theology at Te Kupenga Catholic Leadership Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand. My employment roles involve teaching theology and researching in my fields of knowledge.
9. I am the survivor of child sexual assault in the Catholic Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. That assault includes, though is not limited to, abuse by two Marist Brothers, sexual molestation and attack by a priest of the Society of Mary, sexual molestation by a diocesan priest of ██████████ Catholic Diocese, and its coverup by a bishop of ██████████ Catholic Diocese.
10. I am a survivor of two kinds of faith-based abuse: 1) Clerical and religious child sexual abuse; 2) adult-at-risk abuse. Under both kinds of abuse, I suffered both primary abuse, that is, the direct experience of sexual abuse, and what I consider to be secondary abuse, that is, subsequent abuse in the forms of psychological and emotional manipulation, retaliation, and exploitation while in the care of the Catholic Church.
11. I consider the secondary forms of abuse to also be primary abuse with they are not associated with other forms of abuse as consequent to that abuse.
12. I am the complainant in five cases of abuse: three cases of clerical and religious child sexual abuse including repeated child sexual assault, and two cases of adult-at-risk abuse. I filed all five complaints with the New Zealand Police and with the Catholic Church of New Zealand's National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS).
13. The five complaints are against:
 1. Brother ██████████ of the Marist Brothers also known as ██████████ ██████████;
 2. Brother ██████████ of the Marist Brothers also known as ██████████ ██████████
 3. Father ██████████ of the Society of Mary;
 4. Father ██████████ of the Catholic Diocese of ██████████, ██████████ Monsignor ██████████;

5. Bishop ██████████, ██████████ of the Catholic Diocese of ██████████.
14. These five cases are the major instances of abuse for which I have lodged complaints in Aotearoa New Zealand. Having lived most of my adult life overseas in the United States and Rome Italy, there are other cases of clerical and religious sexual and physical abuse that are not included in the complaints filed in New Zealand.
15. I lived for decades with shame and guilt over the abuse that started at the Marist Brothers school, ██████████. The effects of the abuse had affected virtually all aspects of my life, my relationships with self, family, friends, and almost everyone with whom I came into contact.
16. Despite the abuse I suffered in that Church, and despite its direct, profound, and personal effects on my life, I have maintained connections with the Catholic institution in various ways over the years, primarily through employment agreements. I have been employed by organisations of the Catholic Church's system in various capacities in New Zealand, Washington DC, Rome Italy, and Vatican City State.
17. I consider myself as someone who speaks out about the abuse I suffered within the institution responsible for that abuse. I consider this a courageous act and one that any good person would be expected to do.
18. In 2018 I advocated to have the Terms of Reference of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care extended to include abuse while in the care of faith-based institutions. I wrote to the Prime Minister in this regard, who responded in a letter dated 7 August 2018.
19. I was prohibited by Father ██████████, the ██████████ of the Catholic Diocese of ██████████ at the time, from applying to the ██████████ seminary in New Zealand after High School, and subsequently by Bishop ██████████, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of ██████████. I subsequently entered a Catholic seminary in Australia, then Germany, and then the United States.
20. I am currently the National Leader for the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) in Aotearoa New Zealand. SNAP is the world's largest, oldest and most active support group for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities (priests, ministers, bishops, deacons, nuns, coaches, teachers, and others).
21. The Aotearoa New Zealand chapter of SNAP was founded in June 2019 after I felt a dearth of support needed in New Zealand for victims and survivors dealing with the extra layers of complexity around faith-based abuse.

About the Abuse

22. In my view, being abused in the care of faith-based institutions is synonymous with faith-based abuse. However, the latter extends to abuse in all pastoral relationships as well, therefore it can also be situational and independent of an institution.
23. Therefore, faith-based abuse, in my view, is any abuse that takes place in a relationship with a person in a religious position and/or acting in a pastoral role. To me, faith-based abuse therefore is both situational and relational. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and spiritual, though when in a situation or a relationship that is pastoral in nature, or faith-based, then any of these forms of abuse are faith-based abuse.
24. In other words, faith-based abuse is not contingent on abuse in a specific faith-based institution or location such as a church building or a faith-based school, but is perpetrated by someone who is in a position of faith-based care and authority, such as a priest, or bishops, or religious schoolteacher, lay minister, or spiritual director, or employee of a religious organisation acting in his or her work role.
25. For me, clerical sexual abuse is abuse by a priest, bishop, cardinal or pope who may also be a member of a religious congregation. Religious sexual abuse is the abuse perpetrated by a member of any religious congregation. This may also include priests; however, it is also abuse particularly by brothers and nuns of a religious congregation or religious institute.
26. For me, faith-based abuse has many dimensions. Again, it can be abuse that is physical, sexual, mental, emotional, psychological, religious (community driven such as manipulation in a religious context, social situation, church group, parish, school etc) spiritual abuse which is a religious based mental abuse, and ritual abuse which is a form of religious abuse which involves ceremonial acts. There is significant overlap among these diverse forms of faith-based abuse.
27. Further, I know faith-based abuse is perpetrated in numerous ways by the abuser, for example, power over children in schools, power over persons in families, power over people in church communities in both socially indirect ways (covert religious abuse), and single direct ways (overt religious abuse). For example, the former ways are more subtle and often unnoticeable, while the latter ways are carried out in secret and kept hidden by various factors that have been well documented in the literature.³
28. The abuse I suffered in the Catholic Church as a child was not only sexual assault. There were elements of mental and psychological abuse as well, and unjustifiable punishments, both related to and independent of the child sexual assault.

29. In my view, one of the most despicable responses to clerical and religious child sexual abuse is retaliation by the accused when the victim reports the abuse. I have experienced this kind of retaliation first-hand in two contexts: 1) as an adult-at-risk who did not go along with the sexual solicitation, molestation and abuse; 2) as a survivor who has reported the abuse and spoken out against it, identifying the abuser, and seeking justice. I suspect I may continue to experience this ongoing abuse given some of the content of this witness statement and given the ongoing attempts by Catholic Church officials in New Zealand to continue to cover up this abuse using more covert and sophisticated ways.

66. I was also the target of sexual assault as a young adult in the Catholic Church by other priests outside New Zealand, specifically in the United States and in Rome, Italy.

About the Abusers

67. Again, to date I have lodged five formal complaints with the New Zealand Police and with NOPS against five people. Again they are:

1. Brother [REDACTED]
2. Brother [REDACTED]
3. Father [REDACTED]
4. Father (Monsignor) [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Catholic Diocese
5. [REDACTED] Bishop [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Catholic Diocese

68. Regarding Brother [REDACTED], he died [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. He was a Marist Brother of the Schools. [REDACTED]

69. Regarding Brother [REDACTED], he died [REDACTED]. He was also a Marist Brother of the Schools. [REDACTED]. He lived at the same residence with Brother [REDACTED], next to [REDACTED]. He was charged and convicted for possessing child pornography [REDACTED].

70. Regarding Father [REDACTED], he was a Marist Father, that is, a priest of the Society of Mary. He died [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] [REDACTED], during my time there ([REDACTED]). [REDACTED] of the Society of Mary in New Zealand who was also my Form 6 religion [REDACTED]. Father [REDACTED] was a co-resident as well as confrere of Father [REDACTED].
71. Regarding Monsignor [REDACTED], he is currently the [REDACTED] in the Catholic Diocese of [REDACTED]. At the time of his offending ([REDACTED]), he was the [REDACTED] for the Catholic Diocese of [REDACTED].
72. Regarding Bishop [REDACTED], he is the [REDACTED] of the Catholic Diocese of [REDACTED]. He was the [REDACTED] of that Diocese at the time of the offending by Monsignor [REDACTED]. I have accused this Bishop of protecting Monsignor [REDACTED] and trying to conceal his offense. I believe this Bishop colluded with Father [REDACTED] at the time to cover up his priest's sexual molestation and by trying to bully my mother into a state of silence. I have also accused Bishop [REDACTED] of colluding with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to discredit and block me from applying to the seminary in order to cover up Monsignor's [REDACTED] indecent act. I believe this Bishop continues to do so today and is supported in doing so by [REDACTED] who I know to be accused of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] when he was [REDACTED] at [REDACTED], [REDACTED].
73. It is fully understandable to me why [REDACTED] has been systematically denying credible complaints and protecting [REDACTED] clergy. He is known to SNAP to be shielding other priests accused of clerical child sexual abuse, including Monsignor [REDACTED], Monsignor [REDACTED], and Father [REDACTED], [REDACTED].
190. I am aware that character assassination of a victim is not unusual in the Catholic hierarchy after a victim has been abused and even before any disclosure of that abuse is made. This is another form of abuse and it is also a way the abuser tries to protect himself....
238. Further, several members of SNAP who identify as survivors of Catholic Church clerical sexual abuse and who used the APTH process have informed SNAP that the Church's response demonstrated denial, disbelief, concealment, cover up, justifying, lying, diverting, stalling, masking culpability by offering partial or weak apologies, protection of perpetrators...

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

[Redacted Signature]

Dated:

[Redacted Date]

Dr Christopher Evan Longhurst

ANNEX B

Consent to use my Statement

I, Dr Christopher Longhurst, confirm that by submitting my signed Witness Statement to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, I consent to its use in the following ways:

- publication on the Inquiry website;

- reference and/or inclusion in any interim and/or final report;
- disclosure to those granted leave to appear, designated as core participants and where instructed, their legal representatives via the Inquiry’s database or by any other means as directed by the Inquiry;
- presentation as evidence before the Inquiry, including at a public hearing;
- informing further investigation by the Inquiry.

I also confirm that I have been advised of the option to seek anonymity and that if granted my identity may nevertheless be disclosed to a person or organisation, including any instructed legal representatives, who is the subject of criticism in my witness statement in order that they are afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the criticism.

Please tick this box if you are seeking anonymity.

Signed [REDACTED]

Christopher Evan Longhurst

Date.. [REDACTED]

Abbreviations

ADW	Archdiocese of Wellington
APTH	A Path to Healing / Te Houhanga Rongo
CAC	Complaints Assessment Committee
CLCANZ	Congregational Leaders Conference Aotearoa New Zealand
F.M.S.	Marist Brothers of the Schools (Latin, <i>Fratelli Maristi delle Scuole</i>).
NOPS	National Office for Professional Standards
NSPSC	National Safeguarding & Professional Standards Committee
NZCBC	New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference
S.M.	Society of Mary (Latin, <i>Societas Mariae</i>).
SNAP	Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests