

Witness Name: **GRO-A Ms K**

Statement No.: WITN0045001

Exhibits: WITN0045002 – WITN0045011

Dated: 21/09/2020

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF **GRO-A Ms K**

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I, **GRO-A Ms K**, state: -

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. My full name is **GRO-A Ms K**. I was born on **GRO-A** 1968 and I am 52 years old. I currently live in Australia.

1.2. I am a mother of seven children, and a grandmother of ten.

#### *Background*

1.3. At the time I was abused, our family lived in Masterton. I was from a family of six children. I was the only girl and I had five brothers.

1.4. In 1986, when I was 18 years old, my family moved to Australia and settled in Perth.

- 1.5. My health has suffered because of the abuse I have suffered as explained below in my statement. I have ongoing issues with anxiety, depression, insomnia and diabetes.
- 1.6. I receive a very small regular payment from a permanent disability pension due to suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The amount I receive does not even cover the cost of my anti-depressant medication.
- 1.7. I am unable to maintain a job due to my health issues. This has affected me financially and caused additional financial stress. I do not own my own home, so I do not have financial security.

*My experience of being in care*

- 1.8. Although I was not in the direct care of a Catholic institution myself, the abuse I suffered was perpetrated by representatives of the Catholic Church who were active in my local church and community. The abuse therefore occurred in the broader context of the Catholic Church setting as explained below.

## **2. THE ABUSE**

- 2.1. In 1977, I was approximately 9 years old when I was abused by two Marist Brothers in my own home on separate occasions.

### **Refer exhibit WITN0045002 – Photo aged 9 in 1977**

- 2.2. The Marist Brothers were Brother Michael Beaumont and Brother Gordon (Kevin Healy). They were both teachers at my older brother's school – Saint Joseph's School in Masterton. They were both active members in my local church and community.
- 2.3. Brother Gordon also abused one of my older brothers.

*Abuse by Brother Michael Beaumont*

- 2.4. The first time I was abused was during a family prayer meeting in 1977. Brother Michael had dinner at our family home along with another person whom I don't remember. Brother Michael was invited to join in family prayers as was customary after dinner. This consisted of the full rosary and proceeding prayers.

- 2.5. When Brother Michael came to our house it was considered a privilege to have him there and as such my mother put on dinner and was being “extra prayerful” meaning making sure prayers were said slowly and reverently with eyes closed and heads bowed.
- 2.6. I was in my room getting my pyjamas on when mum called me to the lounge room. I ran in and Brother Michael held out his arms for me to sit next to him and I was happy to do so. I felt special and privileged he wanted me close to him.
- 2.7. Brother Michael sat on the couch and the rest of the family sat on the floor which was customary for our family. I knew of Brother Michael from Church and the brothers were always giving the young children like me sweet biscuits.
- 2.8. Brother Michael put his arm around my shoulder and pulled me in close. I was sitting on his left side. When everyone had closed their eyes and started to pray the rosary, he slid his hand through the back of my pyjamas and then round to the front until his hand was in my crotch. I had no underwear on under my pyjamas. As I felt his hand coming round my waist to the front, my body stiffened up. I felt his finger go inside my vagina. I did not know what he was doing at the time or what was happening to me. I felt petrified.
- 2.9. I stared at my parents, begging in my head for them to open their eyes and see what was happening. They had their eyes closed. My brothers were sitting in front of me with their backs to me. My Mum was only about two metres away from me.
- 2.10. The decade of the rosary usually took about 30 minutes plus extra time for proceeding prayers. Brother Michael had his hand down my pants for the whole time and was moving his finger in my vagina or around that area for the whole time. He was pressing on my vagina as well as poking inside.
- 2.11. As the rosary finished, he moved his hand back to the side and rested his arm on me. I jumped up and quickly ran off to bed without saying anything about what had happened. All my family commented that this was very unusual for me. I lay in my bed listening to my parents say goodbye to Brother Michael.
- 2.12. I was terrified and I did not know what had just happened. What I did know was that it was wrong, but I was not able to process it and put it into words.
- 2.13. I didn't tell my parents. I did tell my younger brother the next day. I was very close to him and believed he would tell my parents.
- 2.14. I remember a week or so after the abuse, I was at the house of GRO-B-1 and GRO-B-2 GRO-B after we had all been to a baptism and Brother Michael was taking pictures. He was taking pictures of me and followed me to the bathroom, and then

taking pictures of the two ladies who were breastfeeding their babies. He was known for being a photographer and musician. He sang at Mass with my cousin and used to look at me and smile. I felt that I had done a terrible thing.

- 2.15. As a practising Catholic, I continued to see Brother Michael in and around the school and at Church and prayer meetings for years. I was always scared of him and couldn't understand why he was still in Church and a holy man when he had done bad things to me. I also witnessed him taking photos of other girls.
- 2.16. I took on this abuse and internalised it as something I had done wrong. I felt that I was a "bad" girl. This made sense to me as Brother Michael had made me feel bad, so I must be bad, because he was a man close to God.
- 2.17. From that age on my personality changed and I spent my time always trying to be better. I carried tremendous shame as I never seemed to be able to be a "better" girl. I decided to dedicate my young life to God and become a nun when I was older. I wanted to be a saint to prove I was worthy of him.

*Abuse by Brother Gordon (Kevin Healy)*

- 2.18. Brother Gordon was the one brother who always seemed to be mean to me. He teased me about the freckles on my face. He said I should rub rotten tomatoes on my face to get rid of the freckles. He told me I was ugly. It seemed that he was nasty to me but nice to my brothers. He wouldn't let me join in the games that he played with them.
- 2.19. Brother Gordon was often at our house. One night he came into my bedroom to say goodnight. This was the first time I recall him doing that. He usually played with my brothers but somehow this night he appeared in my room.
- 2.20. Brother Gordon had his face close to my face and was quietly saying things in my ear and coaxing me and insisting that I kiss him. He whispered other things, but I cannot recall exactly what they were as I was so frightened.
- 2.21. Upon Brother Gordon's insistence and coaxing, I gave him a kiss on the cheek hoping that would satisfy him. He then said words to the effect of: "I won't go until you give me a proper kiss". I tried to move away from Brother Gordon, however he was still holding me, and I could not move. He then gave me a full kiss on the mouth and pushed his tongue into my mouth. I was very frightened and disturbed. It was revolting and I felt disgusted by it. I had never experienced anything like that before. It was not an instant kiss. I lasted for several seconds and I remember lying stiff and just wondering what was happening.

- 2.22. Brother Gordon left the room and I lay there silent, not really understanding what had just happened.
- 2.23. I didn't tell anyone in my family about what had happened at the time. I did tell another girl, **GRO-B-3**. She was my age and attended the prayer meetings which these Brothers often came to. It was not until I was about age 15 that I recall speaking with my parents about it.
- 2.24. Although my parents didn't know about what had happened to me at the time of the abuse, I do recall later there was a lot of talk about **GRO-B-4** as he had assaulted **GRO-B** at a camp. I remember my brothers often referred to him as a "creep".
- 2.25. I understand that sometime later my father and members of our community raised Brother Gordon's behaviour **GRO-B** with the parish priest, Father Pettit, and the school principal and head of the Marist Brothers, Brother Champion. Nothing appeared to happen until suddenly Brother Gordon disappeared. Brother Michael departed not long after but in a slightly more normal way.
- 2.26. When I was about 15, we left Masterton and moved to Lower Hutt. Later, our family shifted to Australia when I was about age 18. We settled in Perth.

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

- 3.1. I continue to suffer health problems including PTSD, anxiety and depression. I am diabetic and have sleep disorders.

#### *Teenage development*

- 3.2. As a teenager, I acted out and this interfered with my education and jobs. I have not been able to complete adult education as I would get frightened and feel inadequate and out of depth and run.
- 3.3. By the age of ten I was desperate to look like one of my brothers. I used to stand on the toilet to urinate so I would sound like a boy in the toilet and I begged my mother to make my clothes from my brothers' old clothes. I cut all my hair off and quit dancing. Anything that identified me as female I rejected.
- 3.4. This carried on through to puberty, which was especially traumatising for me as I felt my body was betraying me by developing. Boys started to notice me, and this frightened me. To me sex was dirty and bad however this was something that I

was used to feeling so if a male wanted to abuse me, I allowed it to happen. I was numb to it.

- 3.5. I left school at 16. I was a very angry person, I hated everything about me. I couldn't understand the world. I was still a practising Catholic, so I also felt that how I was acting was a sin. I would often confess in confession, only to receive penance – which reinforced my view of myself as a “bad girl”. My first job at 16 consisted of older men wanting to do sexual things to me. I had a very childlike understanding of this and complied, as I carried the belief that that was all I was good for.
- 3.6. At 17, I fell pregnant and had a child at 18, which only reinforced the shame I carried and the belief that I was a bad girl. Unwed and pregnant was against the Church's rules. My parents sent me to a convent so I could hide in shame. I was treated very badly there and begged to come home, which I did and had my child. I raised her and adore her still to this day. She was the only thing I lived for, she was beautiful, unlike me and perfect unlike me. I thought this would give me another chance to make my parents happy and like me.
- 3.7. This didn't happen. Instead I suffered with such feelings of self-loathing and revulsion at the person I was that I started to think I don't deserve such a beautiful daughter. I hid these feelings in an abusive relationship that ended in divorce by the age of 24 with now another three children.
- 3.8. I was renting a house owned by the Church in Lower Hutt. I couldn't pay the rent and was told to leave. I had nowhere to go so my parents, who were in Australia by this time, told me to come over with the children. I arrived alone, confused and worn out with no money no education and all these children.
- 3.9. I was going to church and it was suggested I go to the Catholic dating group. But there the same cycle started with men abusing me for sex. This time it was men of the age of 50 plus while I was only 25. I did not have the ability to say no and I still carried this train of thought; that I was a bad girl, and this was what I am good for.

#### *Relationships with men*

- 3.10. In summary, the abuse I suffered as a child has had a disastrous impact on the way I view men. It has deeply affected my ability to form safe and normal relationships with men. I felt that if a man was touching me sexually then that

meant he loved me. All the relationships I have had have been destructive and abusive for me.

- 3.11. Life went on and I accepted physical abuse with one man being charged by the Police for punching me up several times and another two marriages where I accepted abuse. I have not been able to sustain a long-term relationship with my husband despite loving him.
- 3.12. I ended up falling pregnant with my fifth child and, as an unwed mother, my parish priest organised for me and my children to go into a women's shelter in Adelaide (a state I had never been to and which was away from any support) so I could hide the shame of another pregnancy. The nuns ran this shelter and were very abusive with me. One time I called the Archbishop as they were going to throw me on the streets. Once again, I was afraid and subjected to doing as I was told as I was a "bad" person. I kept my child and came home in shame, still clinging to my church and was eventually assaulted by the parish priest **GRO-B**

#### *Catholicism and my relationship with God*

- 3.13. Catholicism runs deep in my family. My great-grandparents were devoted members of the Catholic Church and went to Africa as missionaries from Ireland. Then they were called to NZ as missionaries to set up the Church there. My grandparents were devoted members, building schools and financially supporting the Church and my parents spent their lives working for and supporting the Church, building schools, World Vision and supporting boat people and other groups including as foundation members of Marriage Encounter in New Zealand. I watched my father work all the hours under the sun for the Archdiocese of Wellington and throughout the country. And I have raised seven children in the Catholic Church devoting my time to set up youth groups, prayer groups, functions raising money, camps and so on. All the while I was trying to atone for my feelings of being bad.
- 3.14. And now as a parishioner, I have raised the very painful abuse that changed my life. I feel I am a nobody. A nobody who the Church has denied any form of closure. A nobody that the Church would rather "go away".
- 3.15. My relationship with my God has also suffered and now I can't go into a church. Most of my life I have walked out of church angrier than when I entered. I have had all my children receive all their sacraments in a bid to try and "atone" for my sins as a child. But nothing ever works. I have told so many priests about the

abuse I have suffered in confession and have only received penance in return. Not one ever told me it was a crime or gave me advice, so I believed it was my sin to carry.

#### *Relationship with my parents*

- 3.16. I carry the shame of hurting my parents to this day. I know it does not come from them however in bringing this abuse to light it has altered my relationship with them as my mother told me, "If you are a Catholic as you say you are, you wouldn't be doing this against the Church". This has impacted me greatly as I became very conflicted over bringing this to light. Even today I cannot talk to my parents about this, so I am very alone in this journey.
- 3.17. I've always felt that my family were ashamed of me and the relationship is still fraught and tenuous at times. Some of my family want me to "let it go" but I can't because I do not feel I have achieved justice.
- 3.18. I worry constantly at the relationship decline with my mother since exposing this abuse formally, however I pray to God she understands. I do not go to church anymore however do struggle with feelings of being faithful in going to church.

#### *Parenting of my children*

- 3.19. The abuse has also affected how I have parented my children. I would not allow them to go anywhere without me and this has hindered their development and friendships.
- 3.20. I have denied my children the closeness of a mother's touch from the age of 8. My eldest daughter pointed out to me one day saying, "Do you know, Mum, you never hug any of us as we got older?" I was shocked and ashamed that the damage I received at the hands of these men affected my ability to love and hold my children.

#### *Self-esteem*

- 3.21. I still suffer psychological abuse that I inflict on myself. I still hate my body and feel it betrays me.
- 3.22. The second abuser, Brother Gordon, impacted me in a very deep way as he introduced the idea that I was ugly and should put rotten tomatoes on my face to cover it. Up until then, I was the darling, being the only girl in the family.



- 3.23. He took away my God-given soul. He also took away any comfort or security I had in my own home. I became frightened of the dark, frightened in my room, something I have carried my whole life. I live frightened in my home; I shower in the dark and will not close the toilet door in fear that someone may trap me.
- 3.24. Having been assaulted by two “men of God” only reinforced in me that I was only good for sexual favours and did not deserve love.

#### *Financial impact*

- 3.25. The abuse has also had long term financial impacts on me. I did own a home back in 2003, however when I was later assaulted as an adult by a priest in Australia, I sold my house in one week undervalue as I just had to get out of that parish. I ran. I have never been able to own a home again.
- 3.26. I have moved 36 times since being in Australia and I have never found a place to call home as NZ was my home, but I didn't feel safe there either. My latest move is to outback Australia, 600 kilometres from my parents, and I live in a granny flat where I don't have to face my family. I have come to face the fact that I cannot hold a relationship with a partner. This comes with a great pain to me as I wanted to be loved and to love my husband.
- 3.27. I now manage my life through my eldest daughter who does most things for me and allows me to have my grandchildren in my life when I need it.

#### **4. REDRESS**

- 4.1. In 2003, then aged 37, I was abused as an adult by a priest, Father GRO-B in confession at the Perth Diocese.
- 4.2. With the assistance of my father, I made a complaint to the Bishop of Western Australia about this and was referred to the Professional Standards Resource Group (PSRG).
- 4.3. The outcome of this was unsatisfactory, and the priest claimed that I'd misinterpreted his intentions. He did write a letter of apology as instructed by his superiors. I don't see how a priest sticking his tongue in my mouth and feeling me up could be misinterpreted.
- 4.4. This abuse as an adult traumatised me and triggered a lot of emotion around the abuse I had previously suffered as a child. I made a complaint to the PSRG regarding what happened to me in New Zealand.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045003 – Complaint to Professional Standards Resource Group 11/9/2003**

4.5. At the time, the Pope had said anyone who has been hurt at the hand of the Church can receive help no questions asked. I had a long discussion with the Professional Standards Board in Perth as to what they could offer to a practising Catholic in the form of healing. They offered counselling which I accepted and began a course of counselling that was paid for by the Marist Brothers in New Zealand. An enquiry was started.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045004 – Letter to counsellor [GRO-B], 16/3/2005**

**Refer exhibit WITN0045005 – Letter to counsellor [GRO-B], 22/8/2005**

*Investigation by the Marist Brothers*

- 4.6. What I did not realise at the time was that my counsellor was reporting back to PSRG about my progress and was acting as a conduit for the Marist Brothers in New Zealand. The counsellor was passing back progress reports about my mental state while the Order was making use of the counsellor to provide information to me about the progression of the investigation. In my opinion, professional boundaries were crossed.
- 4.7. At the time the Marists were investigating Beaumont and Healy, both men were no longer Marist Brothers. When the allegations were put to Michael Beaumont, he denied them. When the allegation was put to Kevin Healy, he denied it and made out that he didn't even remember our family. He said that he'd never abused a child, but if he had then he was really sorry. That was a very odd thing to say.
- 4.8. According to the Marists' report in 2005, which they passed on to my counsellor to convey, the Order felt they could do no more as Mr Beaumont and Mr Healy were now private citizens. There appears to be a section of this report that has been cut out. I wonder if there is a part that has been removed that points to knowledge by the Marist Brothers that Beaumont and Healy were known abusers.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045006 – Marist report by Dunleavy, July 2005**

- 4.9. The Marists paid for one more round of counselling as at the time their counsellor believed I needed more time to process everything that had happened to me. During the counselling I was under the understanding that the “Church”—meaning the Perth Diocese—was funding my counselling. I never knew the Marist Brothers were involved until the very last day of counselling.
- 4.10. At the time, the Church-appointed counsellor in Perth read me details from the Church about their internal investigations. I never got a copy of those details until 2016. I’m not sure why, but I suspected it was so I couldn’t follow up details. I was devastated that the Marist Brothers said the brothers had denied my allegations and that it was nothing to do with them since they were no longer in the Order. I remember the counsellor said, “For what it’s worth, I believe you”. I left never to return as the Church would not fund further counselling, and I carried a lot of anger and shame for many years.

*Engaging a lawyer and the response of the Marist Brothers*

- 4.11. One day years later I was having a coffee by myself in McDonalds when I saw an article on Archbishop Pell on the front page of the newspaper. It mentioned how some members of the Church who assaulted young children were simply moved on to another area and could still abuse children. I was very distressed and rang a lawyer specialising in clergy abuse right there and then.
- 4.12. I flew to Sydney at my own cost and made full statements so my lawyer could challenge the Order’s response back in 2003. I had prayed many times with several priests over the years and I believed this was an answer to those prayers.
- 4.13. The Marist Brothers in New Zealand responded claiming they were using the statute of limitations law and I was not within the timeframe to lay a claim. My lawyer dropped my case and said he was appalled that the Church was using this against me however it was the law. Devastated, I followed my lawyer’s advice and went to the police.

*Complaint to the Police*

4.14. In 2016, I provided a sworn statement to the New Zealand Police. They took my complaint and investigated it, including contacting other victims. Charges were laid against both Mr Beaumont and Mr Healy.

*Claim for compensation from Marist Brothers*

4.15. In 2018 my lawyer again made a claim against the Marist Brothers seeking compensation for my abuse at the hands of the two Brothers. Their lawyer basically said that there was no remedy given that Beaumont and Healy were denying charges. They also pointed out that should Beaumont and Healy be found guilty there would still not be a remedy for me due to:

- a) the Church having no vicarious liability
- b) the statute of limitations, and
- c) the provisions of the Accident Compensation Act.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045007 – Letter from Marist lawyer Robert Burnes to Leonie’s lawyer, 2/5/18**

*Criminal proceedings*

4.16. Mr Beaumont pleaded not guilty and a trial by jury was set. Members of my family were not overly supportive, and I ended up having the prosecutor subpoena them. This included my father, mother, my brother GRO-B-5 who was also assaulted, and my brother GRO-B who testified that I had told him about the assault when I was a child. We all flew to New Zealand for the trial.

4.17. Twelve hours before the trial, Mr Beaumont’s lawyer sought to strike a deal. Initially he sought to plead guilty to touching over clothing. I rejected this, and all offers until it came to accepting sexual assault rather than rape. It was explained to me that the charges were similar in the penalty. I accepted the deal to spare my parents and family from having to go through the trial.

4.18. In 2019, I attended the sentencing hearing to provide my victim impact statement. I learned that it turns out when Mr Beaumont was arrested, he was in possession of a thumb drive that contained sex stories of child trafficking and childhood bestiality.

4.19. The sentencing also incorporated charges laid by two other women. Mr Beaumont was sentenced to 12 months' home detention. His name was put on the Child Sex Offender Register. I am deeply hurt that the sentence was so light.

4.20. Mr Healy took a lot longer to get to trial. At every opportunity his lawyer sought to delay the process and tried to argue that he was too old to stand trial. Eventually they asked for an indication of sentence and on that basis, Kevin Healy pleaded guilty to four charges of indecency between a man and boys aged 12 and 13, and one of indecency with a girl aged under 12.

4.21. In 2020, from my point of view his sentencing was equally as bad with only nine months' home detention imposed, and his name was put on the Child Sex Offender Register.

#### *Settlement offer from the Marist Brothers*

4.22. The Marist Brothers have since contacted me to offer an apology and an offer of an ex-gratia payment of \$5,000. I feel this is a total insult and just creates more trauma. I have not been contacted regarding Mr Healy's guilty plea. I responded to the apology inviting the Marist Brothers to hear my victim impact statement, but they declined.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045008 – Letter of settlement 3/2/20**

**Refer exhibit WITN0045009 – Apology letter from Marist Brothers 27/11/19**

#### *Reflections on the journey to justice*

4.23. The journey I have had to undertake to get justice is unbelievable.

4.24. I carry a very deep anger with the Church refusing to acknowledge the assaults I suffered at the hands of their own. I have not been compensated by the Church for what has happened to me. I was never advised by the Church that these were criminal offences, and I should go to the Police.

4.25. I would like to know if in the subsequent court cases, the Marist Brothers or the Catholic Church contributed to the defence of these men.

4.26. I am very dissatisfied with the response and processes of the Catholic Church. As I have said to them, they have wonderfully written statements and letters of apologies and posters in the church however at a grassroots level they mean nothing to a victim. It has taken a year for the New Zealand Professional

Standards board to return my email when I responded to one of these letters put out in church, asking how they could help me. I explained at that stage I was facing two court hearings and needed support.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045010 – email chain with [GRO-B] at NOPS**

4.27. There was no response from them until the media let me know they had contacted them, and they had responded with doing an independent investigation. I have no details about that, just an email from the Professional Standards Board saying they are waiting for documents from the Marist Brothers. I have offered them my documents, but that offer hasn't been taken up.

**Refer exhibit WITN0045011 – Media release 4/6/20**

4.28. As for the Church's reconciliation process, I believe that was a smokescreen to mitigate any losses or bad publicity for the Church. Again, I feel that this is a directive from our Pope but that at a grassroots level it means nothing.

4.29. When counselling finished in 2003, that was that. I was totally left to face life alone and more devastated than when I started counselling. I'm ashamed of my Church that I held onto and promoted and supported all my life. My brothers and those close to me refused to continue their faith because of the treatment I got. My children all turned their back on the Church, and I was left to it.

4.30. Going through the Church's process has left me angry, frustrated, devastated at a very personal level and left my life in pieces. I have felt many times of ending my life as I have felt too small against the giants of the Church.

4.31. I feel I have been conned into "doing the right thing" by speaking out against abuse only to become another victim of it. There is no support for speaking out. Once again, all lovely quotes on posters and websites but no real help.

*Other issues*

4.32. [GRO-B], [GRO-B] also sexually assaulted a person who is close to me [GRO-B]. I worry for that person because he wants justice but is afraid to seek it having seen how I have been treated.

## 5. LOOKING FORWARD

- 5.1. The Church needs to treat people who report abuse with compassion, understanding and belief, and hold accountable the perpetrators of abuse.
- 5.2. In terms of what I would like to see change, I think any reports of abuse should involve an independent group of people, so a multi-disciplinary group approach is provided, including the Police. A trained professional in child clergy abuse should be involved, as well as a representative from the organisation being accused.

### *Final reflections*

- 5.3. I want the Commissioners to understand that, as a little child, my life was totally engrossed in church, school and home – all under the banner of the Catholic Church. My abusers were a part of that. I went to church and there they were, I went to school and there they were, I went home and there they were. I had no safe place to go. All had been violated.
- 5.4. Now, as a religious organisation, being a Catholic wasn't a group I belonged to like a tennis club. It was a way of life with very strict rules and guidelines that were indoctrinated into me. That culture I had to live by was determined by the very patriarchal structure of the Church and sacraments that we had to go through. It was a very male-dominated culture and fostered a form of fear into a child.
- 5.5. Add into the mix a sexual abuse component and then you have a little child unable to raise the alarm to abuse, you have parents who are unable to raise the alarm to abuse, and you have a system where secrecy is the norm and paedophiles are able to go from parish to parish grooming their young victims without any consequences. The Church simply moved them to another area.
- 5.6. I am devastated at 52 years of age to look at my "little GRO-A Ms K" photos with deep sadness at a life lost at the hands of men she was brought up to believe were from God.
- 5.7. For me, the abuse has carried on my entire life, my foundation was changed forever at the hands of these men and reinforced time and time again by my

Church. Never once did the Church stand up for me. Never once did they believe me. Even now, I am alone with my own thoughts and regrets in life. A tortured soul with nowhere to turn.

- 5.8. When the Church told me after counselling that these brothers of faith denied abusing me, they were effectively saying that I am lying. I am supposed to live with that and carry that shame all because of what? Money, compensation, who knows, but now I have had to go through the court process twice and have had a horrendous time of it all. Yet the Church have not even acknowledged Healy's case and for Beaumont they offered me \$5,000 if I sign appropriate forms. They have stated they are not a wealthy organisation and cannot afford more.
- 5.9. I feel that the Church is not made to open their records, they hide behind the laws that protect them and leave those little children to suffer their entire lives. When that child finally, as in my case, after 18 years of trying to get a conviction succeeds in a guilty plea, the law continues to protect the institutions by having a statute of limitations. That made me feel that by the time I was ten I needed to have prosecuted the Church. Where is the sense in that?
- 5.10. I also feel like what is the point of me going through the legal process, even a civil process, when the law does not allow for any form of compensation?
- 5.11. So in summary, the little GRO-A Ms K who was abused at the age of nine by two paedophiles was not able to stand up for herself back then, and has now gained the courage to come forward and complete the process only to find that after an 18-year fight it was all for nothing. The law has let me down and not supported my brave decision to lance the head off clergy abuse in New Zealand.

### 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-A Ms K**

Dated:

01/Sept/2020