

MEDIA RELEASE

Vatican needs to be open and transparent on sex abuse issues



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CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, has this morning responded to the UN report on child sex abuse by saying the challenge for the Church in Rome is to be open and transparent.

"The challenge for the Church in Rome, as it is here in Australia, is not to become defensive, but to be open and transparent and to do all it can to ensure children are safe in its institutions," Mr Sullivan said.

"This will be a real test for the new commission the Pope has established within the Vatican to respond to clerical sexual abuse in the Church.

"It is little wonder that we see reports like this given the Church's history around the world, particularly in past decades, of remaining silent on child sexual abuse.

"In many places around the world the Church has an appalling history which has often involved putting the Church's reputation ahead of the needs of Victims, covering up crimes and of not believing victims.

"What we are seeing in the Vatican at the moment is a real attempt to address the problems and to ensure the Church is safe for Children.

"But it is going to have to be more than words: it is action that will begin to engage people and hopefully rebuild the eroded trust in the Church," Mr Sullivan said.

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>