

MEDIA RELEASE

Vatican announces members of child abuse Commission



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CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan has welcomed the announcement of members of the Vatican's Child abuse Commission which includes a female survivor of child sexual abuse within the Church and three other lay women.

"This is a major step forward in the Vatican's fight to stamp out sexual abuse within the Catholic Church," Mr Sullivan said.

"The appointment of four lay women out of the eight members announced so far should bring a fresh approach to a high-powered Commission such as this which is usually dominated by male Clergy.

Mr Sullivan said he met with one of the members of the Commission, Sheila Hollins, in Canberra last year.

"If Ms Hollins is any indication of the quality and dedication of the other members then this new Commission has the potential to have a major influence over the way in which the Vatican approaches child sex abuse issues in the future."

The eight members announced on Saturday include Marie Collins, an Irish abuse survivor and outspoken campaigner for the rights of victims. Others include:

- The Archbishop of Boston, Sean Patrick O'Malley, a vocal spokesman for US victims
- Psychiatrist Catherine Bonnet, from France
- Sheila Hollins, mental health specialist and Chair of the Board of Science of the British Medical Association
- Politician Hanna Suchocka, the former Polish Prime Minister, Attorney General and ambassador to the Holy See for more than 10 years
- Italian lawyer Claudio Papale, a canon law expert
- the Argentine Jesuit theologian Fr Humberto Miguel Yanez
- Father Hans Zollner, a German Jesuit psychologist and psychotherapist

A statement released by the Vatican said the main objective of these people will be to prepare the statutes of the Commission and to define its powers and duties. More members of the Commission from other parts of the world will be appointed later, according to the statement.

The new commission was first announced in December last year on the advice of a group of eight cardinals from around the world, including Cardinal Pell. It will advise the Pope on reforms to the church's central bureaucracy, the Curia.

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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/>

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