

UPDATE 30

Royal Commission Christian Brothers Case Perth



29 April 2014

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse continued in Perth today with the Commission hearing from a further five former child residents of four schools and orphanages run by the Christian Brothers in Western Australia.

The first witness to give evidence this morning was Clifford Walsh who was born in England and was placed in an orphanage at age two.

At age 10, he was brought to Australia and then to the Christian Brothers farm school at Bindoon. Mr Walsh gave evidence that not long after his arrival at the school he started being abused by a number of Brothers.

Mr Walsh told the Commission he tried to report the abuse but became afraid and later denied that it occurred when he was angrily questioned.

Following the conclusion of Mr Walsh's evidence the Commission heard from VG, a child migrant from Malta.

After his father passed away when he was a child his mother was encouraged by a parish priest to send him to Australia to be educated.

Upon his arrival at the Tardun farm school, VG was not provided with the education promised, but instead was put to work on a farm. He gave evidence that the physical abuse started immediately.

VG gave evidence about the fear and violence at the school and about a particularly violent physical and sexual assault which left him in hospital for a number of days. He spoke of having reported the abuse to a nurse at the hospital but upon his return to Tardun being beaten again.

VG wrote many letters to his mother in Malta but he discovered she had received none.

VG also 'confessed' the abuse on two occasions. On the first occasion, he was accused of lying and received another beating. On the second occasion, he was told he had a dirty mind and that he must do penance for his purification.

The Commission also heard evidence from VV who was born in England and was placed in care at the age of four. When he was nine, he was brought to Australia and Bindoon. He was the youngest child at the Institution.

VV gave evidence that he was anally raped by a Brother after being at Bindoon for only about two weeks. After the assault, he told another Brother of the rape who then also tried to indecently assault him.

VV gave evidence that he was sexually assaulted by four Brothers, older boys and also by a regular visitor to Bindoon who would take boys out on 'picnics' arranged by a Brother.

After the age of 11 he received no further education in Bindoon.

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VV said his treatment at Bindoon had profoundly and permanently affected him and the children who had been used, abused and discarded by the brothers. He said his life would have been completely different if not for his experiences at Bindoon.

VV gave evidence about his experiences with *Towards Healing* and other reparation process he had been part of over the years.

After the lunch break Raphael Ellul a child migrant from Malta gave evidence. Mr Ellul was one of 18 children.

The family home was not large enough and from age 4 until he was ten he lived in a children's home in Malta seeing his family from time to time.

He was then sent to Australia at age 10, where he was placed at Castledare for six weeks, before going to Tardun until he was 16.

Mr Ellul gave evidence that that he was physically and sexually abused at Tardun.

“What happened to me was I lost my country, I lost my language, I lost my culture, I lost my family, and I lost any chance of a decent career,” Mr Ellul told the Commission.

The final witness to give evidence to the Royal Commission today was VI who was born in Australia and was placed at Castledare at the age of seven.

VI gave evidence of having witnessed severe physical abuse of other boys (including his older brother) while at Castledare and of the abuse he also suffered.

VI said at Castledare he never felt safe and that there was always the threat of being sexually abused.

VI was at the school for four years before being moved to Clontaff where he continued to be physically abused.

He said that his experience at Clontaff and Castledare “made me think and act differently from other children. I had great difficulty speaking to anyone.”

“I have always felt isolated. I spent so much time trying to be invisible when I was young...”

The hearing will continue tomorrow.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au
For information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>

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