

UPDATE 49

Royal Commission Marist Brothers

Sydney



Tuesday 1 July 2014 – Day 10

Day ten of the Royal Commission hearing into the Marist Brothers' response to child sexual abuse perpetrated by two teaching brothers from the early 1960s through to the late 1980s continued in Sydney today.

The hearing commenced with evidence from former Marist **Brother Gregory Sutton**, who was convicted in the late 1990s of 67 counts of child sexual abuse committed in the 1970s and 80s.

Sutton served 12 years imprisonment for the crimes and was released in April 2008.

Sutton gave evidence that in August 1989 he was told by Br Turton that there was a police investigation into Sutton's activities at St Thomas More Primary School in Campbelltown, and that he was sent to Canada for psychological treatment shortly afterwards.

Sutton also said that he had been advised by Br Turton in 1992, after he had left the Marist Brothers, that warrants had been issued by NSW Police for his arrest. Sutton said that when he asked what he should do about the warrants, he was told to stay in the USA and 'live his life'.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council and the Marist Brothers have reserved their position in relation to further questioning of Sutton when the hearing resumes.

Br Jeffrey Crowe then continued giving evidence.

Br Crowe was asked about the Marist Brothers' handling of the claims made in relation to abuse perpetrated by Kostka Chute at Marist College Canberra. Br Crowe told the Commission 48 complainants had made claims against Chute, and that more than \$6.8 million in compensation had been paid.

Br Crowe was asked for his opinion about the reasons that Chute was able to offend over such a long period of time. His thoughts were that trust had been placed in Chute by the Marist Brothers because he was a brother, and it was unusual for one brother to have suspicions of another brother. He went on to say that Kostka Chute was a master of secrecy, who failed to acknowledge the sexual assaults he had committed. Br Crowe also gave evidence that in his view there was a degree of ignorance during earlier decades and apparent systemic failures in respect of child protection measures in those periods.

Br Crowe acknowledged there had also been poor handling of some complaints received in respect of Chute from parents in the 1950s and 1960s. He said this was 'disastrous, they weren't very effectively dealt with at all'.

Br Crowe said the Marist Brothers' advisory group is currently 'looking at and learning' from the experience of victims who had been through civil processes and *Towards Healing* and what changes in approach the Marist Brothers could take.

Br Crowe also said the Marist Professional Standards Office is developing a process for people to revisit past settlements. He said that 'We are always open... to people coming back to us who are dissatisfied, and certainly if they believe that... either in the *Towards Healing* process or in the civil litigation process, if they feel that the amount was inadequate, unfair or that the proceedings were at fault.'

The hearing has been adjourned to enable the Royal Commission to make some further inquiries. A date will be set for the hearing to resume once those inquiries are complete.

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