

Interview extract

Archbishop Fisher talks about the child abuse Royal Commission and the Catholic Church's response



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In a [wide ranging interview with Crux](#), the Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, discusses the Church's response to sexual abuse scandals, the impact of World Youth Day, the missionary opportunities being created under Pope Francis, and more.

To follow is an extract from the interview with [Christopher White](#) in which the Archbishop talks about the child abuse Royal Commission and the response of the Catholic Church.

Reporter: Australia's Royal Commission is looking into institutional responses to sexual abuse. How do you think the Church will fare in comparison to other institutions?

AB Fisher: I think the Catholic Church will probably be the most criticized of all institutions in our country in this matter. I'm not sure whether history will judge that we have been the worst offender, but we're certainly the first to have been forced to face this head on and we are deeply ashamed and humiliated by what has been revealed by the behavior of some of our clergy and religious and by the failures of some of our Church leaders.

I think the fact that the spotlight has been turned first on us has forced us to try to deal with the fallout for victims, helping them in every way that we can to help them achieve justice and some measure of healing. We're the first to have to look at what sort of systems we can put in place for the discernment of vocations and the support of people in the priesthood and religious life and Church workers in the future, and putting much better child protection protocols in place right across our institutions.

In all sorts of ways, we've had to face this first, which means we have not had templates from anywhere else to guide us. We've made mistakes, sometimes terrible mistakes. I hope that that experience will mean that others can learn from us as they face the same sort of questions, and that if we've been through the humiliation of this first, we might come through the other end a better Church.

It may be a humbled and ashamed Church in many ways, but I hope a more compassionate and more respectful Church—a Church where people will really feel safe having their children and young people involved with into the future.

I think the Royal Commission will have some very hard things to say to the Church. We need to hear them with open ears and open hearts. We need to learn what we can from this external scrutiny, and to make the necessary reforms so that we are the best Church we can be for the people in Australia.

Read the full article on the Cruxnow website:

<https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2016/07/16/aussie-bishop-asks-missing-opportunity-francis/>

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