



## **MACSAS PRESS RELEASE 10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

### **EMBARGOED PRESS RELEASE**

#### **MACSAS end 'Exploratory Talks' with the Catholic Church**

MACSAS has for the last year been taking part in 'exploratory talks' with other survivor support groups, convened by the Catholic Church in England & Wales to determine how they could respond better to victims of abuse within the Catholic Church. The talks are now proceeding to the formation of a 'working group'.

At the next meeting on Tuesday 11th October MACSAS will withdraw from these 'exploratory talks'. We do so following growing concerns and anger over the manner in which the talks have been conducted, the lack of any coherent purpose, aims or objectives, the manipulation of these talks in the media by the Catholic Church, and the failure of the Catholic church to acknowledge the duty owed to the many thousands of victims of abuse perpetrated within the Catholic Church and its religious institutions in England and Wales.

MACSAS, as the only clergy abuse survivors' group in this country, cannot be part of any working group within the Catholic Church which has failed to hear and respond to the voice of our members and those we support.

At all times we have pressed for foundational principles which should underpin our working relationship with the Church: (a) acknowledgement of clergy and religious abuse victims as the primary responsibility of the Church (b) acknowledgment of the role the Catholic Church played in the harm caused to victims (c) a realistic budget for any proposed response to victims, pastoral or otherwise (d) a fair, proper and transparent complaints process to enable resolution of cases reported by victims, and (e) for victims to receive Justice. None of these foundational principles have been accepted by the Catholic Church therefore we can no longer be part of

these talks or any future working group that comes from them.

The terms of references for the proposed working group include the mission to *'reconcile victims to the Church'*. This is a denial of the need for the Church to take action to be reconciled to the victims through acknowledgement of the harms caused, Justice and reparation. The denial of the Church's responsibility is clear throughout these terms of reference. Other terms are aimed at silencing dissent and the voice of the thousands of victims of clergy and religious abuse still seeking justice and redress decades after they first reported abuse to Church authorities.

MACSAS has over the years engaged with the Catholic Church in countless meetings, working parties, conferences and submissions to the Nolan and Cumberlege commissions. However the Catholic Church has still not put in place any pastoral response for victims. We first requested this in dialogue with Bishop Budd's working party in 1993, it was subsequently recommended in both the Nolan and Cumberlege reports.

**The content of this press release is embargoed until 1pm on Tuesday 11th October 2011.**

All documents produced for the talks by the Catholic Church and MACSAS are available to download from our website or alternatively email MACSAS and we can send the documents to you.

For further enquiries or comments please contact

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**MACSAS - Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors**, is a group run by clergy survivors for clergy abuse survivors, abused either as children or as adults.

MACSAS is the only group in the country founded to support clergy abuse survivors, seek justice for them, to call for accountability of Churches for sexual abuse perpetrated and to speak out for those who are rejected, harmed and vilified by Church leaderships when victims report their abuse. We also critique and watch policies & procedures written by Christian Churches as it relates to child protection, adult protection and pastoral care services.