

**Speech made by Ven.Dr William Jacob, Archdeacon Charing Cross at Margaret Kennedy's Service of Remembrance and Proclamation**  
*Saturday 26th November 2011 at St Giles-in-the-Fields*

In the Church, where we witness God's love for humankind and celebrate the teaching of Jesus to love our neighbours as ourselves, abusive relationships are wholly wrong.

We are gathered together here at St Giles for those who have suffered sexual exploitation, abuse and rape from the very people they should have been able to rely on for spiritual guidance and support. Whilst we can be under no illusions that today will ease the suffering of those present, I hope we can at least serve to recognise the ordeal that Dr Margaret Kennedy and others have endured.

I first met Margaret in February this year, and I was shocked to learn about the sexual assaults she had suffered. Whilst the events may have happened twenty-eight years ago, Margaret's traumatic retelling of her experiences demonstrated the extent to which they are still remembered in her life even today. What happened to Margaret is indefensible and contrary to what the Church and Christian faith stand for.

Much of Margaret's adult life has been spent in seeking acknowledgment and justice for what happened to her. Fighting for that recognition will, I am sure, have added an additional layer of pain and suffering. I hope that now the Church has been able to provide some support and assistance, although clearly that can never remove the feelings nor replace the energy she has spent in addressing these issues.

In recent years the Church has taken steps to root out the evil of sexual abuse of children by clergy and to ensure swift and decisive action is taken to deal with those members of the Clergy who have abused children. However, we still have some way to go in tackling the sexual exploitation of adults by clergy by implementing the good practice recommended in the House of Bishops' Promoting a safe church: Policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England. This will ensure that pastoral care is characterised by a clear policy, based on Christian ethical standards, and establishing appropriate boundaries and professionalism and procedures for dealing, without delay, with allegations of mistreatment, spiritual, physical, emotional, financial and sexual, abuse, harassment and bullying.

Margaret deserves great credit for the work she has done to support those who have suffered similarly traumatic experiences to herself. The organisation she founded in 1993 - MACSAS- has worked tirelessly to provide information and guidance, a helpline, conferences, website, educational material to victims of clergy sexual abuse, whether they have been abused as children or as adults, and for both those who have remained within their Christian communities and for those who have left.

I pray that Margaret's own faith will grow and that this service will go some way to acknowledge the truth of her experience and the courage of her journey for justice.

**Ven.Dr William Jacob**  
**Archdeacon Charing Cross**