

# Anglophone Conference

## Concluding Remarks- John Morgan

All of us were renewed by the quality and depth of the contributions we have listened to during this week in our grappling with the scandal of sexual abuse in the Church.

From the beginning our opening two keynote talks set that tone of quality, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's reminder to us that "What happened should never have happened in the Church of Jesus Christ" and that any comforting statistics have to be put to one side, that we must think in a different light. "The entire Church is called to put itself right in its relations with the Kingdom and with Jesus Christ", that healing is not just a question for counsellors- "It's a theological and ecclesiological necessity". And Archbishop Goic's reminder that the historic contribution the Church in Chile has made in connection with human rights enables the Chilean Church to take on the challenge of social reparation and that challenge includes using the human rights format to further healing and reparation for those who have suffered.

On Tuesday this healing theme was reinforced by Dr. Melissa Darmody's very comprehensive description of her 'Towards healing' counselling and support services and the facilitated listening process, the hallmark of the Restorative Justice route in seeking to achieve effective reparation.

Fr. Hans Zollner's most helpful contribution on that afternoon pointed out the serious lack of theological reflection on the whole subject we are engaged in – what is God telling us through this? Where are we in salvation history? As Christians we need to reflect why we live what we live – in effect there was a re-echo of Pope Benedict's letter to the Catholics of Ireland and the call to renewal and the striving for holiness and what that is.

On Wednesday we engaged with Monsignors Bob Oliver and John Kennedy from CDF and we thank them for their contributions. Monsignor Bob rightly elevated to a paramountcy principle the healing of victims of abuse, emphasising the damage caused by those who do not listen to victims and, in relation to perpetrators, the grounds for addressing our response to them in the need for a team approach.

Wednesday's proceedings were notable also for the visit of Fr. Hank Lemoncilli from the Office for Consecrated Life. I believe we all recognised the gaps that exist in developing the ideal of a consistent 'One Church' approach to the problems we deal with day to day, the recognition that a 'joined up thinking' regime must be sought. This points to one of the roles the *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* might undertake.

We were also very grateful to Adrian Child on Wednesday for taking the conference through the Preliminary Enquiry Protocol as utilised in the Church in England and Wales where internal considerations of risk are required on foot of circumstances of concern regarding conduct with children and vulnerable adults.

Yesterday, Thursday, we all added to our store of knowledge in working with and supporting perpetrators of abuse – Sr. Colette Stevenson's inimitable goodness shining through in telling us of the journey she has travelled in supporting "her 10 men". Then followed Fr. Hugh

Lagan's endorsement of Colette's approach and his warning on the over-reliance on protection structures for child safeguarding, with his plea for a culture of vigilance and not a culture of paranoia. Fr. Hugh, we all stand in your debt for your description of the need for transformational listening to survivors of abuse that forgiveness is a process and not an event, that healing is a life-long journey and not a point of destination.

Can I also mention and thank Fr. John Pavlik when speaking to us in St. John Lateran for his powerful reminder that there is a prophetic dimension to the role entrusted to each and every one of us here in being called to serve in the work the Lord has asked us to participate with him in.

And so to today and our sharing with two of the members of the *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors*, Marie Collins and Fr. Hans Zollner accompanied by Monsignor Bob Oliver – we thank them and pray God's grace on all their actions in this crucial work for the Universal Church.

Finally, on behalf of each and every one of us it is my most pleasant task to thank Monsignor Ciarán O'Carroll, Rector here at the Irish College and through him all here at the College for the warmth of their welcome to us, the warmth of their help and support to us – no item of service was too much for them and also for the quality of the food with which they sustained us. As a small token, on behalf of all of us, we would like to present you with a memento- a sculpted work in the form of Irish bog oak of some 3-5 thousand years old, aptly entitled "The Missionary".