

Conversation with **RC-A9** on Friday 12th February 2010

He is appalled by the report with regard to the issue of child protection. There is a reference to a serious incident in the monastic community. The former head of junior school was jailed for eight years after thirty-five years of systematic abuse. He was arrested twice in the 1970s and went on to become head, and after allegations were further made in 2006 he was promoted to bursar. In 2006 abbey lost a civil action by a former pupil who had been abused and had to pay up over £46000 in damages and the charity commission insisted that there be restrictions on Father David but by the time they were in place he had again been arrested. Last August Father David pleaded guilty to a range of offences covering the period 1992–2007 and on 2nd October he was sentenced to eight years imprisonment. We knew about this 30 years ago and no-one seemed to care. He emailed the abbot about his concerns before Christmas and he did not even reply. He promised an independent review but he doesn't think one has taken place. They take your money and leave you on your own. A boy complained in public in 1978 and was subsequently expelled for having a crew cut. Father David Pearce is his name. He has been in hosts of newspapers. He was not the only one. John Maystree, maths teacher was jailed around 2005 for offences which went back to the 1970s. Father **RC-F41** was charged but acquitted in the last two years. There is another monk he will not name at this stage for reasons of libel who is currently widely believed by his contemporaries from the 1970s to be involved. He finds it absolutely scandalous because people still involved in the school chose to look the other way. He told me an anecdote from his time at school when on CCF camp a lad turned to his companion and asked where the queer priest was at night and father Paul called out that he was there. He thinks people doing the inspection have had the wool pulled over their eyes. There has for many years been a culture of concealment. The abbot's promise of an independent review could have led to some answers about what happened when and this doesn't seem to have happened. The abbot's failure to respond to him makes him think he doesn't care. He would like us to go back and ask some more questions, especially about child protection. After the charity commission report the abbot announced that certain restrictions had been placed on him to protect him from false allegations. Now he is saying that if Father Pearce had been expelled from the community then he would not be under their eye and might cause trouble elsewhere. The local MP Andy Slaughter when he read the charity commission report said it was the most damaging he had ever read. He wrote a piece in the Ealing gazette about it recently. He is not implying that the inspectors should have known, he realises that they were probably lied to. I said that our own role in this might be limited, but that I would want to ensure that this matter was discussed fully with the Chief Inspector and with my opposite number at DCSF which he agreed to. He wants a proper independent review and a re-visit by us. He said he realised that this might be in our power. He finds it amazing that the abbot who shared the accommodation with these men for decades didn't know and therefore finds the points in our report about governance very upsetting. He thanked me for my listening to him and said he would be in touch by email.

Durell Barnes Friday 12th February 2010