

impressions I received from the meeting. It seems that your curiosity hasn't extended that far. Do you not feel that lack of imagination is extraordinary in the person of someone who has a specific responsibility for the care of souls?

It is actions to reach out to the victims which I look for from you above anything else. That to me involves the following.

1. A review of the past to discover as far as possible the scope of the abuse, in terms of severity of abuse, the number of perpetrators, the number of victims, and the overall duration as far as reasonably can be established. Because of problems of perception regarding Catholic cover-ups, it would be best if that review were carried out by a team of experts from a secular institution, so that you are seen not to be hiding from the truth, whatever it might turn out to contain. Unless you are prepared to discover and face the whole of that truth, you aren't in a position really to know the full extent of what you should be apologising for.
2. A public apology to all victims known and unknown, that does not seek to minimize (by the use of euphemisms or in any other way) the harm done by Fr Pearce, and the failure by you, the Abbey and the Church as a whole to prevent it or to provide adequate support for victims up to now. The apology needs to be disseminated by all means that can reasonably be used to reach victims both inside and outside the parish.
3. Tangible actions to try as far as possible to prevent any repetition of such crimes, to safeguard (and been seen to safeguard) the children in the care of the Abbey and its schools, and to provide support to any and all victims who may come forward. Given that your existing internally mandated procedures have repeatedly failed despite being repeatedly updated in the light of experience, obtaining and acting on external advice on safeguarding appears to me to be an essential part of this.

I accept that you cannot say much more in public until October 2nd, and that the timing of a public apology is determined by that event.

But on the evidence so far available to me, it seems that you haven't really even started yet on item #1, though you have known about Fr Pearce's criminal activities for 15 years, and there is no need to wait for your public statement for this.

And it also seems to me that a start on actions to provide support to victims and to request external advice on safeguarding do not need to wait until October 2nd. In fact, any apology you give on that date will have much more force if it is accompanied by statements about actions you have undertaken to put things right in these various ways. So if you are going to be able to say anything about such actions, you do rather need to make a start now.

I think it is fair to say that the head of any \*secular\* institution which had suffered a comparable failure to protect the children in its care would have resigned or have been required to resign long ago. No school governor of any secular school could possibly survive a discovery that sexual assaults had been carried out by a teacher on pupils, that he had known about it for 15 years, and had nonetheless maintained a public denial even to the point of contesting a civil