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RC-A593

DPA

07/12/10

Dear Father Abbot,

I have wrestled long and hard before writing this letter and have concluded that the only and best way to overcome it is to go through it.

I write, of course, about the sexual assaults I suffered at the hands of – literally – the holy Reverend Father David Pearce who now I understand resides at Her Majesty's pleasure. It is small satisfaction, but it is satisfaction. And, more importantly, justice. This pillar of society appointed the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Benedictine Order, to guide, instruct and protect the children in his care. He did a grand job, didn't he? And, as we all know, was not the only pervert employed to educate us.

Don't I sound cynical. That's because I am, and bitter and twisted and totally screwed up thanks to the superior education I received at St. Benedict's.

Let's talk about that 'education'. I was forced to attend his Friday afternoon tea-parties which, with the benefit of hindsight, were meant for grooming, even though I was very scared because he had already molested me. As when I was 14 and had to feign illness for a whole year just to avoid the holy Reverend Father David. (I actually had [DPA] initially but 'stretched it out'.) As when I feigned illness - I am [DPA] so it was plausible - to escape contact and lessons with the holy Reverend Father David.

As when I suffered from agoraphobia because I was too scared to leave my home to go to school to face the holy Reverend Father David. As when I locked myself in the computer room (for which I was given the keys by Mr. Potts), every day after school and hid under desks to avoid him when he was prowling around looking for conquests. As when I had to repeat the whole year I had missed and was again forced to employ avoiding tactics to escape the assaults to which I was subjected in my earlier years at your religious and deeply caring school.

At the age of 17 I tried to commit suicide rather than go to school. I constantly – even to the present day – have horrific nightmares with variations of being chased and trapped with no means of escape.

My Mother, who was divorced, told me that, as a single parent, all she could offer me was a good education as she would never be rich enough to leave me an 'inheritance' as such – her 'legacy' being an education which would provide the means of making my own 'inheritance'. That worked out well too. God knows I didn't get what she paid for.

Of course, she knew nothing of this at the time because I was too scared to tell her, or anyone else for that matter, because I thought no-one, anywhere, would believe me. I only know that she suffered greatly and worried hugely about me, my health, my education, my life. Now I have, no career, few prospects, no faith, no hope, only guilt and fear. You've done an excellent job at St. Benedict's haven't you?

What's a life worth these days, not a proper life, of course, only a ruined life? Who knows? But one thing I do know for sure. I did not get the education that my Mother paid for. It breaks my heart now to see her living on a reduced pension – she had to retire early due to [DPA] her dreams for me shattered and now in the knowledge of what I was subjected to at the school she actually chose to send me.

So, first and foremost, I demand that you repay her every single penny she paid you to educate me. She did not pay for torture. I have no idea how much this amount is, but you do. I was there from 1978 to 1984. You will know the fees current at that time and you will also have records to verify it. Please make your cheque out to: [Mother]

Secondly, I would like to know if there is a class action being taken by any 'old boys' against the holy Reverend Father David or St. Benedict's School that I could join or with whom I could associate myself, or must I go it alone. I would be obliged for any such information in this regard, including any support groups available.

Fortunately it is much easier now that the extra-curricular activities associated with Holy Orders has been so widely exposed.

It gives me no pleasure to write this letter. It actually makes me sick. My only hope is that it will be cathartic and dare I hope – healing – and enable me to get through, not the life I was promised, but the life left to me.

Finally, I apologise to you Father Abbot, if I address this to you in error. I don't know to whom else to address it. If you are not the person to deal with this, please be good enough to pass it to the relevant person/s, bodies, committee concerned with redressing these outrageous wrongs.

If you require details and/or further information, please let me know.

With thanks.

DPA

RC-A593

10th March 2011

Dear **RC-A593**

Once again, please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you. As I am sure you understand we have to treat what you told me with great seriousness and the trustees have been in contact with the solicitors acting in connection with a number of similar cases to take their advice. I can assure you, familiarity with the matter does not make it any easier to deal with.

The Abbey has been shocked by the revelations which have emerged in relation to Fr David. I and everyone here have and will continue to apologise for his behaviour and the consequences for all who have been affected. I do not know what it cost you to write your letter to me, but it was enormously painful to read.

A simple return of school fees is not, as I suspected, something which I am allowed to do, so the best advice I can give is that you seek independent legal advice. A number of other former pupils are pursuing claims, but I know of no class action. Below are the details of some of the solicitors who are currently acting with regard to Fr David and with whom you may wish to make contact.

Diana Hardesty
Bolt Burden Kemp
Providence House
Providence Place
Islington, London N1 0NT
DPA

Tracey Storey
Irwin Mitchell
40 Holborn Viaduct
London EC1N 2PZ
DPA

You have my contact details and I am always happy to meet with you if that would be at all helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

RC-A593

DPA



St Benedict's, Ealing

Trust Office · 54 Eaton Rise · Ealing · London · W5 2ES · Telephone 020 8862 2190

Fax 020 8862 2199 · Email: trustoffice@stbenedicts.org.uk

Bursar Catherine de Cintra BA, ACA

RC-A11

c/o Irwin Mitchell Solicitors
40 Holborn Viaduct
London

20th March 2012

Dear **RC-A11**

Re: Ealing Abbey/St Benedict's School

Following the settlement of your claim I am writing to offer you an apology.

I am deeply sorry that you suffered abuse when you were a pupil at St Benedict's School. Such abusive behaviour was wholly wrong, offends all our values and is indefensible. It should never happen.

I apologise for any decisions taken in the past and any mistakes, failures or lack of knowledge on the part of those who held positions of responsibility. I acknowledge that this matter has caused you distress and suffering and for that I am sorry.

I can however assure you that Ealing Abbey and St Benedict's School's practices now, together with recently introduced statutory procedures, including Criminal Records Bureau checks and much closer collaboration between agencies, make it as certain as possible that such unacceptable behaviour does not occur. Our own procedures are under constant review. I am committed to doing all I can to put in place best practice for the future.

Please also be assured that we are doing, and will do, all in our power to seek to ensure that no-one else suffers as you did. Anyone who suffers abuse by employees or anyone else for whom the Ealing Abbey and St Benedict's School is responsible is assured of prompt and compassionate attention, in conjunction with the police and other statutory authorities.

Yours sincerely

DPA

Abbot Martin Shipperlee OSB

