

# THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## CATHOLIC CHURCH INVESTIGATION

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SUPPLEMENTAL WITNESS STATEMENT OF

RC-A711

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### Why I left Our Lady of Sion

1. I had questioned my vocation to Religious Life for some time, finding the demands of living in community a challenge. Up until the disclosure of my abuse, and the subsequent psychotherapy I received, I was probably not in a strong enough frame of mind to make any big changes in my life. Once I began to make a recovery, and felt much stronger in myself, the decision to leave Religious Life became easier and I made the transition quite easily.

### Meeting with Cardinal Nichols

2. My meeting with Cardinal Nichols was helpful in terms of the fact that he had, at last, agreed to meet me. I felt, however, that this had only come about because of my going to the press and because of the data I had received from my subject access request which was so disparaging about me. It felt as though the meeting was about damage limitation. The Cardinal wanted to know what he could do to "make things better" for me and suggested writing a letter of apology to me about what had been said about me. One of the main culprits in this was Jeremy Trood. When I suggested an apology from Jeremy Trood would help, the Cardinal said that he would apologise for him. His letter of apology, in some ways, had come too late. The damage had already been done and I felt that he wanted, perhaps, to contain my response/reaction to what I had learnt through the subject access request.
3. During the meeting, the Cardinal tried to explain away some of the difficulties I had encountered in the way I was dealt with, by suggesting that because a Religious Order was also involved in my case, and Westminster had the role of advising them, this had sometimes led to a lack of clarity and lack of communication. This did not really answer my concerns about the legalistic and defensive way in which the Church had dealt with me and why Westminster Safeguarding office always sought legal advice before advising

the Servite Order and consistently ignored any need for a compassionate or a survivor-centred response to issues I raised.

4. I left the meeting wondering whether I would have been invited to meet the Cardinal if I had not been so determined to pursue matters and had not uncovered what I did. It felt as though the meeting was an opportunity for him to smooth muddy waters.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed... **RC-A711** .....

Dated... 4/10/2019 .....