



The Bishop of Chichester
The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner

Name Redacted

DPA

17 September 2015

Jear

Name Redacted

I am writing to express my deep sorrow regarding the matters you wrote about in your email to the Archbishop of Canterbury in April 2013. You reported being abused by the former Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, when you were a very young child visiting the Palace with your aunt. The abuse of children is a criminal act and a devastating betrayal of trust that should never occur in any situation, particularly in the church. No-one should have to live with memories such as these and I am truly sorry that this has been your experience.

I understand that in 1995 you approached Eric Kemp, the Bishop of Chichester at the time, giving a clear and unambiguous account of your memories of being abused. The response you received fell a long way short, not just of what is expected now, but of what we now appreciate you should have had a right to expect then. No-one reading that letter could have been in any doubt that you were referring to serious sexual abuse by a senior figure in the Church of England, and whilst Bishop Bell was long since dead by that time, every effort should have been made to respond to you appropriately. The church, like other institutions across the country, has learnt much in recent years about the importance of responding with compassion and transparency. The fact that your experience in 1995 fell so far short of this only adds to my very deep regret.

TO KNOW · LOVE · FOLLOW JESUS

DPA

The Palace, Chichester, PO19 1PY

DPA

When you wrote to the Archbishop in April 2013, your email was passed to the Diocese of Chichester. I understand that you received support from our safeguarding team, particularly Gemma Wordsworth, and I hope that this has been helpful. I understand that you spoke with Sussex Police at the time, giving a full account to them of your memories of abuse. I recognise that the two years of waiting since then have been very difficult, and that at times you may have felt that people in the Church were hoping that you would go away. Please accept my reassurance that this has not been the case; there were many steps that needed to be taken in order to be able to respond as we have now done. Please let me thank you for your patience whilst this occurred.

Along with my colleagues throughout the church, I am committed to ensuring that the past is handled with honesty and transparency. You have shown great courage in coming forward to report your memories of abuse, particularly given the response you received in 1995. When victims of abuse tell us about what happened to them, it contributes to the on-going work to change the church's culture. Again, I hope that you find it encouraging to know that in reporting your memories of abuse, you have helped reinforce to the church that no-one is 'above suspicion', and that abuse is intolerable and must be rooted out.

Once again, please accept my deepest apologies that you have had to live with these memories. I understand that you have continued contact with Gemma Wordsworth, who will be able to offer you further support if you require.

Yours sincerely,

DPA