

# Stolen lives

Telling the stories that need to be told

Jan - Feb 2022

## Four talks presented by Root and Branch and the Scottish Laity Network

*We are deeply grateful to MACSAS (Ministry and Clerical Sexual Abuse Survivors) and Catholic Survivors for supporting us and guiding our planning. It is immensely humbling that survivors of abuse have put their trust in Root and Branch and Scottish Laity Network.*

*“Our Church is a place of serious crimes, of frightening attacks on the lives and integrity of children and adults. We must recognize and confess it: we have allowed an ecclesial system to develop which—far from bearing life and opening up to spiritual liberty - damages, crushes, tramples on human beings and their most basic rights.”*

*Archbishop De Moulins-Beaufort's second response to the Sauvé report, (The Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE) 2021.*

So many Catholics whose parishes seem untouched by the abuse scandal, find it hard to believe that criminal sexual violence alongside physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse could truly have happened for so long within our Church. It is very hard to face this reality and the consequences of knowing more. We must ask ourselves: how much harder is it for survivors whose lives have been stolen from them to live with the lifelong effects of abuse?

We must ask ourselves, how can people who have suffered so much find the courage to trust us, and to put their faith in us to truly listen? Listening with what St Benedict called ‘the ear of our heart’ is surely the very least that we can offer their often astounding courage and persistence.

We have felt deeply ashamed that our Church has been strongly criticised by investigatory bodies in the UK, Ireland, Europe, North and South America, Australia and the Indian subcontinent. The abuse scandal has damaged us all. There is absolutely no room for complacency or pretending that ‘we didn't know’. We can't dismiss abuse as the actions of a few wicked individuals.

To begin to reform and rebuild our Church we must cut through the veil of silence that characterises both the original abuse and its cover-up. We must understand the damaging consequences of a clerical culture within which power has been abused and exploited. Our journey of discernment, with the help of deeply experienced and knowledgeable guides, will follow four basic steps.



#### **Four stages to our journey of understanding:**

- Recognising the experience and impact of clerical abuse.
  - Asking how does clericalism underpin the abuse of power?
  - Seeing the need for large-scale cultural change and how it can really take root.
  - Moving forward and understanding that we, the People of God, are the change - we can empower ourselves in solidarity with survivors..
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#### **Saturday 15 January 10.00 London time**

##### **Brian Devlin and A711 in conversation with journalist Catherine Deveney**

*Challenging the abuse of power in the Catholic Church - the survivors' perspective.*

Brian Devlin is author of the recently published 'Cardinal Sin: Challenging Power Abuse in the Catholic Church'. He was a priest in Edinburgh, but left the priesthood a year after ordination when his abuser was appointed as his archbishop.

A711 is a survivor of clerical sexual abuse who courageously gave evidence about both her original and her "retraumatizing" experiences to the Independent Investigation Child Sexual Abuse (England & Wales), which described her as "calm and dignified."

A well-respected Scottish journalist and author, Catherine Deveney broke the story of Scottish Cardinal Keith O'Brien's sexual hypocrisy and predatory behaviour.

#### **Thursday 27 January 20.00 London time**

##### **Tom Doyle**

*An overview of abuse and corruption in the Catholic Church and the underpinning causes.*

Tom Doyle, Priest, Canon Lawyer and American Airforce pilot, has over 35 years experience of relentlessly challenging sexual violence and abuse in the Catholic Church. He advised members of the Vatican's 2015 Pontifical Commission which investigated clergy sexual abuse. Tom works tirelessly on behalf of survivors and as an expert witness for them.

Tom will touch on the scale of abuse and crime, its many forms and the root causes, in the context of international and historical perspectives.

#### **Saturday 12 February 10.00 London time**

##### **Francis Sullivan AO**

*Cover-Up Culture in the Church: What Must be Done?*

Francis will highlight the challenges in changing a culture of systemic abuse. He will also identify whole church reform strategies to create strong foundations, a changed system of accountability and structural Church reforms closer to the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Francis Sullivan currently chairs the Mater Group of Hospitals as well as Catholic Social Services in Australia. He previously held a chief executive position with Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council. In 2020, he was honoured for his services to the community as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO).

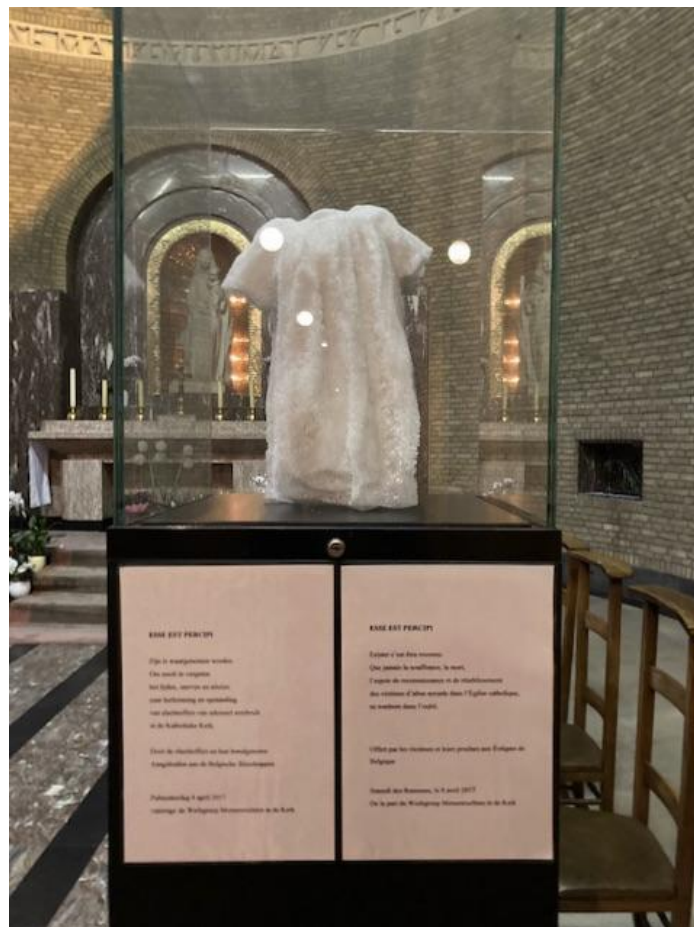
**Thursday 24 February 20.00 London time**

**What can we do?**

*Tom Doyle and Francis Sullivan will join us for an Open Forum - your chance to contribute*

'I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me'. (Matthew 25:40)

This will be a time of sharing amongst ourselves, to reflect on what we've heard and what we know about abuse within the Catholic Church. As the People of God, how will we empower ourselves to insist on and create change? This is a positive, lay-led and forward-looking opportunity to progress that we can take away and share with others.



**Images**

The images 'Esse est Percipi' (to exist is to be recognized), are dedicated to the memory of all victims of sexual abuse committed within the Church. The works were donated by survivors and their relatives. This statue of a child's dress symbolises wounded childhood and fragility and is in the Basilica of Koekelberg, Brussels, Belgium. Statues are also found in Antwerp and Bruges.



### **Root and Branch Forum**

**<https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org>**

Root & Branch is an “all are welcome” forum for change. We believe that we can all contribute and learn. We are working to make the Catholic Church safe, inclusive and welcoming to all. Our thinking has the endorsement of pastorally sensitive and well-informed thinkers and theologians, lay and clerical.

Our work is offered in the spirit of Canon Law 212.3, which states that ‘the Christian faithful... have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful’.

### **Scottish Laity Network      [slaitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:slaitynetwork@gmail.com)**

Our core vision in the Scottish Laity Network is to enable Scottish laity to come together as disciples of Jesus, and through prayer, dialogue and discernment find ‘new ways’ of being Church in Scotland in the 21st Century. Rooted in that vision we seek to reflect on the ‘signs of the times’ as revealed through COVID-19 and the Climate Emergency and, through the promptings of the Spirit, discern how we are called to respond.



### **Please note:**

Both Root & Branch and Scottish Laity Network are voluntary bodies, who have no funding apart from the donations of our supporters. We give freely of our time, but we are grateful for the means to spread the word. We depend on this generosity to fund our online work, Zoom events, websites, social media and recording, editing and outputting.

There is no charge for this event, but if you are moved to support our work, you will find a Donate button at the foot of every page on our R&B website. All donations will go to defray our joint advertising and technical costs. Thank you!