

MEDIA RELEASE

In conversation with Baroness Sheila Hollins, member of the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors



12 April 2016

When it comes to child protection and the issue of child sex abuse in the church, Pope Francis 'gets it' and so does Cardinal O'Malley according to Sheila Hollins who is a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

But she says the Pope probably expects local bishops to take the lead on a response to the scourge.

Speaking with Fr Frank Brennan SJ in Sydney on Monday night, as part of the Living Mercy Today in Society and Church Conversation Series, Baroness Hollins spoke about her role in the lead up to the establishment of the Pontifical Commission in 2014.

She said she agreed to participate on the Commission as long as half the members were women, and victim survivors were represented.

She spoke about the need for realistic expectations about what the Commission can achieve, saying their job is about the future – about prevention, education, guidelines and protocols. It is not about the current crisis.

Baroness Hollins said clericalism is at the core of the problem and women must take a more active role in leadership and decision-making processes in the Church.

She gave some generous insight into the difficulties faced in her family life (her son lives with multiple disabilities and her daughter was brutally attacked in her early twenties) and her views on euthanasia, drawing an analogy between the pain of child birth and the pain of dying.

In addition to her work on the Pontifical Council, Baroness Hollins is a cross bench life peer in the House of Lords, emeritus professor of the psychiatry of learning disability at St George's, London and has served as president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and president of the British Medical Association.

Baroness Hollins will also speak in Melbourne on Wednesday this week and again in Melbourne again on Saturday 16 April 2016. More details are available [here](#).

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>

Truth Justice and Healing Council

PO Box 4593 KINGSTON ACT 2604 | Tel: +61 2 6234 0900 | Fax: +61 2 6234 0999