

It was great to see Bishop Geoffrey Robinson launch his latest book, *For Christ's Sake, End Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church for Good*, in Sydney this week. I have a great deal of respect for Bishop Robinson and I look forward to reading his book to see how it can help in our deliberations in preparing for the Royal Commission.

During his time as a Bishop, Robinson was a leading campaigner for victims of child sex abuse within the Church. He was an advocate; he listened to their stories and developed comprehensive victim response policies. He fought for just outcomes for victims and attempted to truly understand the whole phenomenon of why child sexual abuse was occurring in the Church.

In launching his book this week, Bishop Robinson said the Royal Commission was limited because it would not have the power to fully eradicate the causes of abuse within the Church.

I agree with his sentiments, it would be foolish to assume that the Royal Commission process would be a one-stop shop for all the answers.

We need to look for the answers ourselves, using evidence, expertise and reflection. We need to own our failures and just as importantly own the future of the Church.

Although the findings of the Royal Commission are sure to be very illuminating for the Church its important to look at what changes we can make now, including how we can build on the changes the Church has already been making to protect children.

There is no question the culture of secrecy and covering up in the Catholic Church has been a contributing factor to child sex abuse. To eradicate child sex abuse we must delve within ourselves to discover what needs to be changed in our culture, and in our formation of personnel, and in our insight to professional accountabilities.

The Church must have the honesty to look at itself so that the truth can be revealed. In being honest about itself the Church is keeping true with the social contract it has with the community.

The media coverage throughout this week also reflects the urgency for change within the Church. Victims have finally had the chance to tell their stories and the focus has now shifted to the Church and the action or inaction of the Church leaders. Empathetic responses, full engagement and radical changes, within the Church, are required to prevent sexual abuse from happening – for good.

Francis Sullivan