

MEDIA RELEASE

Pope Francis set to meet survivors of clerical sexual abuse



27 May 2014

CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council has welcomed reports that Pope Francis will meet with survivors of clerical sexual abuse in Rome next month.

The Holy Father will also celebrate Mass with the survivors.

During a press conference yesterday on his return flight from Jerusalem to Rome the Pope declared "zero tolerance" for any member of the clergy who abused a child.

The Pope said he plans to celebrate a Mass with a small group of survivors in the coming weeks and hold a private meeting with them.

CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan said meeting directly with survivors is by far the best way to get a true understanding of the devastation caused by child sexual assault crimes.

"This meeting sends yet another very clear message that sexual abuse within the Church is at the very forefront of the Pope's thinking," Mr Sullivan said.

"Working with his new Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, the Pope is taking real action to address the horror of clerical sexual abuse," Mr Sullivan said.

According to reports, survivors from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Ireland will take part in the meeting in the Domus Santa Marta, the hotel on Vatican grounds where the Pope lives.

The meeting with survivors follows the inaugural meeting of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors earlier this month which called for Bishops to be held accountable if they fail to report suspected sexual abuse or if they fail to protect children from paedophile priests.

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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

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