

# MEDIA RELEASE



## Pope Francis writes to Church leaders calling for full cooperation with Vatican's child protection Commission

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Pope Francis has written to the Catholic world's religious leaders asking for their complete cooperate with the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, set up to protect children from sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

The Pope's letter comes ahead of this weekend's meeting of the Commission, and has been sent to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, said the letter has called on all Church leaders to cooperate with the Commission and ensure all possible steps are taken to protect children and rid the Church of the scourge of sexual abuse of children.

"The message to the leaders of the Catholic Church around the world is that there is now no basis for maintaining the status quo, no turning back," Mr Sullivan said.

"The Pope has set a course to rid the Church of child sexual abuse regardless of the cost and the impact on reputations. It is now time for all Church leaders to get on board."

In the letter, the Pope says everything possible must be done to rid the Church of the scourge of the sexual abuse.

"Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children ... priority must not be given to any other kind of concern, whatever its nature, such as the desire to avoid scandal, since there is absolutely no place in ministry for those who abuse minors."

Part of the task of the Commission, which is made up of 17 clerics and lay people from around the world, including Australia, is to help church leaders put in place "best practices" to prevent abuse and work with victims in a process of healing. Eight members are women and two were sexually abused by clergy.

Read Pope's letter here:

[http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/02/05/pope\\_church\\_must\\_tackle\\_the\\_scurge\\_of\\_child\\_sexual\\_abuse/1121655](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/02/05/pope_church_must_tackle_the_scurge_of_child_sexual_abuse/1121655)

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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](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)

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

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