“The children of priests are the sleeping giant that the Catholic Church prays will never fully awaken. In the Western world, sexual coercion is increasingly being recognised as a criminal offence. Catholic church silencing is an immoral and abusive act of violence. There has been insufficient in-depth investigation into the children of priests and the role that the church and its agents play in controlling us.”

…………………

“Also, it must be said: I am no longer a child. ‘Children of priests’ is a manipulative term propagated by the church and its agents. Yes, we were once children, but every ‘child’ I’ve spoken with is now over forty years of age; our truth is usually hidden until late in life. ‘Children of priests’ justifies others speaking on our behalf, as though we are forever infants, incapable. It is coercive, condescending and paternalistic. As a marginalised and voiceless legion, we have allowed others to do the talking for us for far too long.”

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“In the Western world, sexual coercion is increasingly being recognised as a criminal offence. Church silencing is an immoral and abusive act of violence. While the attention of the international media, restorative justice processes, courts and royal commissions has rightly focused on the abuse by clergy directly upon children, there has been insufficient in-depth investigation into children of priests and the role that the church and its agents play in controlling us.”

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“Aside from the obvious preservation of personal privacy, and church-imposed confidentiality agreements, there are many compelling reasons why the children of priests don’t appear in the media: not wanting to bring shame upon extended family, or their faith, or if their priest father had several children—to multiple women—or if they are the result of rape. It is not easy to speak out publicly.”

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“What troubled me most was the thought that the church might have already muzzled hundreds—possibly thousands—of children of priests worldwide with meagre payments, or worse, ignored their pleas for compassion. Is the church still compelling children of priests, and our mothers, to sign confidentiality agreements? What had be-come of the 2014 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recommendations?”

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“The children of priests issue is a matter for the state, not the church. Just as the police don’t investigate matters of police integrity, and politicians shouldn’t investigate improper acts of other politicians the Catholic Church should not be permitted to engage with or attempt to resolve the coercive, spiritually improper, sinful and/or criminal acts of priests.”

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“For hundreds of years the stifled primal howl of our mothers, abandoned by their spiritual guide, has echoed across oceans. Make no mistake, the children of priests issue is yet another form of Catholic Church abuse of minors—the yet-to-be-born offspring of the ordained.”

…………………

“Sarah’s (the daughter of a priest) post-accident convalescence was life-changing and in time led her to commence a PhD on the phenomenon of Catholic priests’ children. She ‘interviewed many priest children from around the globe—and some of their mothers, and some former priests who’ve also fathered children’.

In total, she made contact with around a hundred children of priests and has formally surveyed a number of them. In an article published by the BBC on 3 January 2018, she shared some early findings: ‘Secrecy always comes up—lots of people talk about being encouraged to lie to keep their fathers a secret. Lack of identity is common, too, and the confidentiality agreements—whether official or verbal—are quite common . . .’

She also described how lack of recognition by the church creates low self-worth and guilt, and cited similarities between the experiences of children who had been sexually abused and those of the children of priests: fifty-six per cent of the survey participants had either attempted suicide or experienced suicidal ideation.

Fifty-six percent; it appalled me.”

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‘TELL NO ONE’ A MEMOIR

By Brendan Watkins

ALLEN & UNWIN

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