



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

APOLOGY TO FORMER CHILD MIGRANTS AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

Apology to Child Migrants

Bishop Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds and Vice Chair of the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission, gave evidence to the panel of IICSA on 18 July 2017 on behalf of the Catholic Council for IICSA. In his written statement, and during his oral evidence, he gave his sincere apology to former child migrants:

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to all of those who were involved in the British Government's migration programmes as children, and express my sincere regret for their suffering as children, including in many cases as a result of child sexual abuse, and the deep wounds which that abuse has left on them as adults. If any former child migrant, not only those who have testified before this Inquiry, would wish to meet with me privately I would welcome the opportunity to do so. I appreciate that some may feel that these apologies and regrets are too little, too late, and for others they may not wish to have anything further to do with the Catholic Church. I would fully respect those views, but I remain open to listening and learning from them.

So far as the Inquiry is concerned, and as the Catholic Council has made clear on a number of occasions, the Catholic Council and the organisations it represents are committed to learning from the past and taking all appropriate steps in the future to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. This will include, of course, learning from the Inquiry's conclusions on the issues identified, including whether the Catholic Church in England and Wales took sufficient care to protect children involved in child migration programmes from sexual abuse.

Bishop Stock's invitation to meet with former child migrants remains open and any person who seeks a personal apology is welcome to contact the General Secretary of the CBCEW at 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX who will facilitate communication between them and Bishop Stock.

/contd.

Access to Records

The CBCEW remains committed to the secure retention of the individual child migrant records collated by the Australian Child Migrant Project for the purposes of providing migrants and their family with information about their background. These records are held by the Catholic Children's Society Westminster.

Where the Catholic agency responsible for migration is known, those concerned should make direct contact with that agency. Otherwise, contact should be made with the Catholic Children's Society Westminster, which can refer you to the agency which may hold your original records or, if no agency can be identified which can assist, otherwise offer you family tracing and associated support services. The Pathways page of CCSW can be found at <https://www.cathchild.org.uk/pathways/>

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas
General Secretary
7th February 2020