

The Royal Commission into the Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse.

The first couple of days of the hearings have focused on some pretty horrendous stories of victims. I was watching the webcast of the hearing today (Wednesday) when one of the victims read a statement, addressing the Marist Brothers.

This victim courageously acknowledged that he was hurting from his experience to such an extent that life was difficult. His courage was that he did not want to hurt any longer. His family – wife and children – were the cause of his road to recovery. He understood that the Marist Brothers Community was also hurting; he accepted that the individual brothers also were hurting. It was in this experience that he called for reconciliation in order that this tragedy could be left behind and both parties could experience life where “hurt” was not the dominant factor. He found that the “Towards Healing” process exacerbated the hurt for both parties and did not leave much leeway for healing to occur.

I found this a most moving experience. With all the erosion of his faith stemming from his abuse, this victim yearned for the time when faith could be regained. He saw the only way forward involved being truthful, being open to forgive and being willing to love.

I think this victim has a lot to teach us, in the Church. And we might have a lot to learn too.