

*If I told you,
What would you do?*



Overwhelmed

When church abuse happens, those it affects feel overcome with emotion, stunned, helpless, powerless, trapped, paralysed, numb, defeated...



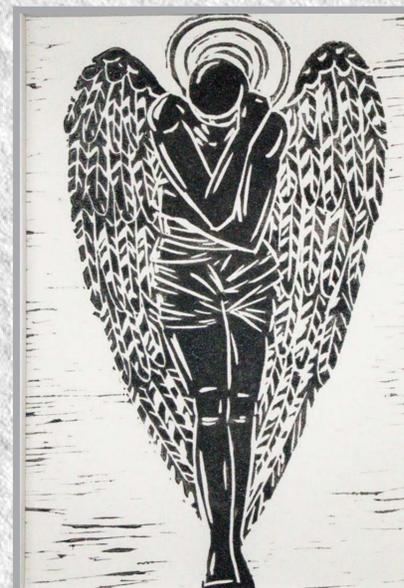
Fear

Church related abuse leaves those affected with fear of that which should be a source of security, safety and sanctuary ... the church, the clergy and those in positions of responsibility in the Church, their faith, even God himself.



Despair

Church related abuse leads creates despair in those affected which isolates them from their connections with others, their sense of purpose, fulfilment, meaningfulness, hope and, their faith in God.



Shame

In church related abuse the perpetrator uses shame to isolate those effected from others they trust from their values, from their faith and, from God. Those affected are made to believe they are responsible for what has happened especially as the perpetrator often holds a role of spiritual power over those affected.

Those affected hold shame which is not theirs to hold but is that which belongs the perpetrator.



Betrayal

Those affected have been and feel betrayed by the individual in a position of trust and power that has committed church related abuse but also by those who disbelieve or reject the abused, those who stand by and do nothing, and those who don't respond or who respond unhelpfully. They also feel and may have been betrayed by the Church itself and by those in power and responsibility within it.

This this can lead to a sense of being betrayed by their faith. This creates an injury on a moral and spiritual level, and isolates them further from sources of help, healing, sanctuary and strength in their time of most need.



Outrage

It is right to be outraged by what has happened. The abused may find it hard to navigate this outrage and may have had their outrage ignored, minimised, silenced or criticised within a spiritual setting. Our own outrage at what has happened validates the experience of the abused. Outrage is the turning point where change happens within those affected and within the Church itself.



Justice

Justice is sought by the abused as an acknowledgement of the truth and validation their experience. In justice the abused is believed and the perpetrator held to account. Importantly, to those abused, justice protects the same abuse happening to others. Through justice restoration can occur.



Trust

In church related abuse those in positions of trust have abused that trust in the most reprehensible of ways. This not only destroys the trust in the perpetrator of the abuse but in themselves, others, the Church and even their faith. The perpetrator was a representative of God and because of that even trust in God is tainted. The restoration of trust is part of the process of healing the wounds of the past.



Dignity

Abuse is the antithesis of dignity and respect. In church related abuse the shame experienced is overwhelming and when this shame is dissolved self-worth and self-respect are restored. Beyond this, being treated with dignity and respect by others protects the individual from further harm from within and without themselves.



Honour

When victims of church related abuse are valued, respected and held in the same esteem by others, the Church and themselves as God does - then their honour can be restored, the moral injury fully healed and their full potential achieved.

