

IT'S OUR CHURCH IT'S UP TO US

Taking action – end clerical power abuse and cover-up

Clerical power abuse, sexual or otherwise has affected us all. We have been betrayed by those in authority whom we have trusted. And what about the trauma of those who have been abused, denied justice, told they were lying and ultimately silenced?

Enough of this cover-up, no more **Deny, Deflect and Delay**. It's our church and we will stand alongside those who have been abused and we will do something about it.

But what can I do?

We may think “well what can I do, the issues are so huge”. YES you can do something, none of us are powerless. Start by listening to survivors talking about their experiences of clerical sexual violence and other forms of power abuse. Nothing will change until we are willing to enter that place of pain alongside survivors.

To help, Root and Branch offers you free, downloadable resources:

www.rootandbranchsynod.org/stolen-lives



No more silence and no more cover-up

But practically, what can I do?



Listen carefully and actively. If someone tells you about abuse, invite them to share their stories and really understand the lifelong impact of clerical violence and abuse. There are many stories told by victims in our learning resource and on websites relating to clerical abuse. The Church has silenced victims. This is retraumatising for them. Everyone wants their story to be heard, to be acknowledged and to be believed. The seeds of what must change and how it must happen are in conversations like these.



Be informed, seek out allies. Challenge the toxic silent cover-up. Don't be a Bystander, be an Upstander. Search out people who may feel as you do. Listen to and share accurate information written by survivors. Use our Stolen Lives learning resource or other reliable sources to find out more. www.rootandbranchsynod.org/stolen-lives



Distribute leaflets and cards. Share survivors stories and the silence, cover-up, and denial they have experienced.



Silent witness. There are many possibilities. Maybe stand with a placard or with a message written on an umbrella, highlighting a particular form of clerical abuse or offering a message of solidarity with survivors.



Direct your financial support. You might want to donate to an organisation that helps those who have been abused. Non-profit support organisations rely on your donations to support survivors and help prevent abuse. Maybe put a note in the collection box explaining what you are doing.



Wear a badge of witness. e.g. 'In solidarity with all those affected by clerical abuse'. Offering badges to others signals active support. Badges can be a conversation starter. Find others who will join you.



Lobbying. We are entitled to know the truth in our Church. Apply pressure to be given truthful information about clerical abuse. Lobby for every cathedral and church to have a healing space, healing candle, sculpture or garden dedicated to victims of clerical sexual abuse. Lobby your priest to include prayers for survivors and to hold liturgies of acknowledgement and repentance. Find out about the LOUDFence initiative for your parish or cathedral.



Show your solidarity with survivors on social media. Tweet and retweet, share on Facebook, Instagram etc. Write to church and other publications, to clergy and bishops, Contact others who might support you. When you read about someone who was abused, make a supportive comment. Victims read the comments and will appreciate support.



Send us your feedback. Tell us about your successes or how your efforts were blocked or unsuccessful. We will share these on our website and let us know if you wish to remain anonymous. Tell us also about how you are finding yourselves changed in the process.