**Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Nationwide, New Zealand (August 16, 2021)**

“*Instances of child sexual abuse by clergy are times to speak up, otherwise Christians will eventually be held to account for failing to do so.”*

*“the continued silence of Catholics would amount to concealment and complicity.”*

**Christopher Longhurst, *Stimulus*, Jul 26, 2021**

New Zealand Catholic Theologian Dr Christopher Longhurst outlines the biblical duty of Catholics to denounce criminal abuse in the Catholic Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand and offers practical ways they can help to do this: *Volume 28 / Issue 1 / 2021, Stimulus - The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice.*

In his article attached (also link below) he articulates for the clergy and faithful key aspects of the culture and systems that failed Catholics and enabled the abuse.

[**\*WHO IS THIS LIGHT OF THE WORLD? Behind the title of Pope Francis's procedural rules managing clerical and religious sexual abuse in the Catholic Church: "Vos Estis Lux Mundi"**](https://hail.to/laidlaw-college/publication/dVgMOTX/article/omXGIoT?fbclid=IwAR3naQzGS3od03FUADa_TD_JSvAyj87CWvgi6zP4L8KgCsDOX90-i2SceD0)

*Christopher Longhurst lectures in theology at Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College of Aotearoa New Zealand. One of his fields of research is the Catholic Church’s institutional ‘crisis’ of clerical child sexual abuse. He has taught at Victoria University of Wellington, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, and Marymount International Institute in Rome, Italy. Chris is also the National Leader of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) in Aotearoa New Zealand.*

**What do the New Zealand Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders Say?**

The duty of Catholics to actively engage with this issue is highlighted in the New Zealand Catholic Church’s protocol for responding to complaints of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in New Zealand: “the Church community must do whatever it can towards healing the hurt and repairing the harm” (A PATH TO HEALING, 2007, I.1); and by **Bishop Stephen Lowe of Hamilton, secretary of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference:** *“The Catholic Church accepts the responsibility to act when abuse occurs in the Church. We will act by listening, learning and supporting those affected by abuse. We will act swiftly on complaints and follow them through. We will hold those to account who have been proven responsible for abuse.”*

[Bishops Media Release**: Catholic bishops welcome Pope’s toughening of Church Canon Law on abuse** 2 Jun 2021 | Safeguarding](https://www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/bishops-welcome-canon-law-changes/)

SNAP recommends that the Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa-New Zealand ask congregational leaders, priests, lay brothers sisters and nuns, chairpersons of diocesan and parish councils, safeguarding administrators, pastoral care workers, and active Catholics to read New Zealand theologian [Christopher Longhurst’s analysis](https://hail.to/laidlaw-college/publication/dVgMOTX/article/omXGIoT?fbclid=IwAR3naQzGS3od03FUADa_TD_JSvAyj87CWvgi6zP4L8KgCsDOX90-i2SceD0) about the duty of all Catholics to speak out against the crimes of sexual violence within the Church.

SNAP asks that Church pastoral authorities distribute this document widely to Catholics to learn how they can assist the Bishops in their mandate to ‘act swiftly on complaints’ and ensure the spiritual wellbeing of the Catholic community of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

For more on this please contact aotearoa-newzealand@snapnetwork.org phone 022 3440496

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International Website: <http://www.snapnetwork.org/>

National Website [Aotearoa-New Zealand - Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (snapnetwork.org)](https://www.snapnetwork.org/aotearoa_new_zealand)