Theological Statement regarding Past Cases Review 2

Bishop Mark Sowerby is the deputy lead bishop for safeguarding and the PCR2 Project Board Chair. He writes as follows:

The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. [John 1.5] St John the Evangelist, like St Luke and St Paul, uses the imagery of light and darkness, where darkness represents concealment and shame, whereas light represents the revelation of truth. Darkness hides things that are forgotten, uncomfortable or broken and have been 'put out of the way' in cellars or behind closed doors. They may be things that are inconvenient or of which we are ashamed or afraid. In darkness they lie where we can forget about them, but Christ is The Light of The World and brings to light things now hidden in darkness. He brings to light those deeds that have been concealed and the victims of sins who have been silenced or kept from view. The Light shines for those who need justice and healing and upon those misdeeds that have injured them.

Allowing light to shine on what has been hidden is a first step towards healing, not only for those who have been abused, but for those whose consciences are, or ought to be, troubled by those sins they have buried away beyond the sight of others. Sometimes it will take an external prompting for those things to be opened to the light of day and to the light of Christ but with such prompting may begin the path to penitence and forgiveness, the path to healing of long-hidden wounds.

Through the Past Cases Review, we are asking you to help shine a revealing light on any instances of abuse that have occurred in your benefice and to help ensure that everything that ought to be brought into the light has been. Shining a light on what has hurt or frightened someone is a matter of justice for those who have been victims; sometimes it may also prevent further harm and sometimes it may be the first step towards healing. With that in mind, we thank you for your cooperation in working towards a safer Church.
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