

# Joint Statement of the Confraternities of Catholic Clergy Defending Inviolability of the Seal of Confession

*Catholic priests & deacons from the USA, Australia, and the UK speak out against government attempts to break confidentiality in the confessional*

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, June 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the priests and deacons of the

American, Australian, and British Confraternities jointly declare our unequivocal support, defense, and adherence to the sacred seal of confession, which the Catholic Church solemnly teaches is inviolable with absolutely no exceptions.

We make this declaration after several recent civil laws have been enacted in various countries that attempt to compel ordained priests to disclose the identity and content of what a penitent has confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Secular authorities have made a non-sequitur argument that maintaining total confidentiality of priest and penitent impedes their prosecution of criminals who have committed heinous crimes like child abuse. Ironically, these same authorities respect and uphold the institutions of attorney/client and doctor/patient privilege.

We maintain that criminal investigation and adjudication can be lawfully and morally done without violating religious liberty. Observing the sacrosanct privacy of a penitent and their confessor does not prevent nor hinder the police and the courts from doing their job.

Since penitents may confess their sins anonymously, it is even more absurd to suggest a priest reveal the identity of the person if no visual contact has been made. Even with face-to-face confessions, however, the priest is bound by doctrine (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1467) and discipline (Code of Canon Law #983, #1388) to keep the content as well as the name of the penitent absolutely secret. If he does not, he incurs automatic excommunication, which can only be lifted by the Roman Pontiff.

The Confraternity of Catholic Clergy maintains that justice can be fully served while equally respecting the free practice of religion. The Human Rights Act of 1998 in the U.K., the First



Amendment of the Constitution of the U.S.A., and Section 116 of Chapter V of the Constitution of Australia all affirm religious liberty.

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