

## Seal of Confession

I hereby offer the following comments to oppose the draft legislation to impose mandatory disclosure upon Priests

Firstly, it is an incredibly contentious attack on a millennial enduring Sacred Seal for minimal to no benefit. A similar order placed upon those close to and aware of intra family abuse, would reap protection to a far greater number of children.

I will leave it others more appropriate to make the liturgical, canonical, legal, and human rights arguments against the planned legislative imposition on earnestly held beliefs and sacred practices.

Instead I will propose that equally, the circumstantial and situational status of Confession clearly makes its own argument that the sanctity of the Confessional should be maintained just as other jurisdictions have their secrets secured by entitled silence or redaction.

Because of the nature of paedophilia, it is most unusual for it to be confessed. However, if it were to be, the penitent must be seeking forgiveness or help.

Therefore, it is far better for the confessor to remain a confidant free to discuss the situation with the penitent and encourage them to self-report. This is a process in which he could offer to assist, and absolution could be conferred in conjunction with a remorseful report.

This is an entirely preferable approach to the complete destruction of trust that mandatory reporting will cause. Breaking the Sacred Seal of Confession will evaporate any likely hood of a confession.

Further, as the confessional is anonymous, the priest is unable to identify the penitent unless they agree to be identified; this will only occur in an environment of trust versus a demand of identity.

Finally, the penitent is confessing to his God; the priest is an earnestly vowed conduit and therefore has no personal jurisdiction over the information he hears. He is no way entitled to break this covenant whatever worldly orders may be made.