



**Marie Collins**

*International clergy sexual abuse survivor supporter and child protection advocate*

Marie Collins is a former member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. She resigned from the Commission in March 2017, citing as the reason her frustration with the resistance to change in some sections of the Vatican curia and their lack of cooperation with the Commission.

She has spoken out for many years on the need for change in the Catholic Church, better protection of children and justice for clergy sexual abuse survivors. She was a victim of this abuse while a patient in a Dublin children's hospital. She suffered for many years with depression, anxiety, panic attacks, and agoraphobia as a result of her abuse. Her abuser was brought to justice in 1997.

Collins helped the Archdiocese of Dublin set up its Child Protection Service in 2003 and also that year became a founding director of the advocacy and counseling support group for abuse survivors called One in Four (Ireland). She was a member of the Lynott Committee (2003/2004), which worked on drafting the Catholic Church's all-Ireland child protection guidelines, "Our Children Our Church."

Along with other survivors, Collins lobbied the Irish government to set up a Dublin Archdiocese commission of investigation to look into the handling of abuse cases in the diocese. The Murphy Commission issued its report in November 2009.

Collins was a founding member of the Irish depression support group "Aware" and set up and worked on their voluntary helpline phone service for many years. She was involved with other survivors in the preparation of the Liturgy of Lament and Repentance for Clerical and Religious Sexual Abuse, which was held in St. Mary's Pro Cathedral in Dublin on Feb. 20, 2011, in the presence of Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin and Cardinal Sean O'Malley, archbishop of Boston.

In 2012 Collins gave her name to a new charity in Britain, The Marie Collins Foundation, and is now its patron. The charity helps those abused or exploited via the internet, mobile phone and such devices.

She has contributed chapters to the books *The Dublin/Murphy Report: A Watershed for Irish Catholicism* and *Dark Night of the Catholic Church: Examining the child sexual abuse scandal*.

She was invited to speak about her experience as a victim of sexual abuse by a priest before Catholic Church leaders from around the world at the Vatican-sponsored symposium on child sexual abuse "Toward Healing," held at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in February 2012. Collins spoke at the 2015 national assembly of Voice of the Faithful in Hartford, Connecticut, about the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. In September 2016 and 2017, Collins gave talks on abuse and its effects to new bishops from around the world during their training events in Rome.