

## MPS 616 International Relations and Conflict Management

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Forgiveness and reconciliation in the face of guilt.

The work of the Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association (FRCJIA) as a role model for the Catholic Church to deal with its guilt and win back the trust of the people through reconciliation and forgiveness.

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The structure of the Catholic Church has made possible or at least not prevented the abuse of people whom the Church should serve and protect. Guilt and failure of the Catholic Church in prevention, dealing with perpetrators, compensation for victims, and consequences have dominated the discussion inside and outside the Church for years. The victims were physically and psychologically severely injured and traumatized. The revelation of the scandal and its global scope has traumatized victims again. The trust in the institution of the Catholic Church is massively disrupted as a result. Forgiveness and reconciliation can, after an internal and external legal review, be a way of regaining healing and trust. The Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association (FRCJIA) will be reviewed in their work to promote best practices and impulses for forgiveness and reconciliation after global crises on a local level.

There is a crisis going on for years caused by the sexual abuse of clerics and religious. The lack of ability and willingness of the Catholic Church to investigate and the often inadequate punishment of perpetrators have led to anger, disgust, repulsion, fury, distrust, disappointment, and a mass exodus of believers from the Church. This essay is not intended to answer the question of the appropriate punishment of perpetrators. It is to show that after a penalty, a further step is necessary. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not only elementary components of the Christian faith but also offer the possibility of a new beginning, healing, and a restoration of trust in an institution (Pope & Geske, 2019).

In the consciousness of Christians, the opinion prevails that it is inappropriate or forbidden to feel anger and rage, for the commandment of charity. Out of these feelings, victims of sexual abuse have the impression that they will be made victims a second time because they are suffering and cannot or should not adequately express their helplessness in their feelings of anger and rage (Pope & Geske, 2019).

The impression of being made a victim once again was reinforced by the Catholic Church's unwillingness to clear up, punish the perpetrators, admit one's own guilt and ask for forgiveness for the victims of sexual violence (Kellenbach, 2019). Pope Francis showed an understanding of the anger of so many victims and believers. He asked for forgiveness for the failure of the Church and called the abuse a sin and a crime (Francis, 2018). This allowed the victims to admit their anger and express it. The question for the future is how those affected should deal with this anger. For a process of healing, it is inevitable to be able to call the injustice suffered as such and to allow the feelings of anger and rage to pass without proving them with a moral verdict that in the doctrine of the institution is proclaimed who is guilty (Chan & Scott-Ladd, 2014; Gavrielides & Coker, 2005).