

**Submission
No 390**

**INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS
CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011**

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**Submission to the Inquiry into the
Education Amendment (Ethics Classes Repeal) Bill 2011**

By the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 of the Legislative Council

I strongly support Ethics classes in public schools. I consider that Ethics classes are a fantastic alternative to non-scripture classes where children are prevented from doing something worthwhile, such as receiving English or Mathematics tutoring, even if they want to.

The fact that this Inquiry will assess Ethics classes but will not do the same to Special Religious Education reveals the intentions of Mr Fred Nile: he is searching for faults in the Ethics classes program while shielding Special Religious Education from scrutiny. Obviously Mr Nile has the belief that god and religion are of the utmost importance and the main tool to separate right from wrong.

However, contrary to that belief, I found evidence that one organisation that arranges scripture classes in New South Wales seems to have difficulty applying ethics. I quote from the New York Times:

“In 1998, eight Legionaries seminarians filed a complaint with the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The pope, who was then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the head of the body, quashed an investigation in 1999, according to accounts from a Mexican bishop who tried to press the case with him. In 2004, a few months before John Paul died, the future pope reopened the investigation. It eventually found that Father Maciel had abused seminarians, fathered several children and misappropriated funds. In 2006, Benedict removed him from priestly duties and restricted him to a life of prayer and penance — a punishment that his victims say was not commensurate to his crimes. He died two years later, still a priest.”

You can read the entire article here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/world/europe/02legion.html?pagewanted=1>

If true, it means the Catholic Church appears to have problems applying ethics when deciding whether or not to cover up child sexual crimes at the highest levels of the organisation, including the Vatican Head of State, while telling politicians and journalists around the world that the Catholic Church takes child sexual crimes allegations very seriously.

I sent an email to the NSW Premier about this issue however he chose to ignore it. I have been sending emails to the NSW Education Minister however so far he is refusing to investigate. Their handling of this issue tells you how they apply ethics when deciding whether or not to investigate an organisation where the leader and top officials appear to have personally covered up sexual crimes against children by not referring to police Father Maciel for two years even though multiple child sexual crimes allegations were known to Vatican authorities.

As a result, I request the NSW Government to set up an Inquiry to investigate the following:

- 1) When did the NSW Government and particularly the NSW Education Department become aware of the cover up of child sexual crimes by the Vatican's leader and top officials?
- 2) What did the NSW Government and particularly the NSW Education Department do about it at the time?
- 3) Why is such organisation allowed to enter NSW public schools and lecture children on what is right or wrong?

Aldo Bayona

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