

CARDINAL PELL, R.I.P.

Cardinal George Pell died on January 10th at age 81.

We mourned his death at the Catholic League. No priest of his stature was victimized in recent times more than him. He suffered mightily, spending over 400 days in an Australian prison for crimes he was later acquitted. The anti-Catholicism that drove his conviction was obvious to all with eyes to see.

His conviction on five counts of sexual abuse was unanimously overturned by Australia's High Court in 2020. He was never guilty of these charges in the first place.

Pell was the victim of outrageous lies. He had been smeared, spat upon, and forced to endure solitary confinement for crimes he never committed.

This was a sham from the get-go and should never have made its way through the Australian courts.

Pell was charged with abusing two boys in 1996. One of the boys overdosed on drugs but not before telling his mother—on two occasions—that Pell never abused him. The other boy's accusation was undercut by the dead boy's account: they were allegedly abused at the same time and place. There were no witnesses to an offense that supposedly took place after Mass in the sacristy of a church.

The High Court concluded that the charges against Cardinal Pell strained credulity. It was based on assumptions that simply didn't add up.

We defended Cardinal Pell for many years. Indeed, we issued approximately two dozen news releases defending him from his critics. He was sustained by his faith, and his courage was exemplary. May he rest in peace.