

# CARDINAL PELL, R.I.P.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the death of Cardinal George Pell:

Cardinal George Pell has died at age 81. He had undergone hip surgery and was doing well until he apparently suffered cardiac arrest.

We mourn 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 2019. 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.

Here is what the High Court said about this matter. "The assumption that a group of choristers, including adults, might have been so preoccupied with making their way to the robing room as to fail to notice the extraordinary sight of the

Archbishop of Melbourne dressed 'in his full regalia' advancing through the procession and pinning a 13 year old boy to the wall, is a large one." That is putting it mildly. It is preposterous.

We at the Catholic League defended Cardinal Pell for many years. Here's a chronological list of my public statements in defense of him, all of which are available on our website.

- "Cardinal Pell Should Sue For Libel," March 12, 2013
- "Unsubstantiated Accusations," April 10, 2013
- "Yanked!" February 9, 2016
- "CNN Op-Ed On Sexual Abuse Is Flawed," June 30, 2017
- "The Washington Post Is At It Again," July 5, 2017
- "The New York Times Piles On," July 7, 2017
- "Cardinal Pell Acquires Top Lawyer," July 11, 2017
- "The War on Cardinal Pell," July 20, 2017
- "Foes of Cardinal Pell In High Gear," July 25, 2017
- "Media Cast Wide Net In Pell Case," July 26, 2017
- "Australia's War On Christian Kids," July 31, 2017
- "Australian Abuse Report Deeply Flawed," October 2, 2017
- "Media Bias Against Cardinal Pell," January 8, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell's Ordeal Continues," April 17, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell's Hearings Were An Eye-Opener," April 24, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell Pleads 'Not Guilty,'" May 1, 2018
- "Can Cardinal Pell Ever Get A Fair Trial?" May 16, 2018
- "Washington Post Columnist Gets It Wrong," December 14, 2018
- "Rolling Stone's Dishonest Hit On Cardinal Pell," March 19, 2019
- "Cardinal Pell's Appeal Is Justified," February 26, 2019
- "Cardinal Pell Victimized," August 21, 2019
- "Cardinal Pell And Brett Kavanaugh; Two Defamed Catholics," September 30, 2019
- "Measure Of Justice For Cardinal Pell," November 13, 2019

- “Cardinal Pell Targeted Again,” April 2, 2020

Cardinal Pell wrote about his years in prison in a three-volume set of memoirs. He was sustained by his faith, and his courage was exemplary. May he rest in peace.