

CARDINAL PELL VICTIMIZED

On August 21, Cardinal George Pell was convicted by the State Supreme Court of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia of sexually abusing two minors. The appeals court judges split 2-1 against him. He is the most prominent Catholic cleric ever to be convicted of such a crime. He is also the most unfairly treated Catholic cleric in recent history.

In 2017, Pell was accused of sexually abusing minors. In September 2018, the trial ended in a hung jury. In December he was found guilty in a second trial. Now he has lost on appeal. It is not certain whether he will appeal to the High Court of Australia.

The case against Pell depended largely on the testimony of one of two choirboys: the accuser claims that both he and his friend were abused by the cardinal after Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996. The police investigated the charge and found nothing to support it.

One of the boys later died of a drug overdose. However, before he died he told his mother—on two occasions—that he was never abused by Pell. Why wasn't this enough to exculpate Pell? Isn't that alone cause for reasonable doubt? In his dissent, one justice noted, "the complainant was inclined to embellish aspects of his account."

We can only hope and pray that the Vatican does not pile on by defrocking him. That would only add to the litany of injustices he has had to endure. Pell is no McCarrick—he is a decent man who has been repeatedly victimized.