

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**24th June 2010**

**Cardinal Brady hopes Catholic religious will engage with Justice for Magdalenes (JFM)**

Cardinal Sean Brady followed his assertion on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 that he wanted a “just solution” for Magdalene survivors with an invitation to JFM to meet with him to further discuss “a pathway forward.” Today (Thursday, 24 June), a delegation from survivor advocacy group JFM met with the Cardinal and key members of the Bishops’ Conference committee who work with survivors of institutional abuse.

The meeting lasted two hours and the Cardinal expressed his appreciation for Professor James Smith’s (Boston College/JFM Advisory Committee) presentation addressing State complicity in the operation of the Magdalene laundries. He said that JFM offered “a fair and balanced” account, and he expressed his wish that other religious, most notably the leaders of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) and relevant religious congregations, would engage JFM in dialog and ensure restorative justice for Magdalene survivors.

The Cardinal noted that JFM’s work to date has highlighted State complicity. Moreover he welcomes the group’s efforts to understand how families and the wider society, as well as Church and State, are culpable in the treatment of these women and children. Bishop John McAreevy added that Prof. Smith’s presentation was “broad and inclusive”.

Cardinal Brady directed members of the Bishops’ Conference committee to work with JFM in continuing to “establish trust” between the religious congregations and JFM in order to develop understanding and bring about healing.

Prof. Smith said, “It was an encouraging meeting and I was pleased the Cardinal appreciates that time is of the essence in bringing restorative justice to this elderly and aging population. We also underscored that the Church’s archives hold the key to detailing the extent of the State’s involvement in the Magdalene system.”

Dr, Katherine O’Donnell (UCD School of Social Justice, Director of Women’s Studies/ JFM Advisory Committee) said, “The meeting was particularly productive in identifying that the ethical release of the Church’s archives could result in speedy and beneficial actions including, for example, a review of the burial plots to ensure that they are an accurate and dignified memorial and facilitation of information useful for the adoption search and reunion process.”

JFM is committed to building upon today’s meeting in its efforts to bring about (i) a formal apology from Church and State and (ii) the establishment of a distinct redress scheme for all Magdalene survivors.

**Note to editors:** JFM will issue a further statement around lunchtime tomorrow (Friday 25th June) following a meeting with senior officials in the Department of Justice.

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