



Applause as 'evil' priest gets more jail

By Dan Silkstone
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A courtroom filled with spontaneous applause yesterday as pedophile and former priest Michael Charles Glennon was described by a judge as "wantonly evil" and sentenced to at least 15 years in jail.

"You're gonna die in prison, dog," yelled one of Glennon's victims as the disgraced Catholic priest was led from the County Court.

One of Australia's most notorious pedophiles, Glennon was found guilty in two trials in August and October of sexually abusing four Aboriginal boys between 1984 and 1991.

Judge Roland Williams said yesterday that Glennon was an intractable pedophile who used his priestly position and knowledge of indigenous culture to win the trust and love of the children he abused.

"You have indeed shown yourself to be an evil and callous human being, capable of the most cunning, premeditated planning to commit the most sordid sexual acts upon young children," he said.

Glennon has been convicted five times of pedophilia offences since 1978 - abuses against a total of 15 children. He has spent most of the past 13 years in prison following convictions in 1991 and 1999.

Many offences occurred at a property near Lancefield where Glennon ran karate camps under the auspices of his Peaceful Hand Youth Foundation.

Most of the 26 counts for which he was sentenced yesterday took place while he was on bail awaiting his 1991 trial.

Judge Williams said Glennon, aged 59, had a life expectancy of 19 years.

He then handed down an effective maximum sentence of 20 years - combining an 18-year term with part of the four years Glennon has yet to serve from a conviction in 1999.

Judge Williams said Glennon had continued to act as a priest despite being forced to resign by the church in 1984.

"You told stories about Aboriginal myths and secret men's business," he said. "You used all of these techniques . . . to gain the trust and love of the children who would then do whatever you asked them.

"They'd take part in your sordid sex play in the belief that it had some greater meaning."

Judge Williams said Glennon's offending could not be understood as a failing of human nature. "You... are in that quite small minority of offenders who are just wantonly evil," he said.

Outside court one victim, now in his late 20s said he hoped Glennon would rot in prison.

"He was a very charismatic person who sucked us all in," he said. "Now he's a withered little worm who's going to spend the rest of his life in jail."

Yesterday's sentence was the culmination of a legal struggle that has involved aborted trials, retrials and appeals to the High Court.

Glennon was controversially outed as a pedophile by broadcaster Derryn Hinch in 1984, an outburst that later landed Hinch in jail for contempt of court.

At subsequent trials and appeals the former priest claimed he was unable to receive a fair hearing because of media attention.

Judge Williams said that aside from his first conviction in 1978, Glennon had consistently pleaded not guilty - forcing his victims to endure the trauma of reliving their abuse in court.

"They struggled mightily to get through their evidence. They were cross-examined on your behalf... taken through every last detail of the abuse again and again; doubted, ridiculed and confused," he said.

"You didn't spare these victims the awful ordeal and the quid pro quo is that you will not get one skerrick of credit on the sentence this time for any remorse."

Judge Williams said he saw no evidence of any desire to rehabilitate or acknowledgement from Glennon of the harm he had caused.

"You have played hardball right to the end... now you will take the consequences," he said.