

**5-16-08 - Bishop Robinson says he is "disappointed" in fellow Australian bishops
National Catholic Reporter, By Dennis Coday, staff writer**

Australian Bishop Geoffery Robinson has said he is "disappointed" in his fellow bishops, who last week issued a statement saying they had found "doctrinal difficulties" with Robinson's book on sex abuse and reform in the Catholic church.

Robinson is in the United States on a book tour for *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, which was published last fall in Australia is now available in North American through Collegeville, Minn.-based Liturgical Press.

Robinson, 71, is the retired auxiliary bishop of Sydney and led the Australian bishops' committee that addressed sexual abuse by Catholic clergy.

The Australian bishops' conference issued a statement [1] May 6 that rejected the reformist proposals advocated by Bishop Robinson in his book. They stated that "the authority entrusted by Christ to his church may at times be poorly exercised, especially in shaping policy and practice in complex areas of pastoral and human concern. This does not, in Catholic belief, invalidate the church's authority to teach particular truths of faith and morals."

Robinson issued a response to the bishops' statement May 15. The text of that statement follows:

The statement of the Australian bishops is not unexpected, but it is disappointing. My book is about the response to the revelations of sexual abuse within the church. Sexual abuse is all about power and sex, so it is surely reasonable to ask questions about power and sex in the church. In their statement, the bishops appear to be saying that, in seeking to respond to abuse, we may investigate all other factors contributing to abuse, but we may not ask questions concerning ways in which teachings, laws, and attitudes concerning power and sex within the church may have contributed.

This imposes impossible restrictions on any serious and objective study, and it is where I have broken from the Bishops Conference. We must be free to follow the argument wherever it leads.

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson
15th May 2008