



Archbishop Paul Cremona

» Interview Pages 10, 11



England are more talented

» Gary Neville Page 110



First quarter-finalists known

» Sport Page 111

EU fund students to receive government assistance

Christian Peregin

The government seems to have found a solution for a number of students affected by the suspension of EU funds, by setting up fresh arrangements directly with various EU universities and giving financial grants to students.

A number of students who planned to study abroad with EU funds have been told they will receive €300 a month from the Maltese government to make their trips possible this year.

Continued on page 4 »

Family defends auction



Peter Borg Olivier admires the paintings left over by his late father. Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi » See story on page 5

Vatican official in 'sad and open' meetings

Christian Peregin, Herman Grech

A top Vatican official described his meetings with the alleged victims of sexual abuse as "very sad, moving and open", as two more men came forward with similar claims about priests who ran an orphanage.

"I'm here primarily to honour their request, to meet them and listen to them. But I wanted to use this occasion to get direct information about the case," Mgr Charles Scicluna told *The Sunday Times* yesterday after concluding

meetings with six of the 13 alleged victims.

The men claim they were abused some 20 years ago at St Joseph's orphanage in St Venera.

Mgr Scicluna, Promoter of Justice in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is expected to remain in Malta until July 2 to gather information from the alleged victims against four priests who served at the institute.

When asked about a promise made to one of the accusers that action would be taken by August, Mgr Scicluna acknowledged there was a sense of urgency but said the

timeframe depended on the Curia's Response Team as well as the amount of cooperation from the victims.

"I only managed to pluck up the courage recently"

The Rome-based monsignor is meeting the men together with a notary, who is taking detailed statements.

His meticulous and warm approach was welcomed by the alleged victims, one of whom described his one-on-one meetings with him as "amazing".

Mgr Scicluna is the prosecuting officer in the case, but his work will rely heavily on the investigations of the Malta Curia's Response Team.

Decisions will then be taken on a local level by Archbishop Paul Cremona, together with the Vatican.

Mgr Scicluna confirmed that the toughest penalty is that of "reducing the priests to their lay state", which means defrocking them.

He said, however, he had no intention of meeting the accused priests, including one who was serving in Italy. That was the responsibility of the Response Team.

He stressed that he was in Malta to supplement the work by the Curia's Response Team, not override it.

"I am urging the men to cooperate fully with the Curia's investigation. We are working hand in hand and pulling the same rope."

The meetings will continue throughout this week.

Continued on page 4 »



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