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# TREET THE JUDGES IN THE CRAZIEST SHOW ON EARTH

**EXCLUSIVE IRELAND'S GOT TALENT SPECIAL** 

# BREAKING 35-YEAR SILENCE ONABUSE



FIGHTING BACK: Joe Devi

After seeing our John of God story husband reveals to his wife that he was also a victim

The Investigation

**By Michael O'Farrell** 

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

A HUSBAND, who can't read or write, told his wife for the first time of alleged abuse he suffered, after seeing Brother Aidan Clohessy pictured in the Irish Mail on Sunday last week.

In his heartbreaking revelation to his wife Sally, Joe Devine explained that he **Turn to Page 6** 

Ronan Keating and family - including tot Cooper - enjoy a mind-blowing break to the magical Maldives PLUS

CREATOR OF THE 52 DIET

BEAT STRESS AND LOSE WEIGHT WITH DR MICHAEL MOSLEY IN MICHAEL

We've found the joyzone

#### **By Michael O'Farrell**

**INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR** 

IT'S BEEN 35 years since Joe Devine has seen Brother Aidan Clohessy. That is also how long he has bottled up the shame he felt about what he alleges happened to him at St Augustine's special needs school when he was a child.

Until this week Joe - now 54 - had never told these things to anyone. Not even his wife Sally, though she always knew something was amiss. She could tell by the rage within him.

Joe was 'educated' in St Augustine's from the age of nine years old.

He was sent there when his mother left her nine children to a father who did not cope. Joe arrived just after his First Communion and left, unable to read or write, at the age of 19.

But Joe didn't need to read to understand what was on the front page of the Irish Mail on Sunday last week, when Sally brought the paper home. There before him, on the front page, was Br

Aidan's face – a face he can never forget. 'That's Br Aidan,' he told Sally as memories, long

suppressed, rushed back to the surface. She'd asked him before but now she tried again. 'Did he do those things to you?' Sally asked.

The floodgates opened and Joe began the first steps of unburdening himself of a load long shouldered. 'Why didn't you tell me?' Sally asked.

#### 'You were a child. The shame is not yours. You did nothing wrong'

It was the shame, Joe explained. 'You might not

Sally took a deep breath, relieved after all this time that the source of her husband's anger - an anger that had nearly torn them apart - was

Beyond the relief there was a stronger feeling. She felt so sorry for the child that Joe had been, the childhood he'd been robbed of.

'Do you remember our shed was burgled?' she asked him. 'They robbed our shed. That's a crime that someone committed - it's no one's fault

'You were a child,' she told her husband. 'The shame is not yours. You did nothing wrong.'

Joe understood. Now he wants the world to know

what Br Aidan allegedly did to him. A statement containing Joe's alleged experience at St Augustine's has now been prepared for the gardaí. It's one of several new sets of allegations unearthed by this newspaper's investigation into

Br Aidan, meanwhile, has not elaborated further on his spare denials and his comment that he is 'innocent until proved guilty'. But someone is lying. In the end, perhaps the courts will decide. Joe would welcome that and he knows what he would tell the court.

He'd tell them how, on his first night at St Augustine's his older brother warned him that bed wetters would be punished. When it happened to him he alleges this punishment was handed down by Br Aidan.

walloped me across the a\*\*e and then touched my testicles.

'He said: "You've got a nice fine pair." They were his words. He said: 'You don't have to tell anyone

'Then I copped myself on at night-time and I didn't take anything to drink after a certain time, if it was going to affect me wetting

But learning to keep his sheets dry was not enough to escape.

he pulled down my pyjamas and he every few weeks. 'If I didn't do something properly, like making the beds properly, Br Aidan would punish me by slapping me. He would tell me to pull my trousers

and underpants down. 'Once in the gym he put me lying down in the store room where the mats were. He put me lying across the mats with my trousers and underpants down and then he beat my backside.

'When I was lying facing away from him he said: "Don't move, keep your head front ways. Do not

turn your head - keep it straight". 'He gave me four slaps across the a\*\*e with the strap. He took a long

married me

Joe Devine's heart-wrenching account of

Why didn't you tell me?

The shame.

You might

not have

why he broke 35 years of angry silence

'In the gym, he put me lying across the mats' time with the fifth one and then he

me, then I started screaming. That's when he touched my behind all

At the age of 19 Joe left - and went as far away as he could - moving to England to work on building sites. While there he met Sally and they married in 1992. Tragically their

together. I got up and I wriggled out

and pulled up my pants. He said: "Now, I don't want to see you in here

first born - a beautiful son - was born early and died after nine weeks. A daughter - now 24 years came up and put his hands in around old and engaged to be married - followed. Two years later they had now aged 22 - that Joe dotes on. Back in Ireland Joe did what he could to provide for his family. For years that meant working from the back of a bin lorry in Kildare.

Today, things have changed and Sally is the main breadwinner, working locally as an accounts executive while Joe tends to the home and minds his family, cutting grass part-time for some extra cash. 'I cannot read or write properly. That's one of my big regrets,' he says. 'No one taught me how to read and write. I ring Sally to

explain cooking instructions and things like that when I can't read them. For my wedding I was not able to read my wedding vows.' But he doesn't need to read to tell

the world what he went through. It's now something he has to do. 'It's like a weight off my back to talk about,' he says.

But there's another reason too. Three reasons in fact. As a father of three special needs girls, Joe knows how vulnerable they are. He wants them to live in a world ties are taken seriously. Only then can he be sure that his children won't have to feel the way he has

felt for so long. If you have been affected by

any issues dealt with in this investigation, the following helpline is available: Connect Counselling Freephone 1800 477 477. Connect Counselling is open 20 hours a week, out of hours. Wednesday through to Sunday, from 6pn to 10pm. Additional opening hours tomorrow 6pm to 10pm.

# Coughlan: I'm sickened over abuse claims

By **Anne Sheridan** 

SINGER Mary Coughlan said she 'nearly passed out' when she read about the child abuse allegations against Br Aidan Clohessy on the front page of the Irish Mail on Sunday last weekend.

Speaking to the MoS this week, the singer said she has been left 'really sickened' and 'quite upset and saddened' to learn of the mounting allegations against the member of the St John of God Order, whom she has met on numerous occasions over the past decade.

The singer was one of a number of Irish celebrities who not only travelled to Malawi - where Fr Clohessy was stationed for years to oversee children's projects - but also actively campaigned for funding for children with disabilities and orphans who lost parents to HIV and Aids who were housed in Br Clohessy's com-

#### He had 'an elevated status of a saint'

pound, where children showered under his supervision.

In Malawi, she said the perception of Br Clohessy was of 'an elevated status of a saint'

To compound her anguish, Ms Coughlan said she had been so touched by her interaction with teenagers and young adults - as they attempted to build a better life - that she visited Br Clohessy upon his return to Dublin six years ago.

She and her manager John Dunford travelled to Mzuzu, northern Malawi, after holding meetings with Br Clohessy and the order in advance of their trip.

Documentaries highlighted the 'extraordinary' work by the order in Malawi later aired on both TG4 and

RTE in 2012. Ms Coughlan, who previously attended the St John of God treatment centre for alcohol addiction, praised the Malawi centre they ran during the RTÉ programme, Into Africa, as an 'oasis from the hard



**SADDENED:** Singer Mary Coughlar

she said she remains 'dumbfounded and 'gobsmacked' by the claims.

'I nearly passed out when I saw the paper. I was living in the compound and had met Aidan... I had no idea [about the allegations]. It's a good facility and a lot of really good peo-ple work there, mostly from Malawi An awful lot of Irish people have travelled out to raise money for the children's school, and famous people donated musical instruments to them over the years. I went out to set up an AA facility for very young alcoholics and drug addicts.

'The worst part of it is, I went to see him when he came back to Dublin because I heard he wasn't well and went in to John of God's to see him. He was on a retreat and was

mostly praying at the time. 'I am just sickened. I met a lot of people out there, kids from Ireland doing summer holiday work there It had a great name and was very well established. He [Br Clohessy] was very, very quiet. I have spoken to a few people about him [since last Sunday] and we are all very, very shocked.

Ms Coughlan recorded a song Believe in Me with the children to raise funds for the centre.

Sharon Shannon and her Big Band held a number of fundraising gigs for the centre under their Umoza Challenge.

Umoza, meaning 'together', is the name of a school for street children under the auspices of St John of God, Mzuzu in northern Malawi,

### John of God may face legal challenge from survivors

From Page One

had kept his painful secret for 35 years because he was afraid she would not have mar-

Mr Devine's allegations of abuse he suffered at St Augustine's special needs school in Blackrock, south Dublin, are the latest of more than 20 against Br Aidan.

The MoS revealed last week that while allegations mounted against the brother - who was principal of St Augustine's from 1970 until 1993 - he was allowed to stay in a position of authority over children while founding a St John of God's mission in Malawi.

Mr Devine's bravery comes as a senior St dren as allegations mounted against him. John of God psychiatrist breaks ranks to Under the Criminal Justice Act 2006 a perwarn of a dangerous culture of Omertà at the heart of the organisation he works for.

Dr Paul Moran – a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist with the St John of God Cluain Mhuire Service - said he was 'speaking for many colleagues who are deeply shocked and saddened by the thoughts of what may have been done to these children'.

Now, a new clerical abuse survivors' group founded last year, Reclaiming Self, is seeking legal advice on whether the St John of God order could be held to account for allowing Brother Aidan have continued access to chil-

son can be prosecuted for recklessly endangering a child by 'causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which

creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse.' Abuse survivor Colm O'Gorman said an independent examination of all issues regarding Br Aidan's transfer to Malawi, how complaints against him in Ireland were dealt with by the order and the manner in which any

other abuse claims against other priests were handled needs to be established. That investigation should be resourced and

paid for by the order, but not led by it, said the Amnesty Ireland boss, speaking in a per-

sonal capacity. Responding to queries about what they had done to investigate the potential of abuse in Malawi, St John of God, through a spokesman said: 'With regards to Malawi, the order wishes to state clearly that anyone with any information concerning any alleged abuse has both a duty of care and responsibility to inform the authorities.

'The order has policies and procedures across all of its provinces for safeguarding and urges any person with a concern to contact the authorities.'



**WE REVEAL HOW A** MISSIONARY **ACCUSED OF ABUSE WAS** LEFT TO WORK WITH STREET KIDS IN AFRICA

#### CLERICAL abuse survivor Colm O'Gorman said the transfer of Br Aidan Clohessy by the St John of God Order

to Africa, after he had been accused of committing child abuse in Ireland, was 'unspeakably wrong' and 'unforgivable'. Speaking to the Irish Mail on Sunday in a personal capacity, rather than as head of Amnesty Ireland, Mr O'Gorman said he was left 'speechless' by the revelations, which were first brought to

public attention by this newspaper. In 2004, St John of God misinformed the Ryan Commission into clerical child abuse that no abuse cases had been notified to the order before 1996 -

#### **POLITICS**

despite a complaint having been made against Br Aidan in 1985.

'If one was generous, you could say John of God misled the commission,' said Mr O'Gorman, 'but it's difficult to see how it could be anything other than deceit and they need to clarify on what basis they didn't provide that information in the fullest possible way.

'They are certainly open to a charge of wilful negligence. It is beyond inexcusable. It's unforgivable.

Whoever is in a position of authority (in SJOG) needs to be held accountable. Meanwhile the Minister for Children, Katherine Zappone, said: 'All parents have been shocked by revelations of recent weeks. As a government minister, it would be wrong for me to speak about an individual case or a set of allegations. However, I do want people to know that my mission, and that of my department, is to protect each and every child.'

Minister of State for Disabilities Finian McGrath, also told the MoS: 'Any allegations of child abuse must be investigated as a matter of urgency.'

## Whistleblower psychiatrist at St John of God says its code of silence endangers children

# Dangerous cul ture of omerta

Prior General of the St John of God



**DEEP CONCERNS:** Dr Paul Moran

By **Michael O'Farrell** 

**INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR** 

A SENIOR St John of God (SJOG) psychiatrist has broken ranks to warn of a dangerous culture of omerta (silence) at the heart of the organisation for which he works.

Dr Paul Moran, a consultant liaison psychiatrist with the St John of God Cluain Mhuire Service, came forward in the wake of last week's Irish Mail on Sunday revelation that the SJOG order had covered up mounting child abuse allegations, allowing Brother Aidan Clohessy to remain working with vulnerable children in Malawi for decades.

In coming forward, Dr Moran said that he was 'speaking for many colleagues who are deeply shocked and saddened by the thoughts of what may have been done to these

He continued: 'There is also a great sense of shame about how our organisation fails to act responsibly and enables more and more children to be put at risk.'

Because his role includes treating and counselling survivors of child abuse, Dr Moran is acutely familiar

#### 'Concerns are dismissed as gossip and negativity'

with the life-long impact that abuse has on those affected. And he is appalled that an organi-

sation such as St John of God which ran the Granada treatment centre for clerical paedophiles for years - would risk endangering vulnerable children in its care.

Dr Moran said: 'There is a culture of omerta, which has been promoted and maintained by the senior management of the organisation over many years.'

(A Sicilian term, omerta is the code of silence by which the mafia controlled its underlings through intimidation).

'Any questions or discussion by professionals about their concerns in relation to organisational wrongdoing are dismissed as gossip and negativity,' Dr Moran explained.

'Senior management strongly discourage any communication by professionals with bodies outside the organisation, going as far as to link compliance with omerta and enhanced promotion prospects.'



IT WAS a simple ceremony but one of immense consequence. Gathered in the hospital chapel at their HQ in Stillorgan, a small

group of Brothers watched as Provincial Donatus Forkan presented a small bronze statue of St John of God to Brother Aidan Clohessy. The date was October 22, 1993, the official start of his new mission to Malawi.

It was fitting perhaps that Br Donatus would be the one to oversee Br Aidan's departure to Africa. The pair had been professed as

Brothers together in 1960. There was one problem though. **Brother Aidan had** been accused of child abuse years earlier in 1985. In years to allegations would substantially. Yet, it appears, that for decades no

one acted to see

if chlidren in

Malawi needed

THE LEADER

to be protected. Since Brother Aidan's departure to Africa. Brother Donatus's career rose steadily. In 1994, he was elected a general councillor, making him one of the five most senior members of the St John of God

In 2000 he was re-elected - this time as First General Councillor making him the second most owerful member of the order, and in 2006 he became Prior

> General, making the farmer's son from Swinford. Co. Mayo the worldwide leader. Moving into his new Rome office, he placed some ageing sweets, given to

street girl in

Mexico, on his desk beside his computer. He said they reminded him that because of poverty and exclusion she had been 'deprived of the dignity that every human being is entitled to'.

In 2006, the allegations against Br Aidan had exceeded a dozen, yet he remained living and working with children in Malawi. As Prior General, Br Donatus was responsible for the response to child abuse claims. Whatever he knew about developments in Ireland, he was aware of concerns in Australia. We know that because from 2007 bishops and SJOG experts there were warning

him of abuse on a massive scale. In the end - with the backing of Rome - the order in Australia paid millions in compensation and legal fees to protect accused brothers who would later be jailed.

Why then was Br Aidan left in Malawi, living and working with children? We've asked Br Donatus this in person and in writing - to no avail so far. In 2010 he and Br Aidan celebrated their Golden Jubilee together, and Brother Donatus went on one of his frequent trips to Malawi, staying in Br Aidan's home. Children who stayed there at the time member the visits. In 2011, Br Donatus was back in

Malawi again to watch Br Aidan surrendered the statue Br Donatus had given him in 1993, to newly professed African brothers. In 2012, as Br Donatus left Rome to become Provincial in Ireland again, Br Aidan was quietly withdrawn from Malawi. It appears no effort has been made to establish what impact he may have had there. Today, Br Aidan and Br Donatus live in the St John of God community house in Stillorgan, just beside the order's hospital. When the weather suits Br Aidan strolls the grounds and

nearby neighbourhood alone.

country singer Charlie Landsborough, is called A Million Ways To Fall. There are no

The result, he explained, is a 'culture that does not help safeguarding or best practice'.

Dr Moran continued: 'Even since the latest shocking revelations, organisation on this subject. I feel I must speak out on behalf of fellow

He also expressed concern about instructions given to SJOG doctors in 2015, which he felt were in breach

of Medical Council guidelines. The instruction came in the form of a circular from then CEO, John Pepper, that ordered all doctors and psychiatrists within the SJOG servfiles to solicitors representing vic-

tims of alleged abuse. It read: 'As you are probably aware, the Residential Institutions Redress Board is no longer dealing with historic claims of abuse, which has resulted in these matters being taken up by solicitors on behalf of

'Please ensure that nobody within your service responds to any such legal representations, but refer all correspondence of this nature to myself as Chairman of the Safeguarding Advisory Group for the Order and Ministries.

After checking the law with the

back to Mr Pepper to point out that the instruction appeared at odds with both ethical guidelines and the law.

He wrote: 'It appears that your suggested refusal to provide medical reports at the request of patients is not compatible with current legal requirements.

Mr Pepper then wrote back to Dr

However, this clarification was issued to Dr Moran only and appears not to have been circulated to all those who received the original instruction. Because of this. Dr Moran fears that colleagues may still

concerns to the authorities.

intended to prevent consultants provid-

ing patient records or reporting abuse

be acting on the original instruction. St John of God, through a spokesman, said: 'The Saint John of God Order places tremendous value on the work and acknowledges the invaluable contribution made by its staff members, which is

very much appreciated. There are a number of stated policies and procedures through which employees can air grievances or concerns should they have any.

'In accordance with HR best practice, it is not appropriate to respond to a staff member through the media. However, the order urges any personnel with concerns to come forward to it and/or alter-

michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org

My impression is that there is a culture of collusion inside the Province which is deeply engrained, and which makes it almost impossible for the truth about these matters to be dealt with.

# Whistleblower raised collusion fear 10 years ago

By Micael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

CLAIMS of omerta at the heart of the St John of God order are not new.

Ten years ago in Australia Dr Michelle Mulvihill - a psychologist and former Sister of Mercy nun - voiced the same concerns Dr Paul Moran is expressing about the order in

Ireland today. Though a decade apart, these whistleblowers have one thing to Brother Donatus Forkan.

Originally hired to help St John of God in Australia and New Zealand as a flood of abuse cases were unearthed Dr Mulvihill ended up resigning in disgust. As she did so, she wrote to Brother Donatus, then head of the St John of God order in Rome.

The Irish Mail on Sunday has obtained her letter and Brother Donatus's response.

'In spite of the best efforts of the Professional Standards Committee it was not possible to bring the province to an awareness of the gravity of the situation in relation to the long history of misconduct and in particular the culture of sexual abuse in the province," ner letter reads.

'My impression is that there is a culture of collusion inside the province which is deeply engrained and which makes it almost impossible for the truth about these matters to be dealt with,' the letter continued.' She said when she tried to raise these matters she was met with 'rejection' and personal 'vilification'.

In response, Brother Dona-



Testifying at the Australian commission last year Dr Mulvihill said: 'It's all about power, isn't it? All roads lead to Rome It's all about who's in charge.

Dr Mulvihill was not alone in raising concerns. The MoS has obtained a 2007 letter to Brother Donatus from Australian Bishop Michael Malonie where he writes of 'a widespread culture of sexual abuse amongst the members of the Australian province'.

He was concerned that the Australian province of St John of God had elected a new leader and council, some of whom had been the subject of abuse complaints.

'I understand that you were present for the chapter and election. If the matters reported to me... are true, as 1 believe they are, then the entire order in Australia needs

to be seriously assessed.' In response, Brother Donatus issued a statement,

'At all times the actions and But her concerns have since responses of Brother Donatus were conducted appropriately was found that 40% of the and in accordance with safe-SJOG brothers in the province guarding policies, best prachad allegations of child sexual tice and with the input of tus wrote: 'It pains me to hear abuse against them - a far external consultation and that there continues to be a higher percentage than any guidance. Any statement, belief that "there is a culture other Church body. It is now inference or assertion to the

### Faced 'rejection and

**RESIGNED:** Dr Michelle

Mulvihill also raised her

concerns with Brother Donatus

ince which is deeply engrained

and which and which makes it

almost impossible for the

truth about these matters to

be dealt with". Were anything

like that proven to be the case

I would be the first to insist on

He said the order would

establish an 'independent and

external audit to examine all

the most radical action.'

aspects of the abuse issue in the province'.

would speak to Dr Mulvihill, she was not contacted.

been vindicated. Last year it of collusion inside the prov- known that hundreds of chil- contrary is not correct.'

through a spokesman. He said: 'As this was an inde pendent external audit, Brother Donatus had no involvement in how the audit Despite his assurances that was conducted. The recomthose conducting the audit mendations of this audit were implemented by the province.

CLERICAL abuse survivor campaigners last night called for an inquiry into how alleged abusers, whose victims were compensated by the Redress Board, could have continued access to children.

Kennedy of the Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support (formerly Aislinn Centre). 'How 'It is unconscionable to think a many other Brother D's are out named alleged child abuser was there?' she said. Ms Kennedy said allowed to continue to have contact it was 'hard to believe' the Redress

to the gardai.' such disclosures be investigated.'

and allegations of abuse and were an 'examination of the work of the not legally obliged to report these Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and the Redress Board is 'Now, in light of revelations by very overdue'. Last year RS the MoS, surely the State has a reported the State's 'failure to put moral obligation to ensure a legal in place mechanisms for investiprocess is put in place to allow all gating abuses disclosed to the Commission and the Redress Board,' to Reclaiming Self (RS) - a new survi- the UN Committee Against Torwith children,' said Annmarie Board 'had heard personal stories vors' group founded last year - said ture. The group is seeking legal

God order could be held to account for allowing Brother Aidan have continued access to children as allegations mounted against him. In a statement, RS said it believed State policies 'offered protection to alleged abusers and their affiliated orders rather than the protection of children in vulnerable circumstances'.

advice on whether or not the St John of

natively to contact the authorities.'