

## Chapter 3

# St Joseph's Industrial School, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, ('Ferryhouse'), 1885–1999

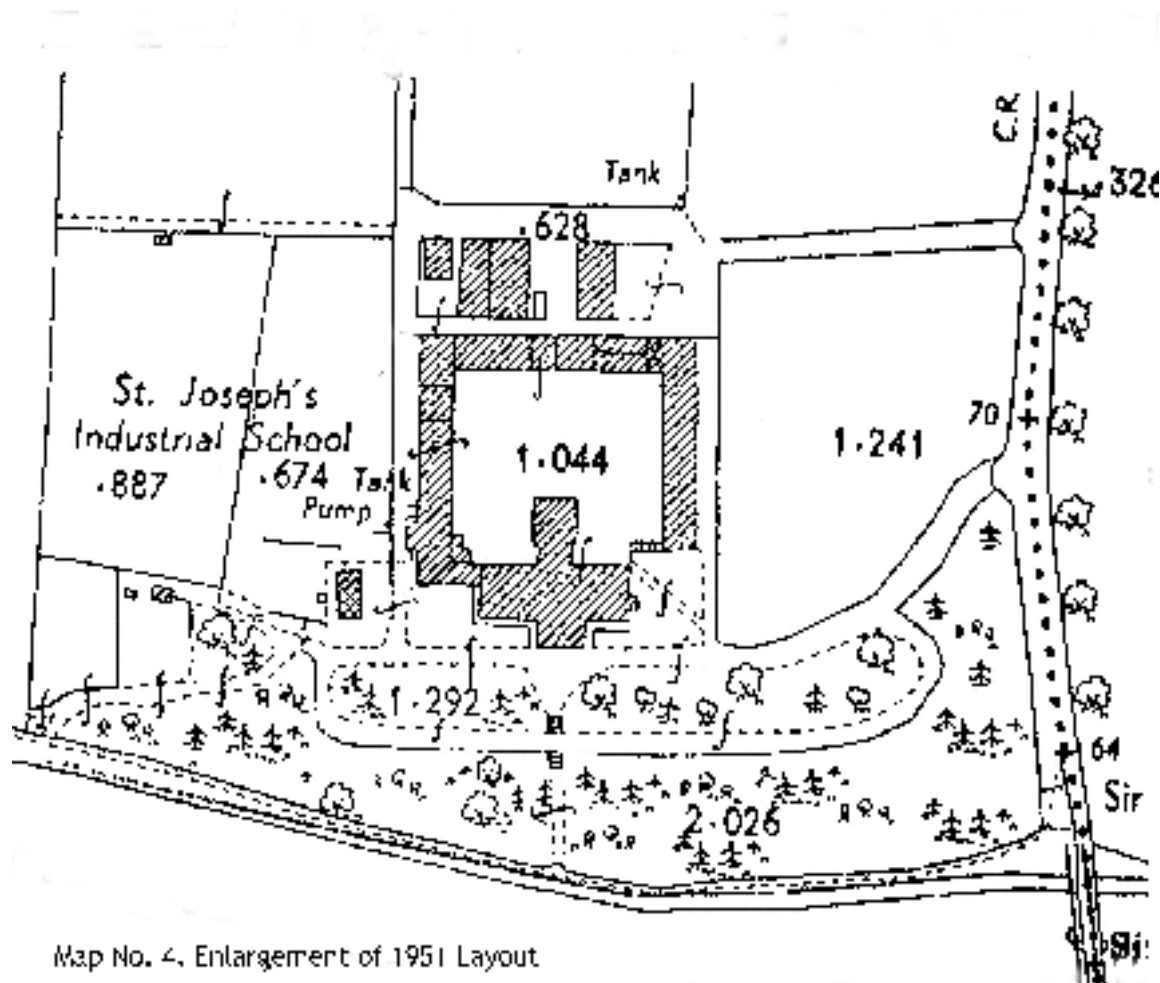
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## Introduction

### *Buildings and layout*

- 3.01** St Joseph's Industrial School is located in the townland of Ferryhouse, some three to four kilometres due east of the centre of Clonmel, on the northern bank of the river Suir, in County Tipperary. The original building was erected at a cost of £10,000 in 1884 by Count Moore, a wealthy local Catholic benefactor, and, shortly after its construction, he invited the Rosminians to run the School. He gave them an additional £1,000 to furnish the School.
- 3.02** It was a large, three-storey red brick building located on approximately nine acres of farmland. It was cruciform in shape, with the central projection in front housing the main entrance, with the Resident Manager's office, a reception area and the church, which included the sanctuary area. Above the entrance, set in an alcove, was a statue of St Joseph. There were steps running down to the river from the entrance. The projection to the rear housed the main staircase. A cloister at the rear of the building served as a corridor.
- 3.03** Shortly after opening, three new wings were erected, a west and east, each with two storeys, and a north-facing building of one storey. With the main house, these buildings enclosed a yard or quadrangular area, with access through an archway on the northern side. More land was bought during the course of the following decades so that, by the 1950s, the farm had increased to approximately 50 acres. In later years, a series of buildings, including a chapel, an infirmary and various workshops, were built. The focus of the School remained the original main building. The School was entirely rebuilt during the early 1980s.
- 3.04** The dormitories were in the two upper storeys of the original three-storey building, with senior boys on the first floor and junior boys on the second floor above. Each dormitory accommodated 100 beds and a Prefect's room. On the ground floor were a number of offices.
- 3.05** The west wing was a two-storey granite structure providing community accommodation, the infirmary, nurse's room and boys' kitchen and dining area.
- 3.06** The two-storey east wing housed the School classrooms up until the 1960s when they moved to prefab accommodation. This area was then converted in 1967 to a junior dormitory, at which stage the dormitory accommodation was divided into junior, intermediate and senior areas. The ground floor of the east wing comprised the hall, offices and various recreational rooms.

- 3.07** The north-facing section was a single-storey building which housed the trade shops and, in later years, various recreation areas.
- 3.08** There were also various outhouses and maintenance sheds and, in the 1960s, an extension to the original central building was added, providing toilet and shower facilities.
- 3.09** The Community had a separate refectory and kitchen in the main house. The Rosminian Community residence was located in the main building. All of the buildings and land still in possession of the Rosminians was transferred to the State in 2002, apart from a small holding of land unsuitable for farming south of the river Suir.
- 3.10** A plan of these buildings is given below:



- 3.11** A report has been compiled by Mr Ciaran Fahy, consulting engineer, on the physical surroundings of Ferryhouse, with particular reference to the buildings. A copy of this report is appended to this chapter.

### ***Number of boys in Ferryhouse***

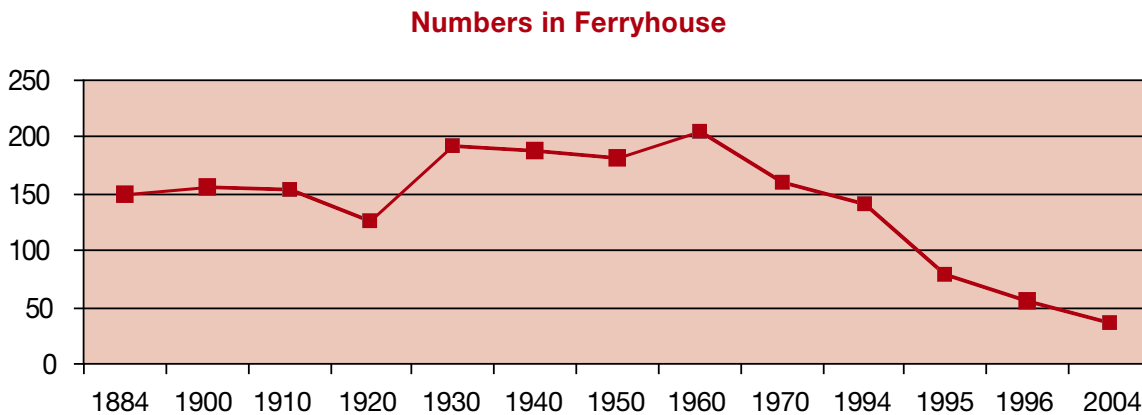
- 3.12** As can be seen from the following charts, there were between 150 and 200 boys in Ferryhouse until the 1970s. In January 1885, a Certificate was granted for the School to receive 150 boys and, in 1944, this Certificate was increased to 200. The numbers in Ferryhouse ranged from 189 boys in 1940, increasing to a high of 205 in 1960. This number decreased to 160 in 1970, but it

was still a high number of boys. Thereafter, the numbers began to gradually decline. Up until the 1980s, the numbers were far in excess of the certified number.

**3.13** Numbers in other schools began dropping from the 1950s onwards, but Ferryhouse continued to be at or near its capacity, largely because it took children from other schools. Upton closed following a major fire in 1966, and 28 boys were transferred to Ferryhouse. The chart below shows the breakdown of numbers of residents throughout the years:

Year	Certification number	Type of admissions
1884	licence for 150 children	Committed
1900	155 children	Committed
1910	154 children	Committed
1920	127 children	Committed
1930	193 children	Committed and voluntary
1940	189 children	Committed and voluntary
1950	182 children	Committed and voluntary
1960	205	Committed and voluntary
1970	160	Committed and voluntary
1994	140	Committed and voluntary
1995	80	Committed and voluntary
1996	56	Committed and voluntary
2004	36	Committed and voluntary

This data may also be illustrated in graph form as follows:



**3.14** The boys were aged between nine and 16 years.

#### ***First impressions of the School as described by former residents***

**3.15** On first entering the School, several complainants described being over-awed by the numbers. One witness, who went there in the late 1940s, described his first day as follows:

*Oh, it was frightening, to see them big doors open. I was introduced to the Rector at the time ... who was a very nice man, he was, very pleasant. I was taken into a room. I was given some bread and cocoa, a change of clothes ... Then you could say I was thrown out into the yard with the other boys, really frightening ... I have never seen so many boys*

*in my life. I thought – well, I should imagine you would expect about 50 or 60 like that was in [the convent] but when you see about 200, oh dear.*

- 3.16** A resident who was in Ferryhouse in the 1940s described his first day as fearful. His mother had recently died and five of the large family were sent to Ferryhouse. He recalled:

*When I arrived, we were brought in a front door and then you came through a kind of a cloister and you came out a door and there was a clock over the door – now you didn't see that until you came back in – and I seen this massive amount of boys. There was about 200 boys there at my time when I arrived there. There was a massive amount of boys, all ages, running, and shouting. It drove the fear of God in you and that's the truth. We kind of cuddled together, the five of us.*

- 3.17** Another witness, in Ferryhouse in the late 1960s, also stressed the frightening impact of so many boys together at one time. On recalling his first day:

*We were escorted up to a laundry house and, if I am not mistaken, the laundry house would have been underneath the main stairs or somewhere in that area of the main building of Ferryhouse before you go out to the yard from the Rector's office. There was a little laundry room there which Br Leone<sup>1</sup> was running and there he handed you out whatever clothing or blankets, I can't remember what it was. I remember the smell of the laundry room. That is all I remember of it.*

*When I walked out the door that day and seen so many boys running around, I think it was the first and last time I actually had a good cry because I knew where I was. I didn't know there was no come back, but I knew that was the first time I actually said to myself I really missed my mother. I realised I was after being taken away.*

- 3.18** Another witness described a similar routine at mealtime:

*You lined up every morning for your meals ... the small guys up the front and the bigger lads at the back. It would be like an army ... you would go in and line up. There was 11 at each table and you had a leader at the top of the table, he was responsible for cutting the horrible block of margarine that each one got a square of.*

- 3.19** By the 1960s, the nineteenth-century buildings were becoming dilapidated and outmoded. A surprise inspection by the Department of Education of Ferryhouse, on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1966, referred to outmoded methods of housing children. Dr Lysaght, the Medical Inspector, described 'a depressing air of mass communal living' due to the large size of the dormitories and the large number of beds. His report, which is dealt with below, recommended that the dormitories should be broken into smaller units, and the Department responded by sanctioning six new prefabs for the School. These changes prefaced the huge rebuilding programme undertaken a decade later.

- 3.20** After the School was rebuilt, some complainants described their first impression as favourable. A resident who went there in the late 1980s, after Ferryhouse had been rebuilt, said:

*The first day we went down I was with the police and they were showing us around. They brought us out in the building first, they showed us where we would be just so we would settle in. Then they brought us all around the buildings, telling us what buildings was which and then brought us out to the back where there was a kind of farm, just showing us where the animals were and saying if we wanted we could help out with the animals and all. Looking around it was real nice, I thought it was going to be nicer than when I was in Michael's beforehand, because I was in St. Michael's for three weeks before going down. I was thinking it was real open, not closed doors everywhere. I thought it was a real nice place and I thought it would be okay.*

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<sup>1</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.21** Later he added:

*The first few weeks it was more or less the same like, everybody was okay. Then I think the first time I got hit was when I was in a fight with one of the lads, we had a disagreement.*

***First impressions and atmosphere of the School as described by staff***

**3.22** The conditions within Ferryhouse, and its atmosphere, were vividly described by some of the former and current members of the Rosminian Order. One priest, Fr Antonio,<sup>2</sup> who was there in the late 1960s and 1970s, described the grim conditions that he found prior to the rebuilding of the School. He told the Investigation Committee:

*Things were very Dickensian in the place at the time in 1967/68 ... Things were very, very bad at that time. My first vision of the dormitory were all these beds in the big dormitory, full stretched up the whole way, and all the wet beds on one side of the dormitory which was a very Dickensian situation and a cruel situation at that time.*

*One of the earliest memories I would have had going in there was a place at the end of the stairs and a young 12 year old would be in charge of the laundry and he would go in and take out all these shirts and bring them out and put them on the beds. A tall fella could have a shirt down to his navel and another fella could have his shirt down to his ankles.*

*... Some of the saddest memories I would have is of the boys who wet their bed bringing out their sheets to laundry in the morning because there was only one woman in the laundry and they used to have to bring them out.*

***Daily routine***

**3.23** With small variations, the daily timetable for the boys and staff in Ferryhouse followed the activity pattern set out below:

Time	Activity for boys	Duty for staff
6.30		Rise/ prepare breakfast etc
7.30		Mass
8.00	Boys called/ Wash and dress	Raise boys Supervise
8.30	Mass then breakfast/ polishing boots and clothing inspection etc	Supervise
9.00	School/ Workshops/technical classes Mondays and Wednesdays	Return to dorms to check all is clean
11.30	Playtime	Supervise
12.00 to 12.45	Catechism	
12.45 to 1.00	Playtime	Supervise
1.00	Dinner/play	Supervise
2.30	Workshops	
3.00	Band until 4.45 for players	
5.00	Play	Supervise
5.30	School	
7.45	Supper/Play	Supervise
9.00	Bed	Supervise until night watchman arrives/ on call

<sup>2</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.24** In earlier years, the boys started earlier, but shifts in the time scale did not alter the basic routine.

**3.25** For this daily routine to run on time, the boys had to be drilled with near military precision. As one priest, Fr Ludano,<sup>3</sup> who stayed at the School in the late 1940s and early 1950s, put it:

*Probably even at that time I considered it harsh ... well, there was a lot of regimentation, some of which I didn't think was necessary. It was run almost on army lines, which I think was unnecessary.*

**3.26** While this regimentation allowed things to run on schedule, it led to quick physical chastisement of boys who fell behind the others. One witness, resident in Ferryhouse in the late 1940s, described the regimentation and how it was enforced:

*In the yard playing around. Then when evening came, bedtime, I was shown the bed I would be sleeping in, an iron cast bed. We got up in the morning, wash your face, wash your hair. There was two lines of sinks, wash basins. You had to take your shirt off, one line at a time in each line of sinks. When they were finished another line would go in. Now, we had to wash our hair and our face, cold water, carbolic soap and if we didn't get the soap off in time we got a whack across the head with a cane so everybody had to rush to get the soap off ...*

*Then we would go out and then we would make our beds. The other lot would go in, wash their heads and face until everybody was done. Then we would dress ourselves, down to Mass. We went to Mass every morning. After Mass we would go back up to the dormitory again, dust our beds, the frame of the beds, dust it. The laymen would come around, feel the bed. If there was a bit of dust left on it, if there was a bit left on it we got a wallop. What does a 10 or 11-year-old child have to get a wallop because there is a bit of dust on the frame of the bed?*

*Anyway after that we would go down to breakfast: two slices of bread and dripping, either a cup of tea or cocoa. Then we would go to the various classes, school. We had four, I think it was four lay teachers ... We had no lady teachers, there was no ladies at all in the school while I was there, no ladies at all.*

*After school we would have our dinner. We would have to line up in the yard like an army barracks. They would shout out in Irish, 'Stand to attention. At ease'. Line one would go into the refectory. Then line two. We didn't say a word. If we said anything we got a wallop. We would say our grace for what was on the table, which wasn't much. We would sit down, have that, not a word out of us. Tin plate and a spoon. We would come out and then we would start playing. Then about half past four line up again for our last meal of the day. Two slices of a bread and jam and a cup of cocoa or whatever it was, tea or cocoa then about. We would be out playing then and we would have – no, I beg your pardon. Before the lunch we would go to the workshops. I was in the knitting shop. There was a tailor shop, a shoemaker shop and that would go on for several hours. Then we would have our lunch. We lined up again for that. After that we would go out and play, and at about eight or half past eight we would go to bed then. We would say our night prayers. We would get up again in the morning, same routine again.*

**3.27** Within this regimented timetable, each boy got to know his duty. One witness explained:

*Some people who wet the bed might get a clattering and that would be the start of the day for them, after showing their sheets and the mattresses. Those that wet the bed would have to go for communal showers after Mass and then go to the office then to get the strap for the same thing ... Then you had your morning chores after that. Some people cleaned the long corridors of the school, clean it. Some people cleaned the dormitories.*

<sup>3</sup> This is a pseudonym.

*Not everyone had morning chores, but there was a designated number of people who would do the morning chores.*

### **Priests and Brothers in Ferryhouse**

**3.28** The Rosminian Community in Ferryhouse generally consisted of 10 members of the Order, both priests and Brothers. All of the members of the Community lived in the School, and each had different responsibilities. The Resident Manager and the Prefects ran the School, and the Prefects had the most direct contact with the boys. However, other Brothers and priests had responsibilities with the boys to a lesser degree.

**3.29** Fr Stefano<sup>4</sup> was appointed as Resident Manager of Ferryhouse in the mid-1970s. He detailed in his evidence what staff were available to him at that time. What he described was typical of the previous decades in Ferryhouse:

*In the community when I arrived, I had a bursar; I had three Prefects, one for each group; and I had an assistant, a student, and a Rosminian student who was studying for the priesthood and he was there as well and he would help out in different units at different times. I had the farm manager. There was a retired gardener, a Brother who died shortly after I arrived there. I had another Brother who was helping in maintenance. There was a Brother who was in charge of the community kitchen and there was a mission secretary – that was a priest who worked full-time for the Missions raising money for our African Missions and he lived with us.*

**3.30** Fr Stefano, therefore, had three Prefects to call upon to take care of over 150 boys. His other staff, although involved in the running of the School, were not directly involved in the day-to-day care of the boys. Throughout its history, Ferryhouse used only a small number of staff to take care of the boys. It is a fair estimate that less than 20% of the religious Community present in Ferryhouse had a direct role in the provision of care to the boys:

**Sample table of staff to pupil ratio in Ferryhouse**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of boys resident</b>	<b>Total number of Rosminian Community</b>	<b>Number of prefects</b>	<b>Prefect/boy ratio</b>
1930	193	9	2	96/1
1940	189	9	2	94/1
1950	182	10	2	91/1
1960	205	12	2	102/1
1970	160	12	3	53/1

<sup>4</sup> This is a pseudonym.



## Physical abuse

### *Physical abuse: what the Institute of Charity have conceded*

- 3.31** As far back as 1990, on the occasion of the public opening of a new school in Ferryhouse, the Provincial spoke of the boys who had been damaged by the years they spent in the old Ferryhouse, and of those who looked back in anger and bitterness on their time there. He said:

*The greatest guilt has to be borne by those of us who utilised or condoned or ignored the extreme severity, even brutality which characterised at times the regime at old Ferryhouse.*

- 3.32** This awareness of the extreme severity, even brutality, of the old regime was reiterated in statements made to the Investigation Committee. Fr O'Reilly, speaking on behalf of the Order at the Phase I public hearing on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004, outlined its position on the use of corporal punishment at St Joseph's, Ferryhouse. He told the Investigation Committee:

*I'd say that most of the boys who were in Ferryhouse would have received corporal punishment at one time or another in the course of their time there for what was regarded as misbehaviour, be that absconding, or some other thing, and I think that corporal punishment was the standard that was acceptable at that time.*

- 3.33** He went on to say, however, 'I am sure that punishment at times for running away was excessive'.

- 3.34** The Rosminians prepared a respondent statement in response to each complainant's allegations of physical abuse. This statement was furnished to the Commission by Fr Matt Gaffney, Provincial Superior, in May 2002. It further clarified the attitude of the Order to the era when corporal punishment was in widespread use. He wrote:

Corporal punishment should be seen in an institutional context where the maintenance of control was an absolute necessity, and in particular in the light of social attitudes of the time. It is true that the ideal of child-care in Industrial Schools was to avoid corporal punishment when possible, but that unfortunately provided an aspiration without the means of achieving it. The absence of child-care training left staff at the schools without any practical policy other than personal judgment, which was fallible and always hard-pressed. The use of corporal punishment as a general disciplinary measure, and its uses also as a punishment or deterrent for bed wetting, absconding and other infractions, in times when corporal punishment was generally socially acceptable, produced a disciplinary environment in which the distinction between punishment and abuse could become blurred.

- 3.35** In their Final Submission to the Investigation Committee, after all the hearings had been completed, the Rosminians wrote:

The susceptibility of corporal punishment to abuse seems inherent. If left to discretion, a cause can always be found for its use, especially where authority is threatened or insecure ...

It must be said that Prefects seem to have varied widely in their use of corporal punishment. This appears to be reflected in the pattern of complaints. This in itself would suggest that problems of corporal punishment were created in part by a lack of policy and supervision.

- 3.36** The approach taken by the Rosminians had many advantages for the complainants giving evidence to the Committee. Above all, it made it easier for them to tell of their experiences. The Rosminians' inquisitorial approach actively engaged with the Commission in searching for facts.



The victims were sometimes helped to recall details, and were often asked to add to the facts known to the Order.

- 3.37** However, the Order were loath to admit that the kind of corporal punishment administered as part of the regime often constituted physical abuse. This contrasted with their approach to known sexual abusers, where they did not dispute the abusive nature of the behaviour.

### ***The role of Prefect***

- 3.38** While all members of the Order and the lay teachers could use corporal punishments, the majority of the complaints received by the Investigation Committee named members of the Order who had been appointed Prefects. Until the late 1960s, when the number of dormitories was increased to three following a critical inspection, there were two Prefects, one for the junior and one for the senior section. Fr O'Reilly told the Investigation Committee:

*... it was regarded as the responsibility of the Prefects to look after the children, regardless of how many there were there ... once the children came out for all activities, whether that was football or hurling or soccer in the yard or whatever it had to be, you had to organise that and you had to ensure, as far as you could, that you had an eye on all the children or as many as you possibly could have, because that is your responsibility.*

- 3.39** It was regarded as an impossible task, unless the supervision of the children also involved a degree of control over them through fear of punishment. One former Prefect told the Investigation Committee:

*I certainly would have hit chaps with the palm of my hand as well if the frustration got too much ... I wouldn't have been unique, I don't think, no ... we always tried to leave that side of it to one of the others if they would do it. Somebody has to take on the responsibility of the disciplinarian, one of us could step back and let ... whoever was there do it ... That kind of shoved you into a role at the time as well.*

- 3.40** The Prefects, he explained:

*allowed somebody to take the flak, we all do it in groups unfortunately at times, somebody else takes on this role of being the disciplinarian and everybody else can sit back and say I'll send you to [the Prefect].*

- 3.41** A Prefect from the 1960s, Br Alfonso,<sup>5</sup> described the role of Prefect in the following terms:

*the Prefect of Discipline was public enemy numero uno. That he was the first public enemy because he was the only one who is to dish out discipline. He was to physically punish the children if that were necessary.*

- 3.42** Fr Antonio, who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1940s and 1950s, told the Committee, 'The advice I was given when I went over there first, make sure they know who is boss and your job was to keep control. There was very little support, I might add'.

- 3.43** Once 'shoved into' the role of Prefect, he went on:

*You just have to go in and pretend that you are the big boy, which I did at the time ... I roared and shouted and put a fella away and said that will stop that messing now. I don't remember hitting anybody that particular night, many a time I did. You would kind of take on the acting role ... Then, looking back now, while I was acting I'm sure the children didn't think I was acting at all, so that would have frightened them as well ... You would think I was going to kill them. It was using fear really to get control.*

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<sup>5</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.44** Fr Antonio told the Committee that he had requested that he be removed from the Prefect's position. He said:

*I was glad to get away from the prefecting ... it was too boring and walking around just like that all day, nothing to do. I would prefer to be working, doing something.*

**3.45** He took up another position in the School, and became happier in his work. Indeed, one of the complainants singled him out as a kind and helpful Brother, whereas, when Prefect, he did rule by fear, and was named by many complainants as unfeeling, cruel and severe.

### ***The leather straps***

**3.46** The official instrument used to punish was the leather strap as discussed in the chapter on Upton. There were two kinds: one was a shaped single piece of leather; and the other was known as 'a doubler'.

**3.47** It is likely that different straps were in use from time to time, and it is not certain that all of them contained metal or coins within them.

**3.48** The heavier strap was kept in the Prefect's office on the ground floor, a room that served also as the sweet shop, and boys who had committed more serious offences were sent there for punishment. Another strap, also a 'doubler', was sometimes kept in the Prefect's room adjacent to the dormitory. It appears that some Prefects carried a strap in their cassock or up a sleeve, to act as both a deterrent and to punish as they felt appropriate.

**3.49** Both boys and Brothers agreed that, to receive the strap, the boy faced the Prefect or Brother, and blows from the strap were along the length of the hand and forearm. The Brothers spoke of giving a boy a few slaps, but when the witnesses described their pain and distress the full pathos of corporal punishment emerged. Many graphic descriptions are given below. As one witness put it, 'The doublers ... when you were getting hit it used to go up your arm ... You got it right up the arm'. Many said the most painful was the blow upon the wrist.

**3.50** Being beaten on the hands was known as getting 'handers', and being struck on the buttocks or back was known as a 'flaming'. In theory, 'flammings' were reserved for very serious offences such as absconding and, as a rule, only the Prefects administered them.

**3.51** The Rules and Regulations governing Industrial and Reformatory Schools, issued to all certified schools in 1933,<sup>6</sup> allowed 'Chastisement with the cane, strap or birch', but made no attempt to describe the implements. The Department of Education Inspector, Mr Mícheál Ó Síochfhrada, issued more precise guidelines in a circular of 1946, in which he stated that corporal punishment should in future be confined to the form usually used in schools, that is, slapping on the open hand with a light cane or strap. Any form of punishment that was not in accordance with the circular was 'strictly prohibited'.

**3.52** The heavy double straps in use until 1993 in Ferryhouse, often weighted with coins, could not be described as a light strap. Nor could a blow along the arm be described as 'slapping on the open hand'. Therefore, neither the implement nor the manner of delivering the blow were in accordance with the rules and regulations governing corporal punishment.

### ***Documentary evidence on physical abuse***

**3.53** There is no documentary evidence on the use of corporal punishment and the issue of physical abuse. There is no punishment book for Ferryhouse. This is all the more surprising, given the fact

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<sup>6</sup> Set out in full in Volume I.

that the Prefect who had introduced the punishment book in Upton in 1952 also served as Prefect in Ferryhouse from 1960. Since the punishment books were intended to control the use of corporal punishment and curb its excesses, its absence makes it more difficult to establish the extent and severity of such abuse.

### ***The evidence of the complainants***

- 3.54** The Investigation Committee heard evidence from 29 individuals who spent time in Ferryhouse as children. Nearly all of them described being physically punished. Many expressed an acceptance of corporal punishment if it was proportionate and deserved. For example, one witness, in Ferryhouse in the late 1960s and early 1970s, told the Committee:

*You just have to be, kind of, street wise down there, you know ... I was never really punished much ... if there was a group of you you would always get one or two on the hands and that was it. You would just take it and leave it, you know ... sometimes they were deserved, yes.*

- 3.55** He went on to describe the kinds of offences that incurred different levels of physical punishment:

*Sometimes would be two, sometimes it would be four. Six if it was something bad, you know what I mean, smoking, say, for instance ... or cursing, you know, if you called somebody something you would probably only get two or three ... but really really trouble you would get six.*

- 3.56** A predictable tariff for offences would have allowed boys to work out what was fair or deserved punishment, and also taught the ‘street wise’ boy what to do to avoid being beaten. If applied properly, it would have made the punishment regime predictable. This particular witness accepted being physically punished if he had done wrong and if he got what he deserved. He reserved his criticism for unfair punishment, or excessive violence. He told the Investigation Committee:

*It was strict ... like, when you look back over it, it is for stupid things; wet the beds or you soiled your pants or something like that.*

- 3.57** He elaborated on this theme later:

*Soiling your underpants, checking your underpants and if you are soiled everyone else know about it. That is not human. You used to have to go up and open your underpants and show them in a line and there would be people scrubbing and spitting on them ... they are the things that stick in your mind.*

- 3.58** Many witnesses described being physically punished in circumstances that they considered being excessive, unfair and capricious. Although a few spoke of being punished by the Resident Manager, or by other members of the Rosminian Community, almost all focused on punishments inflicted by the Prefects, who were in charge of the boys.

- 3.59** Complaints were not confined to the use of the strap as an instrument of punishment. Some testified to being struck by various other implements, and a number of witnesses spoke of being punched or kicked.

- 3.60** Complaints of physical punishment related to every decade in respect of which the Investigation Committee heard evidence. The earliest evidence came from a witness who was admitted in 1943. The latest evidence came from one who left Ferryhouse in 1991.

- 3.61** In each of these decades, boys living in Ferryhouse complained of punishment that was severe and excessive, and beyond what was permitted under the rules governing industrial schools.

## Excessive punishment

**3.62** Several witnesses described beatings that went far beyond the limits of moderate chastisement. These severe beatings were usually given after serious offences, such as absconding. Running away was viewed as particularly serious for several reasons: first, the safety of the boys themselves was a consideration; secondly, there was a fear that the neighbours in Clonmel might be burgled or disturbed by the absconders; thirdly, all cases of absconding had to be reported to the Department of Education, so involved extra administration and possible reprimand; fourthly, one boy absconding unsettled the other boys and frequently triggered a spate of absconding; and finally, the Gardaí would have to be informed and searches had to be organised. The Prefect had the responsibility of organising the search for absconders.

**3.63** For all these reasons, absconders were dealt with severely. When they were returned, they were usually punished with the strap, often in view of other boys, and in the earlier years their heads were shaved. At one stage, Fr Antonio informed the Committee:

*They used to put them in pyjamas and coats over the top to stop them running away ... Again it was Dickensian ... And there were other occasions where they were put in short pants as well.*

**3.64** The major deterrent remained corporal punishment, and, as the Rosminians have conceded, corporal punishment for running away was at times excessive.

**3.65** A witness who was resident in Ferryhouse in the late 1940s, when he was aged approximately 14 years, told the Investigation Committee of a particularly severe beating he received for absconding. He ran away four or five days after his arrival and was found by the Gardaí and brought back. He was not punished on this occasion. A week later, he ran away again, and was picked up a few days later, early in the morning, by the Gardaí at his home. He was put in a police cell, 'a dirty stinking hole of a dungeon' and was forgotten about until there was a change of shift. He received no food at all, and was collected late that evening by a Brother, and driven back to Ferryhouse. He described what ensued:

*Went to bed because it was very late at night. Within about 15 minutes, I was hauled out of bed by Br Gian.<sup>7</sup> In those days we had no nightclothes, we slept in our shirt, he grabbed hold of my shirt and pulled it up over my head and my arms were held up like that and I was flogged unmercifully for a long period of time ... across the back, small of the back, the buttocks, the backs of my thighs and he left marks nearly an inch wide and they were there for months. When my mother come to see me they wouldn't let her see me because she could clearly see the back of my legs, they were all bruised.*

**3.66** He did not try to run away again. 'Neither' he added, 'did anybody else. We lived in fear, I never looked up from the ground after that'. Following that beating when he finally left the Institution and went home, he never left the house for a period of two years.

**3.67** A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the 1950s described seeing a boy who had absconded receive a severe beating in the dormitory on his return. He was visibly distressed as he told his story:

*He was 14, I think, 14 years of age, a big lad. A nice person. I used to refer to him as a gentle giant ... he was given an example beating in the dormitory ... He ran away with another two lads or something like that ... he was protesting, he had been in the school because he was 14 and the Committal Order was until he was 14 ... He should have been out. I think that was his general thing so he ran away. He was caught, brought back and up in the lower dormitory, at night time, when we were all up in the dormitory ... He was*

<sup>7</sup> This is a pseudonym.

again brought out in the dormitory ... and he was approached by this Br Maximo<sup>8</sup> ... Br Maximo would be the main physical man. [There were three other staff there] ... I don't know. Did they want him to tip over so they could strap him on the backside? ... He wouldn't anyway. He grabbed the bed and he wouldn't let go of the bed so Br Maximo then proceeded to come down on his fists, on the boy's fists on the bed ... then Br Maximo went to physically attack him anyway on the body ... He gave him a couple of whacks of the strap as well to see would that loosen the grip. It didn't. We were all kind of getting closer and closer to what was happening ... In the end I think .... did, out of pure weakness, let go of the bed. Br Maximo started strapping him with the strap ... From fisting, and from clattering and from the strap ... it was quite a bad beating he got. Bear in mind he was only a young boy and you have a full physical adult using fists and what have you on him.

- 3.68** A witness who was there in the late 1960s absconded twice, the first time with his brother and another boy, and the second time with two other boys. He told the Investigation Committee, 'I think the first time they let us go because we were only young and they realised we wanted just to go home'. The second time, however:

*We were brought back and we were made to shower again in our swimming trunks, and they would dip them in salt and they would slap us again and give us a much more severe beating this time, maybe 12 times.*

- 3.69** Many former residents described severe beatings they called 'flammings', a term apparently peculiar to Ferryhouse. One resident, who was in Ferryhouse in the 1940s, defined a 'flaming' as follows:

*They were administered mostly in the dormitory in front of everyone. They consisted of you being called. Then you took off your shirt because you wore your shirt at night ... and you were put across the bed ... The strap that I was talking about was laid into your body and they didn't care where they hit you ... You were completely naked ... Most of the time you were made put your hands across over the bed, sometimes they were held ... You see, you were in constant fear ... of being punished for the least thing, for the simplest of reasons or maybe for no reason at all.*

- 3.70** He went on to draw a distinction between punishment and abuse:

*If you asked me before to ban corporal punishment, I would have said corporal punishment is a necessity ... The corporal punishment we got, if we got it properly, it was right, it is the corporal punishment that was not right that I did not agree with. The corporal punishment that became abuse is what I'm talking about. Putting out your two hands ... we all got it in school, but flammings you didn't get in school ... in schools you got the hand, you may even have got the pulling of the hair or the ear when you done something wrong. I wouldn't be here today complaining about that.*

- 3.71** A former resident who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1960s and early 1970s described a beating that went from being a deserved punishment, given because he was seen doing a two-finger gesture behind a Brother saying Grace, to being a vicious assault. He told the Investigation Committee:

*I was called into the office ... I knew I was caught ... Fr Paolo<sup>9</sup> had [the leather] in his hand. He said put out your hand, so I put out me hand and I took one ... and he asked me for the other one and I said my thumb was sore, I was after bending it back playing football and I didn't want it on that hand because it would have been worse then, because if you take two or three on one hand you don't feel them. If you are getting six you won't*

<sup>8</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>9</sup> This is a pseudonym.

*feel the other three or four anyway and I wouldn't and he insisted and I kept moving. I wanted him to catch me this side [indicating], rather than this side of me thumb ... He kept missing me because I kept moving it ... One time he skinned it, and the next time he went and I pulled it, and he missed completely ... I could see in his face he was going to batter me ... I seen it and he went for me and I just went down in a huddle ... As I was going down I seen him drawing back to hit me and he caught me with the width of the thing ... It wasn't the flat part. He caught me with the thickness of it on the back there, on the back of the neck there ... I was down for a minute and he stood back. He didn't go mad on me or anything. It was one blow ... When I looked he was back ... I stood up and he said, "Put out your hand" ... I put out this hand and I took the rest. I do not know if it was one or two more on me hand, and I walked out.*

*I had genuinely got a sore thumb but everyone used to say it because if you took two you don't feel the rest because your hand is numb. That was a ploy but they knew about it as well you know.*

- 3.72** A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the latter half of the 1960s gave a similar account of a punishment that went out of control. The punishment was meted out by Br Valerio<sup>10</sup> who, in the private hearing, instructed his counsel to say, 'Br Valerio does not deny [the complainant's] allegation as it is set out in his statement of complaint.'<sup>11</sup> The statement said:

*When I was 13½ years old, maybe 14 years, I was going for a walk with other boys from St Joseph's. I don't know which Brother had us out for the walk but we were walking in twos and on the way out we were doing some messing ... When we got back to the school Br Valerio called me and another fellow out because of what happened on the walk. I was sent to the office to see him ... Inside the office Br Valerio asked me about the messing on the walk and if I had been involved and I denied it. He said he would give me one more chance to tell the truth. I denied it again and this time he got out the long leather strap. He had a reputation of not using his fists to hit boys but of using the strap. He gave me blows with the strap to each hand and he started to hit me all over the body with the strap. He hit me all over but did not hit my head. This lasted a good 5 minutes.*

- 3.73** Fr Ludano who was resident in Ferryhouse in the early 1950s recalled one occasion when he was approached by a few boys about a Brother who had punished another boy. He told the Investigation Committee:

*Some of the boys came to me and said: "Brother so and so, he slapped so and so even though he is only a baby." And that stayed in my mind ... I was horrified ... [I did] nothing ... I didn't know what to do ... You see, my own position would have been a visitor, or just passing through or whatever ... I was very sorry for the little fellow who was involved, you know, and he was only a baby.*

- 3.74** Even in an institution that was accustomed to the use of corporal punishment, there was an awareness of what was excessive and cruel. Neither the boys nor the priest, however, could challenge the right of the Brother to inflict punishment as he saw fit. Within Ferryhouse, it was the Brother in charge who set the rules.

### **Unfair punishment**

- 3.75** The Investigation Committee heard many complaints of punishments that were essentially unfair. It was not the severity of the beating but the injustice of it that gave cause for grievance. As one witness put it, '*Nothing you could do, could be an accident. Everything was deliberate that you did so you were punished*'.

<sup>10</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>11</sup> Br Valerio did not give evidence to the Committee; he lives abroad.



**3.76** One witness described one such incident, when he was unfairly beaten by Br Maximo:

*I was coughing in the dormitory, I wasn't feeling well, I was sick and I was coughing and I don't know what time it would be, maybe it would be after ten or eleven or twelve o'clock at night and Br Maximo came out. He went down along the aisle of the dormitory, one of the aisles, and he wanted to see who was coughing. So he spotted me anyway and he said, "Were you coughing?" I said, I was. So with that he went and started belting me and clattering me from head down across the body for coughing ... With his hands, yes and told me not to cough again ... He gave me a fair old wallop that time ... It was so unfair severe at the same time. I never heard of anyone getting a hiding for being sick. That would be my view.*

**3.77** Another former resident recounted an incident when he was beaten with a strap, even though he had done nothing wrong:

*I used to go to the boiler room to turn the steam on, and one day a glass was broken ... It was on the side of the boiler, a kind of dial to show how much water was in the boiler. I didn't break it, but I got belted for it on the hands because I was supposed to have been the only one who had gone in there.*

**3.78** A resident in the early 1960s described being beaten for something that he did not realise was a serious offence in the eyes of the Order. He explained:

*I got a serious beating there – there used to be a girl, I cannot think of her name now, she used to come out from Clonmel on a bicycle ... I remember the address. She was talking to me one day at the hay barn, I suppose I was maybe 15 at the time, but I knew nothing about young ones or anything like that, I was just plain ignorant and that. I was talking to her at the hay barn and the next thing Fr Dino<sup>12</sup> came along. He gave her a clatter and sent her off home anyway to Clonmel. We were just talking, there was absolutely nothing involved; but I got a bad beating that day and I ended up, I ran away out of Ferryhouse over it. That was a serious beating I got over that.*

**3.79** A resident in the 1940s described two 'flammings', he was given undeservedly. On one occasion, he was accused of asking a person for a cigarette on the Waterford Road, which ran by the School. 'I didn't do it', he said, 'but someone else's word was taken instead of mine and I was flammed for that'. The worst beating he received was when he was accused of allegedly claiming he had seen a priest eating in the kitchen when he should have been fasting. In fact, he had simply said he had seen the priest in the kitchen. 'I got an unmerciful hiding that day and not alone that did I get a hiding, at periods I was sent out and made stand against the wall with my fingers up against the wall like that' ... [indicating].

### **Other forms of punishment**

**3.80** Staff members were not merely authorised to use corporal punishment, they were given the freedom to use it at will. This freedom allowed for even greater scope for abuse. One complainant, a resident in the early 1970s, told the Investigation Committee:

*Not only me, we all got hidings for nothing, it all depends which way Br Valerio woke up in the morning. If we didn't make our beds right, if it wasn't inch perfect we got the slap. If our shoes weren't properly done or if our collars weren't properly inside our jumpers we got the slap for it. More or less for anything.*

**3.81** A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1950s described a physical punishment favoured by Br Maximo:

<sup>12</sup> This is a pseudonym.



*A few times, I don't know what for, I can't remember what it was for but I remember a few times where he told me, he used to do this a lot with a lot of people, hold the head steady by holding the ear to make sure that you didn't move your head when he was going to give you a clatter on the other side of the head. He would give you several clatters maybe on the other side ... with the open hand.*

**3.82** The Rosminians conceded that most of the physical punishment would have happened in a spontaneous way. If there were an incident in the yard, a Prefect would hit a boy a slap as opposed to going through the whole process of administering corporal punishment at a designated time. Fr O'Reilly called these 'spontaneous responses'. He explained, 'it wasn't corporal punishment in terms of receiving the cane. Like, I would acknowledge that it is quite possible that a Prefect just immediately slapped the boy'.

**3.83** These 'spontaneous responses' allowed some Brothers and priests to use physical chastisement as a first resort for correcting a child, and it was not always confined to one or two slaps. Depending on the mood of the Prefect, it could be a few slaps or a severe beating. A witness from the late 1960s told the Committee that even good boys would be beaten. He explained:

*I was very quiet. I kept myself to myself and stayed out of trouble ... we were beaten on regular occasions for talking in the refectory, or whatever. Stuff like that ... Every one of the boys got beaten on some occasion. No matter how good you were you were always beaten at least at some certain occasion.*

**3.84** He gave an example of such on-the-spot chastisement:

*[Fr Paolo] said, "Lights out" and we weren't allowed to speak after lights out and one of the boys might say something and he would be called out in front of Fr Paolo and he would hit him with his back handed slap ... the boy would be looking up to him, he would be only tiny, he would be only seven or eight years old, and he would put a full slap on with the back of his hand and he would put him actually spinning.*

**3.85** The clatter was often the main means of correction, so boys lived in an environment where they expected to be hit regularly and often.

**3.86** Perhaps the worst effect of gratuitous and capricious punishment was its unpredictability. No matter what the boys did, a punishment was still a possibility. The result was a climate of fear. A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1960s vividly described the kind of fear he experienced every day. He told the Investigation Committee:

*I cried most days in that school. I was so scared when the next beating was going to come, whether it would be me. I mean I cried for my friends, my friends cried for me. We didn't deserve this stuff, we really didn't deserve this ... It was the beatings that was given and dished out in there was savage, man, savage ... I was a child you know, a child. I've walked landings with hard men in the Joy [prison], in Cork, wherever. I was never afraid. I would stand eye to eye with people that killed people. I wasn't afraid. But I was afraid when I was in that school, every day of my fucking life. That is what I want you to understand.*

### ***Punishment for bed-wetting***

**3.87** Fr O'Reilly, in his evidence to the Investigation Committee given on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004 at Phase I, said that nocturnal enuresis had always been a problem at their schools:

*If we are taking bed-wetting or enuresis as a problem, it seems to me that you are talking somewhere between 20 and 30% of the boys with a problem in that area.*

- 3.88** When asked how bed-wetters were dealt with, he replied:
- Well, we have no records to say how boys were dealt with who wet the bed. Were boys punished for wetting the bed? We don't have records of that and when I spoke with members of the Congregation who would have worked there, they would not recall that boys were punished for wetting the bed.*
- 3.89** He conceded, however, that boys who wet were kept in a separate area known as 'the sailor's dorm', and that boys were also given the term 'sailors'. The Rosminians explained, 'It is generally felt that these beds were kept together so that the smell of urine did not pervade the whole dormitory and thus the boys who did not wet the bed did not have to suffer the smell'.
- 3.90** The Rosminians now accept that it would have been humiliating for a boy to be known as a 'sailor' or 'bed-wetter'. They also state that 'it is quite possible that certain Prefects used this as a way of asserting their authority'.
- 3.91** The Rosminians also concede that other practices were used to try to stop bed-wetting. The boys were required to wash their own sheets each morning. They would have to take their wet sheets down from the dormitory to the laundry, wash them and then hang them up to dry. In the evening, they would have to collect their own sheets and return them to the dormitory. This practice continued until a new Prefect arranged for the sheets to be washed by a housekeeper. The boys still had to bring down their wet sheets to the laundry room, and that continued to mark them out and humiliate them.
- 3.92** Two further humiliating practices existed for boys who wet the bed. The Rosminians admitted that 'a very demeaning practice developed for a short time of making boys with enuresis wear a short skirt for a period of a day or two'.
- 3.93** Another practice also developed, whereby bed-wetters would be required to walk around the schoolyard with a mattress above their heads.
- 3.94** It was put to Fr O'Reilly that bed-wetting seemed to have been treated as a problem of discipline, even though it was probably the least subject to discipline. He replied:
- I would have to agree with you. You know, if a child has a difficulty in that area and is upset, obviously you are going to increase the problem by drawing even more and more attention to it and certainly by punishing the child or by causing the child to be even more afraid than he was.*
- 3.95** However, he again added, 'I don't know that children were habitually punished for wetting the bed'.
- 3.96** The question of whether bed-wetting was routinely punished was fully answered in the evidence given to the Investigation Committee at the private hearings.
- 3.97** One of the Prefects in charge of the dormitory, Br Ignacio,<sup>13</sup> told the Committee:
- [The top dormitory] was divided into two, they were all the wet beds, as we call them, there on one side, and then the rest of the boys on the other ... When I went there I always thought they were punished ... Which I didn't agree really, but as it before I went and it was well before I went there, I wasn't the one to stop the discipline. Hard as it was for me to administer a couple of slaps for each boy ... They were punished every day if they wet the bed ... They went down with their sheets ... to dry them below where the heating for the showers were ...*

<sup>13</sup> This is a pseudonym.

- 3.98** He added, *'That is the way it was when I went in there. Boys [who wet the bed] were always slapped ... one in each hand ... before they went to bed the next night'.*
- 3.99** He went on to say that he had never agreed with punishing the boys, because *'some boys I know didn't do it purposely, just in their sleep they wet the bed, they couldn't be accountable for that'.* However, he added *'That was the case when I became Prefect and I didn't discontinue that'.*
- 3.100** He was then asked how the boys should have been treated. He replied:
- If I know what I know now, I wouldn't have administered punishment at all, but I was young at the time and that is the way it was handed down from Prefect to Prefect during all the course of the years.*
- 3.101** He went on to advance the bizarre proposition that some boys deliberately wet their beds, *'I knew some fellows didn't mean it, just did it in their sleep ... but there could be others there who didn't ... I couldn't distinguish'.* It was put to him that he was therefore punishing them all in case one boy deliberately wet the bed. He knew that some of the boys could not help wetting the bed and it was not their fault but, at the same time, he felt that some of them deliberately wet the bed and, as he could not distinguish between them, he punished all who wet the bed. He replied, *'Exactly, yes and two slaps would not hurt anyone, never, you know'.*
- 3.102** He then said, *'I am very sorry for it, very sorry for having done that indeed'.*
- 3.103** His counsel apologised on his behalf to a complainant who had been beaten for wetting the bed. He told him:
- Br Ignacio does not and will not in his evidence seek to justify the administration of corporal punishment to bed-wetters in an effort to deter bed-wetting. He accepts there is no justification ... for the administration of corporal punishment to people who wet the bed in the hope or expectation of deterring them from wetting the bed in the future ... Br Ignacio now accepts this was a stupid thing to be doing if he wanted kids to stop wetting the bed ...*
- Br Ignacio will say in evidence that the Prefect that he replaced when he took over as Prefect ... and the Prefect who succeeded him ... administered corporal punishment to the bed-wetters ... he accepts now it was entirely wrong.*
- 3.104** The Prefect himself apologised again, and the conflict between his own beliefs and feelings about how to treat the children and the requirements of his duty to follow the rules and tradition of the Institution fully emerged:
- There was one thing I do regret is having to punish the boys who wet the bed. That was all. That was the biggest, or should I say ... the worst and I couldn't bear to do that and still it was the done thing, give a couple of slaps on the hand and it was against my nature to do that...I didn't want to do that at all although it was done the whole time, years and years before I went there and that was done all the time and that was the, how shall I say, the order of the time....It was against my nature altogether to do that because I knew very well some of them couldn't help it but it was the done thing like. I couldn't very well be the one to stop that, because I would be the worst in the world. You might have the whole lot of them wetting it after a while.*
- 3.105** He found it impossible to break with the School's precedents and tradition. Beating boys to stop them wetting the bed was acknowledged to be *'a stupid thing to be doing'* because it was ineffective and did not stop the wetting. Indeed, it may have made bed-wetting worse. The practice of beating them, however, *'was handed down from Prefect to Prefect during all the course of the*

years', and the Prefect felt he was powerless to stop it, even though it was cruel and pointless. As in many institutions, tradition outweighed reason.

### **Evidence on bed-wetting from former residents**

- 3.106** The Prefect whose evidence has just been discussed expressed the belief that *'two slaps would not hurt anyone'*. Many of the former residents told the Investigation Committee about the effects of facing these beatings at the end of every day. A resident from the 1940s said:

*It was rampant throughout, not just the bed-wetters, everybody got beaten. If you were a bed-wetter my God it was a second helping, a third helping, but you got beat during the day as well, but you were guaranteed it every night. I wished they would give it to us in the morning, get it over with. No, you were all day sweating and you got a few handers during the day and you still had to take whatever. Once it was over thank God, but you got it the next night again because you knew you were going to wet.*

- 3.107** He had earlier tried to express the pain of the experience:

*The wet-the-beds went into the toilet, in they would walk. You would have to hold your sleeve of your corduroy to get the full whack of the hand. When you are getting beat, you shake, you can't help it, you couldn't with them. "Keep your hand still" and there you are – we had a little thing at the beginning but they copped on to that very quick. When the slap came down we used to bring the hand with it. Anyway, if you didn't they would keep beating you until you keep it still. You try to keep a still hand and the blue marks and the pain and the swelling with a leather strap. If you didn't stop they would just put it across the sink and you couldn't move it then so you got it.*

- 3.108** A resident in the early 1960s told of how the beatings had shifted to the mornings, but the inevitability of being beaten for wetting the bed remained. He had not wet the bed in the previous institution, but on his way down to Ferryhouse he drank too much lemonade. That night he wet the bed, was beaten and consigned to the *'sailor's'* section. From then on, he lived in fear of doing it. He explained:

*I used to try and stay awake until I wanted to go to the toilet and then I would go to the toilet, but it didn't work. I would fall asleep eventually.*

- 3.109** He described the ritual the next morning:

*If you wet the bed you had to put your hand up the next morning. They would go around and ask, "Any sailors?" and you would put your hand up. So you took your mattress and your sheet and brought it downstairs to a drying room and you got a cold shower ... If you stepped out of line in the cold shower, if you didn't stand directly underneath the cold shower, you were hit with a strap. If you stood underneath the shower you still got your punishment over in the office. Once you wet the bed you were due a punishment ... Some of them would hit you up there (indicating his arm) ... Some of them would barely get you up the wrist ... Some of them would hit you right up the arms.*

- 3.110** He differentiated between one Brother, who *'would take pleasure in hitting you for nothing'*, and another Brother who *'would kind of gave you your slaps and let you go ... he would just give you your dose of medicine and you would be gone'*.

- 3.111** According to the evidence of Fr Antonio, he did occasional holiday relief work in Ferryhouse from the late 1960s to the late 1980s. He later worked as Director of Ferryhouse from the early to mid-1990s. He said those who wet their beds during his time were not physically punished. That had stopped sometime in the mid-1960s. Also, boys were no longer segregated into a separate section. However, the boys who wet the beds still had to take their sheets down the old fire escape and across the yard to be washed in the laundry. He told the Committee:

*Some of the saddest memories I would have is of the boys who wet their bed bringing out their sheets to laundry in the morning because there was only one woman in the laundry and they used to have to bring them out.*

**3.112** During the 1960s, other steps were taken in an effort to ease the situation. During Fr Rafaele's<sup>14</sup> time (mid-1960s to early 1970s), electronic devices that woke the boys went on trial. The segregation of those who wet the beds in the designated section of the dormitories ceased.

**3.113** Fr O'Reilly admitted to the Investigation Committee that the number of boys who wet the bed decreased only when conditions got better, because there was a reduction in the level of fear and anxiety about bed-wetting and because boys were no longer humiliated by being required to carry their sheets down to the laundry room themselves.

#### **Documentary evidence on the punishment of bed-wetting**

**3.114** In 1962, a County Waterford mother wrote a letter of complaint to the Department of Education about the way in which her son was punished for wetting the bed while in St Joseph's, Ferryhouse. She wrote:

Dear Sir

I am writing this to ask you about my boys ... whom Justice Skinner released three weeks ago, well I want to tell you what happened their brother ... who was only sent also [earlier in the year] for three months, he was suffering from kidney trouble and the punishment they were giving him for wetting the bed was stand under a cold shower and one night he was put out of the bed by the Brother and given four showers at 9:30 p.m. Then into the office in the morning and nine whips of the leather on each hand, and they told him they would increase it, well he had to run and I said it to the Priest, you would run too and so would I. Well he ran home in a terrible state chilled to the bone so I thought he would have a nervous breakdown so I wired for his father to come for him.

**3.115** Fr Alanzo<sup>15</sup> twice wrote to the Reformatory and the Industrial Schools Branch of the Department of Education about the mother's complaint. In his first letter in 1962, he spoke despairingly of her: 'I have had more trouble from their mother than I have had from the rest of the boys', but he does not deal with the complaints raised. His second letter to the Department, sent a month later, is revealing insofar as it conceded that cold showers were given, and suggested that bed-wetting was 99% a bad habit and the result of bad upbringing and laziness on the part of the boys, and it goes on to describe the mother as a neurotic person. Fr Alanzo failed, however, to deal with the question of whether corporal punishment was administered for bed-wetting, and, if so, whether it was the Institution's policy. The Commission does not have any documentation suggesting that the Department followed up this issue.

**3.116** What does emerge from the correspondence is the way in which the mother was seen as a neurotic troublemaker. The Manager's main concern was not dealing with the substance of the complaint, that her son had been ill-treated and beaten for bed-wetting, but placating the Department of Education on the matter. In another sense, her persistence paid off, because her third son was released before the end of the month.

**3.117** The General Inspection Report of Dr Lysaght dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1966 refers to the problem of bed-wetting in the School, stating that it is 'somewhat a problem'. According to the acting Resident Manager, Fr Dino, there were about a dozen cases of bed-wetting in the School at that time, and it was his belief that the 'boys who came from the Convent schools were the worst in this regard'.

<sup>14</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>15</sup> This is a pseudonym.

## ***The movement towards the abolition of corporal punishment***

### **The minutes of a meeting of Rosminian Superiors to discuss the issue**

- 3.118** The question of corporal punishment in Ferryhouse was considered at a meeting of Rosminian Superiors and others, which took place in Drumcondra on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1968. Fr Filippo,<sup>16</sup> Provincial of the Rosminian Institute, called this meeting, and amongst those who attended was Fr Rafaele, Resident Manager of Ferryhouse, Fr Pietro,<sup>17</sup> a previous Resident Manager there, and Fr Lucio<sup>18</sup> who succeeded Fr Rafaele in 1970. Also in attendance was Fr Ludano.
- 3.119** The problem of corporal punishment was raised by the Fr Provincial, Fr Filippo, because 'Recent events seemed to indicate that the administration of it had gone beyond the mean in the past'. His solution was to make it 'the responsibility of the Rector or the Headmaster', with the Provincial as manager ultimately responsible. He canvassed their opinions.
- 3.120** One of the solutions suggested had in fact been in the regulations for decades, that 'all punishments of this kind should be recorded, and further that they should be administered in the presence of a witness'. The Brothers suggested 'the need for a written guide ... such had been in existence in Upton'.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.121** There was recognition that much depended on the appointment of capable Prefects.
- 3.122** There was an objection to turning to the Rector even in small things, but it was again asserted that, even there, 'a little record should be kept' and 'a ceiling to the punishments'.
- 3.123** They discussed the current punishment systems in Ferryhouse and Omeath and agreed 'Corporal punishment was judged the most humiliating of the lot, and the least effective'.
- 3.124** This meeting in 1968 was, in short, debating the need for the regulation of corporal punishment and was reaching conclusions that had been contained in the 1933 guidelines.
- 3.125** Notwithstanding the acknowledgement that it was humiliating and ineffective, the use of corporal punishment continued in Ferryhouse for a further 25 years, until its abolition by the School in 1993.

### **Remarks on corporal punishment by the Department of Education Inspector**

- 3.126** The Department of Education Inspector, Mr Cobalt,<sup>20</sup> touched on the subject of corporal punishment and recorded his concern at its continued occasional use in Ferryhouse. In an addendum to his General Inspection Report of Ferryhouse dated 30<sup>th</sup> May 1979, Mr Cobalt noted that corporal punishment was still used occasionally, and added that he had not examined the facts of its usage.
- 3.127** Mr Cobalt's Inspection Reports for the following and successive years, noted the sanctions that applied to the children. A report dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 1980 listed the sanctions applied to the children as: (a) loss of TV; (b) loss of pocket money; and (c) early bed/loss of home leave. The reports of 1981, 1983 and 1984 are in similar terms, and make no reference whatever to the use of corporal punishment.

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<sup>16</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>17</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>18</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>19</sup> This is believed to be a reference to the Upton punishment book.

<sup>20</sup> This is a pseudonym.



## **Circular 9/82 prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in national schools**

- 3.128** In January 1982, the Department of Education issued Circular No 9/82 that prohibited the use of corporal punishment in national schools. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1982, Fr Stefano, Resident Manager in St Joseph's, Ferryhouse wrote to the Department on the issue of corporal punishment:
- While the general practice, philosophy and ideas of the school would be against the use of any form of corporal punishment, nevertheless, because of the nature of the work in which we are involved, there may be certain occasions when the Manager or his Deputy (Care or Education) might feel that some form of corporal punishment should be used.
- 3.129** He went on to ask the Department for its views as to whether or not Circular 9/82 nullified the Manager's powers under the 1908 Act and 1933 Rules. Despite the considerable reforming zeal that had led to the rebuilding of the nineteenth-century institution, and to numerous other reforms, the abandonment of corporal punishment it seemed was a step too far for him.
- 3.130** Various officials in the Department considered Fr Stefano's letter. One such official, a Miss Ní Fhearghail, set out her views on the issue of corporal punishment in an internal memorandum dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 1982 and entitled 'Corporal Punishment in Special Schools'. She wrote:
- ... in my view Circular 9/82 only covers the conduct of the children while they are in the national school. It does not cover out of school activities. Even within the school the Rules which were approved under the Act may hold precedence. I think we would need to consult the Chief State Solicitor.
- 3.131** However, the issue lay dormant in the Department for a number of months until March 1983, when Miss Ní Fhearghail, in a memorandum addressed to Mr Ó Críodháin, noted that Fr Stefano never got an answer to his query. Mr Ó Críodháin referred the matter to Mr MacGleannáin who, by memorandum dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1983, replied:
- This matter needs to be cleared up. I think policy should be to prohibit corporal punishment. Undoubtedly, however, members of staff in these schools have to restrain youngsters physically and a thin line divides physical restraint from corporal punishment.
- 3.132** The matter was referred to the Chief State Solicitor. By letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 1983, the Deputy Assistant Chief State Solicitor advised that rules made under the 1908 Act took precedence over the rules for national schools, as they had the force of statute, while the rules for national schools, although they had been judicially noticed, were not made pursuant to an Act. He suggested that the matter should now be rectified by the provision of rules made pursuant to Section 3 of the Act of 1941 for all certified industrial schools.
- 3.133** On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1983, the Department of Education passed on to Fr Stefano the advices received from the Deputy Assistant Chief State Solicitor. They wrote:
- The present Rules and Regulations for Certified Industrial Schools were approved by the Minister some fifty years ago and have, to a great extent, become out-moded in practice.
- I would be grateful if you would give earnest consideration to the question of statutory Rules for the conduct of your school and would draw up a schedule of Rules deemed appropriate. It would be helpful if a copy of these draft Rules were forwarded to the Department not later than the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1983.
- 3.134** Fr Stefano gave evidence that nothing was done about this request. The School was being rebuilt, and the management were apparently too busy to respond.
- 3.135** It would seem that the use of corporal punishment continued in Ferryhouse. The report of Mr Cobalt of 13<sup>th</sup> April 1989 records that the strap had been given to one boy and was witnessed.



He wrote that a positive decision should be made about its use as a punishment for out-of-school misbehaviour. In a note attached to the end of the 1989 Report, he advised that the use of corporal punishment be discontinued 'as the evidence is that it does not change deprived boys in their anti-social behaviour ... and my experience confirms that'.

**3.136** In July 1989, a draft Circular (1/89) was prepared which, on the face of it, imposed a ban on the use of corporal punishment in industrial schools operating under the terms of the 1908 Act. In evidence, Fr Stefano said he had no recollection of ever receiving this circular. He believed that, if he had seen it, he would have remembered it, and would have discussed it. He presumed he would have ceased the use of corporal punishment. Fr Stefano said that, when the 1989 draft circular first came to his attention at a recent meeting in preparation for his evidence to the Commission, they carried out an extensive trawl through the Ferryhouse documentation relating to this period, but failed to disclose the original.

**3.137** The issue remained a live one in the early 1990s. At the end of a document concerning requests for amendments to the School rulebook, dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 1990, there is a handwritten comment by the Inspector:

It is noted that corporal punishment can still be administered in St Joseph's. I raised this matter with the Director on my recent visit to the school and he would be strongly opposed to any move to alter this rule.

**3.138** At a meeting in 1993, the senior management team at Ferryhouse took a decision to stop using the strap.

**3.139** What emerges from the foregoing is that there was concern about the use of corporal punishment in Ferryhouse during the period of time under investigation, and attempts appear to have been made in the late 1970s and 1980s to devise a policy in respect of its use, but there was little, if any, regulation of this policy by the Department of Education. Ferryhouse was given leeway to continue its use.

### ***Conclusions on physical abuse***

- 3.140**
- 1. Corporal punishment was the option of first resort for problems. Its use was pervasive, excessive, unpredictable and without regulation or supervision and for these reasons became physically abusive.**
  - 2. Frequent corporal punishment was the main method of maintaining control over the boys and it created a climate of fear that was emotionally harmful.**
  - 3. The system of discipline was the same as in Upton and the Rosminians accept that there was excessive corporal punishment in Ferryhouse.**
  - 4. Young and inexperienced staff used fear and violence to assert authority. Severe punishments were inflicted for a wide range of acts and omissions.**
  - 5. Rules and regulations governing corporal punishment were not observed and a punishment book was not maintained. The rules were regarded as merely guidelines, with no provision made by the Department of Education for sanctions and reprimands being issued to schools that ignored them. They were therefore ignored with impunity.**
  - 6. Excessive, unfair and even capricious violence did lasting damage to many of the boys in Ferryhouse.**
  - 7. For most of the period under review, boys were punished for bed-wetting and were subjected to nightly humiliation, degradation and fear.**

## Sexual abuse

- 3.141** Two religious members of the Rosminian Institute and one layman were convicted of sexual abuse of boys in Ferryhouse. Another religious who served in Ferryhouse was convicted of a crime committed elsewhere, on a boy who had previously been a resident of Ferryhouse and who was then living in another Rosminian institution. These three religious offenders served in senior positions in Ferryhouse and the layman was a volunteer there for different periods of years between 1968 and 1988.
- 3.142** The fact that sexual abuse occurred was not in dispute. The issue that the Committee had to decide was whether the abuse was systemic, related to failures of the Institution or of management, or whether the abuse was to be viewed as episodic acts perpetrated by individuals, unrelated to the nature of the Institution and its management.
- 3.143** The most revealing evidence about sexual abuse came from Br Bruno,<sup>21</sup> who worked as a Prefect in Ferryhouse in the latter half of the 1970s, and who was convicted in 1999 of a number of counts of serious sexual assault on four young men when they were boys in Ferryhouse.
- 3.144** Br Bruno's account described how he committed systematic and repeated abuse of boys during the four years that he was a Prefect in Ferryhouse. He gave candid evidence at a private hearing about his *modus operandi*, how he was able to escape detection (which surprised even himself), and how he was able to frighten boys and prevent them from reporting him or talking about him. He was frank about the nature of his acts, the circumstances in which he committed them, and the extent of what he did.
- 3.145** His account of his deeds, and what enabled him to perpetrate them, provided an insight into the behaviour of a child sexual abuser. He operated in the late 1970s, when living conditions and the building itself were better than in the old Ferryhouse. His testimony on what enabled him to abuse for so long may well be relevant to the Institution at other times in the past, when conditions were more likely to facilitate such coercive, furtive and abusive behaviour.

## Convictions

### Br Bruno

- 3.146** Br Bruno was arrested in 1996 and charged with counts of buggery, indecent assault and assault occasioning actual bodily harm, in respect of four people who had been in his care at Ferryhouse between 1975 and 1979. He was the Brother in charge of 'A' group comprising some 36 to 40 boys aged between nine and 11 years. He appeared before the Circuit Criminal Court in 1999, pleaded guilty to the offences charged and was sentenced to a term of nine years imprisonment with the last three suspended.
- 3.147** Br Bruno's activities as a perpetrator of sexual abuse in Ferryhouse came to light in the late 1970s, following which he was dismissed from the Order, but the case was not reported to the Gardaí until the mid-1990s.
- 3.148** The disclosure occurred when two boys who had absconded from the Institution were hitching a lift. The Resident Manager, Fr Stefano, saw them on the road, picked them up and brought them back to Ferryhouse. As they travelled back to the School, one of the boys broke down, and told Fr Stefano that Br Bruno '*was at him*'. This had an immediate impact on Fr Stefano and, when they got back to the School, he brought the boy to his office, cautioned him about the seriousness of what he had said, and sought details from him. The boy stuck by his story and said that another

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<sup>21</sup> This is a pseudonym.

boy would confirm what he was saying. He said that Br Bruno had started to abuse him when he was in his unit, but that the abuse had continued when he was transferred to the senior group.

**3.149** The other boy was sent for, and Fr Stefano described how *'the two boys sat in my office and unfolded to me a most horrific story of what had been happening to them'*. The boys told Fr Stefano story after story of cruelty and abuse. The worst, as far as he was concerned, was the abuse of one of the boys during the Pope's visit to Ireland in 1979. The whole school went to see the Pope in Limerick, except for one of the two boys who was not allowed to go because of his record of absconding. Br Bruno volunteered to stay back and supervise him. The boy told Fr Stefano that, when the rest of the boys left, *'this Brother came and raped me in my bed'*.

**3.150** Fr Stefano said that he had never suspected Br Bruno; indeed, he found him a very enthusiastic member of staff. His dedication to the work seemed unquestionable: *'this was a man who seemed to be the last in bed and the first up every day'*. Nevertheless, when the allegation was made, Fr Stefano began to see it all very differently:

*... the picture that comes to mind always to me is of a huge jigsaw puzzle that you are reasonably happy with but that there is a piece missing and while I had no suspicions of him, the minute those words were spoken, it was as if somebody had put the final piece in the jigsaw and all these activities that he was involved with started to make sense.*

**3.151** He gave the example of an earlier discussion, at which one of the other Prefects said that a boy had heard someone in the dormitory the night before, and Br Bruno had volunteered to check it out.

**3.152** The same night that the boys disclosed the abuse, Fr Stefano drove the short distance to Glencomeragh to report to the Provincial. He returned to the School where he met Br Bruno the next day. Br Bruno initially denied the allegations but, when he was told that the boys were willing to confront him, he confessed. Br Bruno left the School and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Dublin. Shortly afterwards, he was dismissed from the Order.

**3.153** Br Bruno's career in Ferryhouse began in the mid-1970s and he became a Prefect, which he continued to be until the events of 1979. As Prefect, he was in charge of 'A' Group consisting of 36 to 40 boys aged between nine and 11 years.

**3.154** Br Bruno sexually abused numerous boys during his time in Ferryhouse. He had easy access to and exclusive control over his group, who were located in the junior dormitory, which was separate from the other residents and Brothers. This dormitory was located on the second floor of the east wing. Br Bruno's own room was located off the boys' dormitory. These arrangements had been put in place in the late 1960s, to replace the old system of two large dormitories housing junior and senior boys. The boys were now separated into age groups in three smaller dormitories, each accommodating up to 80 boys.

**3.155** Br Bruno's preference was for pubescent boys, whom he selected with considerable care. Under the pretence of checking whether they had wet their beds, he approached their beds at night. He would fondle their genitals to see if they became aroused; weekends were more suitable times, because there were fewer people around.

**3.156** When he had fixed on a boy whom he intended to abuse, he waited until the weekend and then gave the boy an anti bed-wetting pill that he knew would have a soporific effect. He would spend some time with his colleagues in the west wing, where he would socialise and have a drink, before returning to the dormitory where he carried the boy to his private room and sexually abused him before returning the boy to bed.

**3.157** Br Bruno began his evidence to the Committee with some initial hesitation; he began to imply that he had pleaded guilty to offences he had not committed. He said:

*I fondled them in their bed ... It began when I was moved to the A unit, when I was checking beds at night time for wetting ... Just by touching it started ... The boys didn't mind, they didn't stop me ... I knew it was wrong but I continued ...*

**3.158** At that stage, he denied anal rape:

*I never penetrated ... I would be sexually excited, yes ... it just ended at that ...*

**3.159** The Chairperson then spoke to him about the need for him to give a full and honest account, without trying to recant or change evidence accepted in court. After a brief adjournment for legal consultation, the hearing resumed, and Br Bruno gave a very different account of events. He now said:

*[That boy] was one of the boys that I pleaded guilty to in my criminal trial ... I pleaded guilty to buggery. I did take him into my bed and penetrated but not in a full extent but I did bugger, I did penetrate him ... I told the Gardaí that I had abused [the other boy] ... I took him to my bed and I penetrated him ... [The third boy], I pleaded guilty to fondling, abusing him in that way.*

**3.160** He acknowledged that these acts of abuse happened on more than one occasion. He also accepted that these were not the only boys that he sexually abused:

*There was one or two other boys that I took there but the names are gone from me at the moment.*

**3.161** He was asked to give some estimate as to when the sexual abuse began, and he replied:

*The fondling and the feeling at bedtime went on a few months after I taking charge of the group. It went on at that time. The serious matters that were dealt with in the criminal trial went on in ... [1978/79] ... up to that moment that the Superior ... it was reported to the Superior and he called me in and I admitted to it ... Four, five boys, I think.*

**3.162** He took charge of the dormitory in the mid-1970s, and until Fr Stefano confronted him in December 1979 there were some four years of abuse. When asked to estimate the number of boys he had abused, he answered that, if he was being asked to estimate the numbers he had groped and interfered with, *'It could be dozens, yes ... Yes it would be dozens'*. When asked to try to put a more precise figure on it he replied, *'over maybe 20, over a period of years'*.

**3.163** The fondling took place during the week. The acts of penetration tended to occur at weekends. He explained:

*I fondled them ... I carried them to my room ... left them in my bed and fondled them ... I attempted myself to penetrate them ... It was a weekend basis. Friday, Saturday night ... I was able to go over to the community room ... in the community room we would have a social evening and I would have a drink.*

**3.164** There was a community room upstairs in the west wing, where the members of the Order could relax. It had *'comfortable chairs, a cocktail cabinet and a big television screen'*. Here, he would have a couple of pints of Guinness and perhaps a couple of shorts: *'I may have been a bit unsteady, but not falling down ... they would know that I had some drink taken'*. He would then return to his room where he would also *'take a little tipple'* from bottles of spirits received as gifts that he kept there. He added:

*I should never have been left in the unit on my own, solely on my own and isolated from the rest of the community. There was no such thing as shift work, night staff, night staff*

even for a weekend, all of those things should have been in place in a group like the group that I was in.

- 3.165** He then described what happened when he returned to the dormitory and took a boy to his room:
- ... I left them in the bed and I fondled them and penetrated them ... I felt they were asleep and they didn't know ... On waking up they just remained limp, I am sure terrified of what was going on and preferred to remain in that state ... Those boys that I took to my room were boys that were sleeping ... I selected those ... I felt they were what I wanted. It was weekly ... those boys were terrified during that period when I took them to my room.*
- 3.166** He went on to explain why the boys were so deeply asleep:
- Some of them were on medication for bed-wetting ... They took their tablet and it made them sleepy ... All the bed-wetters would be on them ... The nurse would allot the nightly take every day to me and I would distribute it to them ... I would have maybe two or three days supply of the tablet for all of the boys.*
- 3.167** As he knew which boys had taken a tablet, he knew which ones would be drowsy. These tablets allowed him to choose those boys who would be asleep and remain asleep. When he was finished with a boy, he took him back to his own bed in the dormitory. His activities show how planned and pre-meditated the abuse was.
- 3.168** The abuse continued undetected for four years. When asked whether he was concerned that the boys would tell, he said:
- At the back of my mind you would think—you would know very well that it would come out and somebody would reveal it and they did.*
- 3.169** He told the Investigation Committee, 'I am sure the other boys in the dormitory knew what was going on'. However, such was his control over them that they never told. In Fr Stefano's words, 'quite a lot of the boys who went through his unit ... have told me of the control that he was able to keep when he locked that door at night time ... he had them terrorised'.
- 3.170** A number of reasons as to how the abuse continued were explored with Br Bruno. He agreed that, in his early days as Prefect, he frequently used corporal punishment:
- Yes, I hit the boys, I struck the boys. I found certainly at the beginning I had no other way of keeping control, keeping order, keeping day to day things running.*
- 3.171** He agreed that he had a reputation as a Prefect and the boys were afraid of him, and that this facilitated his ability to do these things without being reported.
- 3.172** He agreed that the job of Prefect with complete unsupervised control over 35 to 40 boys was a corrupting influence:
- It changed me to a different type of person ... a monster person that was the effect that it had.*
- 3.173** Br Bruno claimed that he had no attraction to boys before he went into Ferryhouse:
- In all my years before I went into the Rosminians I had no attraction towards the younger boys ... I had my girlfriends up to going to the Rosminian Order ... the boys thing just started when I went into Ferryhouse.*
- 3.174** Yet, within Ferryhouse, he was unable to control his attraction to pubescent boys and claimed that he tried to get help:

*I went for advice before with [a senior member of the Order] and we chatted. At the end ... at the breaking point that I went to him and discussed it with him. I discussed it with him after coming out of the Order too.*

- 3.175** The Investigation Committee was unable to corroborate this assertion. He remained convinced, moreover, that other members of the Community knew what he was up to. He also asserted that *'it was widespread'*. He explained:

*Like when other boys were talking and were giving out about other members of the Community, I felt they were being abused by other members.*

- 3.176** He was asked if he thought it was fairly safe to do it because it was almost permitted within the Institution, and he replied, *'Yes ...'*.

- 3.177** He later added: *'They [the boys] were mentioning that other members of the community were abusing the boys'*.

- 3.178** This assertion, that abuse was so widespread that it seemed to be permitted, does not accord with the way in which Fr Stefano took instant action when the abuse perpetrated by Br Bruno was disclosed to him. However, Br Bruno had been abusing for about four years before it was reported to Fr Stefano, who was completely unaware that he *'was living with an abuser'*.

- 3.179** A complainant who was in Ferryhouse in the mid to late 1970s described Br Bruno as *'just bad ... he was just evil out and out'*. He told the Committee he first met Bruno in the mid-1970s in Woodstown, in Waterford. This was before Br Bruno had joined the Rosminians, and he was visiting Woodstown with his friend who was a priest. The complainant described how Br Bruno approached him when he was washing his shirt in the sink and, under the pretence of helping to wash the shirt, started rubbing his chest and:

*From that he went on to put his hands down towards my privates and, basically, that was the first time I met [Br Bruno].*

- 3.180** His next encounter with Br Bruno occurred when the latter was posted to Ferryhouse. Under the pretence of checking for bedwetting, Br Bruno would fondle him under the bed sheets and bring him to the toilet, where he *'would start massaging, that's your privates like, and it would start from there'*. He also described how Br Bruno would take him to his bedroom and then he would sexually abuse him. He said there was no penetration involved.

- 3.181** The abuse happened regularly *'every couple of weeks'*, so regularly in fact that the witness thought it was normal: *'I thought this is the way life is, this happens to everybody'*. The complainant also witnessed others being abused. He described how, on occasion, he walked into Br Bruno's room on the way to the toilet and saw that Br Bruno *'had two guys there and they were playing with each other'*. He also attested to the fear Br Bruno used to instil in him. He had an odd tactic of sticking drawing pins into his thigh whenever he saw Br Bruno approaching. He explained, *'It just took away the fear. Me being in pain was better than the fear and the fear of him'*. He described how Br Bruno would never leave him alone with any visitors, as he might have to prevent him from telling them about the abuse.

- 3.182** Br Bruno denied he had abused this witness, but the witness's recollections mirrored the known events. As the witness claimed, Br Bruno did visit Woodstown before he became a Brother and he did reappear as a member of the Order. The events described in the dormitory and in the Brother's room are not dissimilar to the account Br Bruno gave of his own activities.



- 3.183** Another complainant from the same period described a similar incident of nocturnal intrusion into his bed. He was in 'A' group which was supervised by [Br Bruno]. He said that one night, a couple of weeks after he had arrived at the school he woke up in pain. He was being sexually abused . He could not see who it was and he started to scream. This woke the boy next to him who turned on the light. The complainant blamed this boy but he denied it.
- 3.184** The next day, the mystery of the nocturnal intruder was solved. The complainant told another boy what had happened, and the boy said, *'This is the start of it. He won't stop ... It will go on and on'.*
- 3.185** He said that other boys told him *'It was Br Bruno himself, he does it to all of us'.*
- 3.186** The complainant ran away and, on his return to the School, said that he had reported the fact that Br Bruno was at his bed to two staff members, but nothing happened. Neither could recall this complainant reporting the matter to them.
- 3.187** The witness also gave a vivid account of seeing boys being carried to Br Bruno's room:
- He would come out of his room, late at night, he would go to his bed, that bed, he would go into the back dormitories, he would come back out, sometimes carrying a boy. The boys would be asleep. Their limbs would be hanging down like so (indicating), their head to one side and he would be carrying them in his arms, he would be bringing them to his room. The next morning you would enquire as to where the boy was and you would be told that he was sick, he won't be in school today.*
- 3.188** He described how Br Bruno would give the boys tablets for bed-wetting. Sometimes, he would give them just one each, and on other occasions he would give them three. These had the effect of causing the boys to go to sleep. He recalled one occasion when he did not take the tablets and how he woke later that night to find Br Bruno sexually abusing him:
- I started crying and Br Bruno came up to me and he said to me "What's wrong with you, child, you are dreaming, child, go to sleep". That next morning when I was in the toilet and I came out and I was after getting dressed and everything, I went to get the tablets and they were gone. I don't know where they had gone to, they were gone.*
- 3.189** The number of complainants who gave evidence about Br Bruno's activity was not indicative of the number whom he abused. He molested dozens of boys. He himself remarked that the only ones he was likely to have recalled were those whom he raped. None of the four boys who were named in the indictment as being victims of this crime gave evidence before the Investigation Committee. It would appear that the number of boys who he raped over the period of four years when he was in Ferryhouse was greater than he remembered.
- 3.190** In a trial that took place in the mid-1990s, a victim named in Br Bruno's indictment himself faced trial on charges of sexual abuse of children. Mr Cumin<sup>22</sup> pleaded guilty to raping a 14-year-old boy. He had previously been convicted of rape in Britain. In mitigation, his counsel submitted that he had been sexually abused while in care, and this abuse had had disastrous consequences on his own sexuality. The court jailed him for six years.
- 3.191** The lessons learned from this case can be applied to the question posed at the start of this section: was the abuse systemic, related to failures of the Institution or of management, or was it episodic, namely, acts perpetrated by an individual, unrelated to the nature of the Institution and its management?

<sup>22</sup> This is a pseudonym.



**3.192** Fr Stefano's comment provides the best clue and may be repeated:

*The picture that comes to mind always to me is of a huge jigsaw puzzle that you are reasonably happy with but that there is a piece missing and while I had no suspicions of him, the minute those words were spoken, it was as if somebody had put the final piece in the jigsaw and all these activities that he was involved with started to make sense.*

**3.193** The fact that the Institution had a history of keeping the stories of known abusers secret must have contributed to Fr Stefano's unawareness of the real possibility of abuse in a residential institution for young boys. Because the archives recording the discovery of previous abusers were not available, this meant the Institution could not learn from the past.

- 3.194**
- **This case shows how easy it was for an abuser to gain access to the boys in Ferryhouse.**
  - **Br Bruno's activities went undiscovered for four years, despite the fact that many boys were raped and a much greater number were fondled and groomed in his selection process.**
  - **Br Bruno's activities happened at a time when other sexual abuse was happening in Ferryhouse and when improper access to the boys was a feature of the Institution.**
  - **The extent of these activities suggests that boys felt unable to report abuse.**

**Mr Garnier<sup>23</sup>**

**3.195** Mr Garnier was convicted of sexually abusing a 15-year-old boy from Ferryhouse Industrial School on a number of dates in the mid-1970s.

**3.196** Mr Garnier lived and worked in Clonmel and was a voluntary worker in the School for many years. He had free access everywhere in the Institution, even in the dormitories when the boys were going to bed and afterwards. He had particular contact with 'C' Group, which was managed by Br Leone, who was a friend of his. Another man from Clonmel, named Mr Tablis,<sup>24</sup> had similar access on the basis of his friendship with Fr Lucio, the Resident Manager.

**3.197** Fr Paolo recalled Mr Garnier and Mr Tablis being there in the 1970s, but did not remember them being there in the mid-1960s, although it seems that Mr Garnier certainly had access over many years, which could indeed have extended back to that earlier period. Fr Paolo was suspicious of the two men. He thought that they had no business being in any of the dormitories, and made sure that they did not come to his group, 'A' Group. Although Fr Paolo was careful in what he said about these men, he agreed that it was inappropriate for them to be in any dormitory, and that his concern would have been less if they had been in the downstairs gym or a ground-floor recreation area.

**3.198** Despite Fr Paolo's concern about the incursions into the boys' dormitory, and his determination to keep such men out of the one under his control, he did not interfere in what another Brother was doing. The convention of allowing colleagues to run their 'empires' as they thought fit remained paramount, even when the safety of the boys was an issue.

**3.199** Fr Stefano arrived in the mid-1970s. He said that Mr Garnier was someone who had an involvement with Ferryhouse for many years and that his access was in two main areas. On Sunday nights, he used to come and play cards with the boys *'and he would go up along to the dormitory with them, it would be mainly the senior dormitory, from what I recollect'*. He never heard

<sup>23</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>24</sup> This is a pseudonym.

anyone make a complaint about Mr Garnier and did not at the time think that there was anything inappropriate in his having access to dormitories. He *'never had any reason to suspect anything wrong was going on'*. He said local community helpers were needed and appreciated in Ferryhouse, and the two men were accepted in that context. They had a long history of involvement in the School *'probably because there were so few people to do anything'*. Outsiders were involved in the sports day and in fundraising, and people were in and out all the time. He said that it could happen that the Brother in charge of the senior dormitory would be required to drive a distance of some miles to collect a boy who had absconded, for example. In such circumstances, he thought it was likely that Mr Garnier would have volunteered to stay on. Fr Stefano accepted that he was perhaps somewhat naïve, in not being uncomfortable about the access that Mr Garnier was permitted. He suggested that, if there was an error of judgement or a lack of alertness, it should be seen against a background of involvement by the local people in helping Ferryhouse.

**3.200** There is an enormous difference between involvement by the community in the running of the Institution, and allowing outsiders to enter the boys' dormitories and to spend time there on a frequent basis. Clearly, the Brother in charge of the dormitory, Br Leone, should not have permitted the access, but he happened to be the contact in the School on whom Mr Garnier relied, and who introduced him to the School in the first place.

**3.201** Mr Garnier told the Gardaí how his contact with Ferryhouse began:

I know Br Leone for years. A lot of the boys went to the technical school. That is boys from Ferryhouse School. I saw Br Leone bringing them to school and I got chatting to them. That's how it started roughly 28 years ago.

**3.202** Fr Paolo told the Committee he was uneasy about what was going on, and while he would not have allowed the man into the dormitory under his charge, he did not make his concerns known. As in many other cases, Brothers did not interfere with what other Brothers were doing.

**3.203** Before Fr Stefano took over as Resident Manager in the mid-1970s, Fr Lucio was in charge, and he permitted similar access to his friend, Mr Tablis. With such connections over such a period of time, it is unlikely that any action would have been taken, even if Fr Paolo had reported his unease about the access enjoyed by these outsiders.

**3.204** Fr Ricardo<sup>25</sup> was present in the School for two periods during the 1970s and 1980s. He gave evidence to the Committee, and he also did not see anything inappropriate about Mr Garnier's access. He said:

*He used to play a lot of cards, particularly Friday evening and he would help Br Leone in playing cards, that basically was his job. Sometimes he would lock up the unit or come up with Br Leone and he might come up to the dormitory but generally he would go off then before Br Leone would turn the lights out. And I think Br Leone would have seen Mr Garnier, or [Christian name], as I would have known him, as some kind of a help, to help him to get the boys to bed.*

**3.205** Mr Garnier confirmed to the Gardaí the level of his involvement with the School. He visited regularly about once a week. He would play table tennis with the boys, and would play cards; he worked at the School sports day and helped with the pantomimes and the Strawberry Fair. In addition, he said:

I'd take some boys out for drives. About four or five boys at a time. I had my own car. We went to Youghal once and the steam rally in Upton.

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<sup>25</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.206** The boys would also visit him in his house in Clonmel after visiting the cinema, and he would give them ‘a drink of minerals and maybe some money’.

**3.207** He mostly remembered the boys in the older group in Br Leone’s care who were about 14 or 16 years old. He was with the seniors more than the juniors but he had contact with all the groups. He bought sweets and gifts for the boys. Mr Garnier denied allegations made by boys that he had fondled and masturbated them, but he did admit having had sexual contact with two boys in Ferryhouse. The first one happened at a time when Br Leone was in charge of the group, and Fr Lucio was the Resident Manager. The incident happened in the ‘C’ Group dormitory. He described how he had kissed the boy and sexually abused him.

**3.208** The abuse with the other boy followed the same format. He was in ‘C’ Group, which was under the stewardship of Br Leone.

**3.209** A witness resident in Ferryhouse in 1970s alleged in his evidence to the Committee that Mr Garnier sexually abused him. Mr Garnier was not represented at the hearing. The witness said that Mr Garnier was a friend of Br Leone and that he would visit the School regularly. He spent a lot of time in the junior dormitory and only left when the lights were turned off:

*He used to come into the school and he would be up in the juniors, upstairs with the juniors. He would be buying sweets, he would buy torches and he would buy different things for you.*

**3.210** He also visited Mr Garnier’s house in Clonmel:

*We had gone to the cinema and we were on our way back, thumbing likewise. [Mr Garnier] pulls up and says “you can come up to the gaff for a few cigarettes”. Deadly, you know. We went up and he gave us 10 smokes.*

**3.211** The abuse that he alleged happened followed a similar pattern to that admitted by Mr Garnier in his Garda statement, which he confirmed as correct through his solicitor.

**3.212** Mr Garnier’s involvement with the School continued throughout this complainant’s time there.

### **Br Sergio<sup>26</sup>**

**3.213** Br Sergio was convicted of sexual assault in 2002. The offences were committed at locations in Clonmel and Dublin in the early 1990s. Br Sergio received a sentence of three and a half years’ imprisonment.

**3.214** The victim of one assault was a former resident of Ferryhouse, who was living in the Rosminian aftercare centre in Dublin at the time the assaults took place. He was aged 18 at the time of the first assault. The accused, Br Sergio, worked in the aftercare centre. The victim complained to the Rosminian authorities, and the Provincial confronted Br Sergio with the allegations. Br Sergio admitted his guilt and was immediately removed from the centre. He was admitted for treatment at Our Lady of Victory in Stroud in the mid-1990s, and he was treated there for a number months, although he remained in follow-up care for a number of years. He applied for and was granted a dispensation from the Order. In the late 1990s, the victim of the sexual assault contacted the Rosminians, to tell them that he was reporting the matter to the Gardaí. The Rosminians informed the Department of this, and told them that they would co-operate fully with any Garda inquiry.

**3.215** Br Sergio had previously worked in Ferryhouse from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s. In his evidence to the Committee, he said that he had been appointed Prefect in the late 1970s, when he was given charge of ‘B’ Group, which was composed of about 37 boys aged between 10 and

<sup>26</sup> This is a pseudonym.

12. He took over from Fr Antonio, who had been transferred to 'A' Group to replace Br Bruno who had left the School suddenly, as a result of the discovery of his activities as a sexual abuser. He became aware of the reason for Br Bruno's departure 'a week or two' after his departure. Given the age of the boys in his group, and the length of time he was in charge, his group would have contained many of the children who were sexually abused by Br Bruno or who were aware of his activities.

**3.216** One complainant who was present in Ferryhouse in the late 1980s alleged that Br Sergio sexually abused him. He told the Committee that he was taking a shower after he had been brought back to the School after attempting to abscond. Br Sergio was supervising him and molested him in the shower.

**3.217** He also described other less serious instances of improper behaviour, when Br Sergio '*put his hands on me*'. He alleged that Br Sergio would rub his knee while driving him down to see his relatives.

**3.218** Br Sergio denied these allegations, both through his counsel during the cross-examination of the witness and directly during his own evidence, when he described them as '*totally untrue*'.

**3.219** Br Sergio denied abusing children in Ferryhouse or even being attracted to them. When asked if he had '*inappropriate sexual feelings towards the young boys under your care*,' he replied, '*It would be very wrong to say that, it would be very wrong to say that*'.

**3.220** He was also very reluctant to talk about the treatment he had received in Stroud because of his abusive activities. He said that it was a very traumatic time and:

*I don't have any recollection of what I would have said or what and I don't have any papers left from it at all.*

**3.221** He was also uncomfortable about being asked about his knowledge of Br Bruno's departure in the late 1970s.

**3.222** Br Sergio vigorously denied any abuse during the time when he was in Ferryhouse. His subsequent conviction cannot be regarded as evidence that he committed abuse at an earlier time and in different circumstances.

### **Fr Valerio**

**3.223** Fr Valerio, a Rosminian priest, was convicted of assault, including indecent assault in respect of two boys who had been in his care in Ferryhouse in the early 1970s, when he was a Prefect in the School in charge of a group of boys. He received a suspended sentence. The trial judge took into account, in mitigation of sentence, the fact that the accused had himself been a pupil in Ferryhouse and had been sexually and physically abused there. The Court of Criminal Appeal agreed that the accused:

came from a very difficult background – a background which the Court is all too familiar with as representing a cycle of abuse which notoriously has gone on in cases of this nature from one generation to another and the respondent in this case was part of that rather dreadful cycle.

**3.224** The first allegation of sexual abuse against Fr Valerio was made in the early 1980s, when a 15-year-old boy from the United Kingdom complained to a priest there, Fr Penrose<sup>27</sup>, that Fr Valerio had attempted to 'embrace and caress' him while he was on an Irish holiday with Fr Valerio, who was working in Wales at this time and the boy was one of his parishioners. Fr Penrose wrote to

<sup>27</sup> This is a pseudonym.

the Provincial, who spoke to Fr Valerio. There is no record of how Fr Valerio responded to the allegation, but the Provincial left instructions for his successor as Provincial not to let Fr Valerio go to Wales again.

**3.225** This allegation resurfaced in the early 1990s, when the victim contacted the Rosminians after seeing a television programme on clerical abusers. He inquired whether Fr Valerio was still a priest. When he was told that Fr Valerio was still in Holy Orders, he threatened to expose him in the media unless he left the priesthood. The Provincial, Fr Stefano, met Fr Valerio, who was now in parochial work, and he admitted his guilt. He was removed immediately and admitted to a psychiatric hospital and later to Our Lady of Victory, Stroud, for assessment and treatment. He was told that he would never be allowed to work in a position where he would have access to young people. In the early 1990s, he applied for, and was granted, a leave of absence (exclaustration) from the Order. In the mid-1990s, he applied to be laicised, and his application was granted.

**3.226** The Rosminians received further complaints of sexual abuse against Fr Valerio in the mid-1990s, and reported the matter to the Department of Education.

**3.227** Fr Valerio's first involvement with Ferryhouse was in the mid-1950s when, at age nine, he was committed to the Institution by the courts. He remained there until the eve of his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. He alleged in his Garda interview that he was sexually abused during his time there. After leaving, he joined the Order in the mid-1960s. He was posted to Ferryhouse as Assistant Prefect in the late 1960s. He took over charge of 'B' Group, which was composed of boys aged between 14 and 15 years, from Fr Antonio. At the time, Br Andino<sup>28</sup> was in charge of 'A' Group, and Br Leone was in charge of 'C' Group. As Prefect, he slept in a room just off the dormitory where the boys slept. He remained in this position until he left the School, four years later, to begin his studies for the priesthood. Other members of staff present during this period described him as a hardworking albeit strict Brother *'who seemed to me to have a great rapport with the lads in general'*. He was ordained in the late 1970s, and spent the next 10 years as a religious teacher. In the early 1990s, he was engaged in parochial work in Dublin and Wales.

**3.228** Fr Valerio did not give evidence to the Committee, he lives abroad, but he did have a legal representative present. Information about his activities can be ascertained from: the offences to which he pleaded guilty in court; statements of admission made to the Gardaí; admissions made to his Superiors in the Order; and concessions made by his counsel on his instructions at the private hearings. These sources make clear that he sexually abused at least seven children while he worked as a Prefect in Ferryhouse, and a further two children after he left the School. In a statement made to the Gardaí in the late 1990s, Fr Valerio admitted abusing boys in his group in Ferryhouse. However, he stressed that he never used violence. He told the Gardaí:

It was possible that the likely place that I assaulted these boys was in my own private room in Ferryhouse. I would have masturbated these boys. These boys would then masturbate me ... After these acts were over I would have little conversation with them.

**3.229** He described how he once brought two boys to his private room on the pretence that he wanted to give them a prize for swimming. The prize was a pair of swimming togs, which he gave to them and asked them to put on. He also described how he brought one of these boys to his room on another occasion and sexually assaulted him.

**3.230** The Gardaí interviewed him on a number of occasions, concerning a series of new allegations of sexual abuse that had been made against him. He accepted that he had sexually abused the two individuals in question, but differed in his account of the abuse. He stated that he engaged in

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<sup>28</sup> This is a pseudonym.

mutual masturbation with a boy, at his mother's house, after the boy had left Ferryhouse but he denied rape. Fr Valerio admitted that he had sexually abused the second person. The Gardaí subsequently interviewed this victim, who alleged that Fr Valerio abused him in Ferryhouse, but Fr Valerio denied that the abuse took place in the School. He told the Gardaí that, when he was studying for the priesthood in Dublin, he was sent to Ferryhouse on an errand and, while he was there, he was asked to take the boy to Dublin. Instead of taking the boy straight to Dublin, he took him to his home and sexually abused him there.

- 3.231** One of the victims whom Fr Valerio admitted abusing in Ferryhouse gave evidence. He was in the School in the early 1970s:

*My encounter with Valerio was more by chance than anything else, you know. I had an occasion, I believe, to come across a situation where he was quite violent to somebody else and I intervened. From that incident I was put to his room, told to go to his room, which I did. I waited for a little while and he came in, and just a rage, you know, a physical rage on him. He started getting my clothes off and, again, the same thing. It wasn't like Fr Daniele<sup>29</sup> where it was more psychological, you know, more the fear over you, but Valerio was more the doing of the fear; the beating, the grunting, the dragging, the tearing. He was just like, I do not know, the eyes of him, he was like a man who was possessed, you know. He got me ... down and he beat my face off the ground. He done his best to penetrate me, I don't believe to this day he ever did it.*

- 3.232** Another witness who was present in the early 1970s gave evidence that Fr Valerio started to abuse him when he was transferred to 'B' Group. He said that the abuse happened regularly, about once a month, and that Fr Valerio would come up to his bed at night and '*get all pally pally with you*' and bring him up to his room where he was forced to perform oral sex. He said he was not the only one who was brought to Fr Valerio's room at night. It happened regularly, and he believed all the boys were aware of what was going on. Fr Valerio was represented at this hearing by counsel, but did not cross-examine the witness.

- 3.233** One witness said that one night, while he was crossing the yard, Fr Valerio saw him and called him into the office, where he tried to sexually abuse him. He refused to co-operate and was beaten as a result. He felt that he was singled out for punishment after that.

- 3.234** During the cross-examination of this witness, counsel for Fr Valerio stated that Fr Valerio denied the allegation, and further:

*That he is certain that if any attempt at indecency occurred – and he has admitted in other circumstances an offence of indecency, but he says in your case that if any attempt at indecency occurred it was never in the context of violence or associated with violence.*

- 3.235** Another witness gave evidence that Fr Valerio abused him after he had left the School:

*Br Valerio, while I was actually in the School he never actually touched me but when I left School I was in my uncle's house ... and he appeared at the door one day and he asked me to come for a drive or whatever, I presumed I was going back to the School or something for some reason. He took me to his elderly mother's house ... and he asked me to stay the night or something there. I presumed I was going to have my own bedroom. I went to bed and he followed me in and he actually got into the same bed with me. I can't remember, I think it was sometime in the early 1970s, I can't remember the exact dates. It was around Easter or something. He put me to bed and he got in with me and he proceeded to fondle me and touch me and he actually masturbated me and made me*

<sup>29</sup> This is a pseudonym.



*do the same thing to him. That was the one occasion. He never touched me before or after that.*

**3.236** Counsel for Fr Valerio did not accept or reject the allegations but, in his statements to the Gardaí, Fr Valerio accepted abusing other boys in this fashion.

- 3.237**
- **This man served as a Prefect in Ferryhouse for four years until he left to study for the priesthood. He exploited his position for the purpose of sexual abuse.**
  - **In Ferryhouse the system allowed individuals to gain absolute control over large groups of children so that they could do what they liked with little risk of detection.**

### **Other cases**

#### **Mr Tablis**

**3.238** Mr Tablis was another outsider who worked in Clonmel and who had easy access to the boys in Ferryhouse. He does not seem to have had quite the same access to the dormitories as Mr Garnier had, but there are allegations against him in respect of sexual impropriety. Mr Tablis was a friend of Fr Lucio, the Resident Manager before Fr Stefano. Fr Ricardo described the situation as he recalled it:

*Mr Tablis , to my understanding, again was involved with [local club] and they used to bring the boys to ... a daily outing, where they would collect them in the cars and bring them to ... Mr Tablis would call alright, but I think he was a friend of Fr Lucio's, he got to know the boys, but I think it was more got to do with the ... He wouldn't be playing cards so much, I wouldn't recall him being up in through the school generally.*

**3.239** Fr Antonio recalled that Mr Tablis ‘was very friendly with Fr Lucio, he might take two or three of the lads off for a spin in the car and all that kind of stuff, but ... didn't have any specific role’.

**3.240** Fr Paolo, who was a Prefect, was uneasy about Mr Tablis, just as he was about Mr Garnier. His determination to keep outsiders away from the boys in his group extended as much to Mr Tablis as it did to Mr Garnier.

#### **Mr Ducat<sup>30</sup>**

**3.241** A witness who was present in the School from the latter half of the 1970s alleged that he was sexually abused by Br Bruno and Mr Ducat. Mr Ducat was a local man who used to visit the School regularly, doing odd jobs. Fr Antonio gave evidence that Mr Ducat would regularly drive the boys to concerts. The witness alleged that, on one occasion, Mr Ducat asked him if he wanted to go for a drive in his car. He said that he would like to and they went for a drive around the football field. They then left the School grounds, and Mr Ducat stopped the car on the Waterford road:

*He pulled his car in and he tried to get me to commit a sex act for him ... I opened the door and ran back towards the School but to my surprise I was told I won't be going home again because I had tried to run away. Ducat had gone back and told whoever was in charge that I had tried to abscond. In fact I didn't try to abscond. There was no point reporting the matter because there was never anything done about the matters when you reported them.*

**3.242** Fr Stefano was asked about Mr Ducat. He said that he had never received a complaint about him, but that, in the late 1970s:

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<sup>30</sup> This is a pseudonym.



*I was tipped off by a detective in Clonmel that they were worried about him, you know, and I sent for him immediately and he was never allowed in the gates of that School after that again.*

## **Documented cases**

### **Br Gilberto<sup>31</sup>**

- 3.243** Br Gilberto served in Ferryhouse as Assistant Prefect in the mid-1940s, and he returned there as a student from the early to the mid-1950s. He was sent to Upton in the mid-1950s and, shortly afterwards, it was discovered that he had been sexually abusing boys there. A fuller account appears in the Upton chapter.

### **Br Emilio<sup>32</sup>**

- 3.244** Br Emilio joined the Rosminians in the late 1940s, but left the Novitiate at Kilmurry after only three months 'against [the] counsel of [his] Novice Master who thought his decision to leave imprudent and his judgement premature'. He returned to the Rosminians three years later and was re-admitted to the Novitiate in the early 1950s. He was sent to Ferryhouse in the mid-1950s, and he remained there until he was dismissed by decree of the Superior General some three years later.

- 3.245** The reasons for his dismissal appears from the correspondence. In a letter to Fr Lucca,<sup>33</sup> the Superior General in the mid-1950s, the Provincial wrote:

I regret that there is another Brother Emilio who is stationed at the Clonmel house and who is very unsettled in his vocation and desires a dispensation from his triennial vows, which he took on the [two years ago]. His reasons for desiring the dispensation are that he cannot remain until his vows expire as he feels unhappy and discontented – feels keenly the restrictions of obedience and has reasons for fearing that contact with boys would be a danger to him.

This brother is very faithful and conscientious in the office entrusted to him at Clonmel and his external behaviour is good ... I offered him a change to another community but he would not accept that. I am satisfied that it is a case for a dispensation ...

- 3.246** Fr Lucca replied:

As regards Br Emilio try to encourage him to be faithful to his vows until their expiry next September.

- 3.247** The Provincial, Fr Placido,<sup>34</sup> was unhappy with this response and wrote again, setting out different reasons why he felt Br Emilio should be dispensed. Br Emilio was 'of good character but somewhat unbalanced', 'self willed, obstinate', he had 'an intense antipathy to the Prefect of the boys ... and caused great deal of trouble influencing unduly two other members of the Community against the Prefect', 'he is a trouble maker'. Fr Placido concluded:

I think it is urgent to obtain a dispensation from him since he is so unhappy and so unspiritual in his outlook and his presence at Clonmel would endanger still more the peace and happiness of the Community.

- 3.248** Fr Lucca replied:

In view of the explanation you now give me regarding Br Emilio, I believe it is better that he goes. I am dispensing him from his Triennial Vows according to the faculties given me

<sup>31</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>32</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>33</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>34</sup> This is a pseudonym.

by Canon Law. I am very sorry but it is better for himself, and for the community that he goes. Send him home straight away, and may the Lord protect him and accompany him.

**3.249** Despite the fact that the correspondence implies that the Brother was granted a dispensation, his personnel card records that he was dismissed. The full details of this case remain uncertain.

- 3.250**
- **The fact that the Brother had ‘reasons for fearing that contact with boys would be a danger to him’, were not sufficient for the Superior General to grant dispensation.**
  - **The Provincial then sought the dispensation on the ground that the Brother was disrupting the community and this did persuade the Superior General.**
  - **The primary concern was about managing the Brother’s case. The safety of the boys was not a consideration.**

#### **Br Lazarro<sup>35</sup>**

**3.251** Br Lazarro joined the Rosminians in the early 1950s. He was sent to Ferryhouse in the mid-1950s as Assistant School Prefect and was promoted to Prefect in the early 1960s. He left Ferryhouse after a year, when he was transferred to Omeath. The reason for his sudden removal from the School is apparent in a letter from Fr Placido, the Provincial, to Fr Lucca, the Superior General:

The other case is that of Br Lazarro who was prefect and over a period had been very indiscreet. He left for Omeath ... You will fully appreciate ... how instant action is often necessary and the changes made are a cover up in some respects.

**3.252** Fr Lucca replied:

The distressing news conveyed in your letter ... shows that the Rector is very attentive and decisive. I approve the changes you had to make and I hope the guilty ones are convinced of the serious wrong they have done and are repentant. All this causes me great sadness especially [when I consider] the elder of the two. We really must work out our salvation “in fear and trembling.” I am well aware of the Brothers whom you have had to change in these painful circumstances and I pray the Lord will help them in their new positions ... I am sorry for you too who have had to make all these urgent and painful changes. Let us pray the Lord that nothing else of the like will occur.

**3.253** A former resident, present in the School in the early 1960s, complained about Br Lazarro, alleging fondling of a sexual nature when the Brother was Prefect:

*He put his hand under the bedclothes and started, you know, all that. I suppose, you know, this is kind of bloody hard talking about this in front of women, I tell you that much now ... I don’t know how long it went on for, I was in a position that my job was cleaning his bedroom and that, so it went on there as well ...*

**3.254** He said that the abuse continued up to the time that Br Lazarro disappeared. He was unable to remember the circumstances of the Brother’s departure, but said *‘This is only hearsay as well, I heard that someone complained about him’*.

**3.255** He said that the Resident Manager called him into his office and questioned him about the abuse and then punished him. He added, *‘He used the strap on me, more or less saying “it is your fault”*’.

**3.256** The witness had difficulty recounting the abuse, and instead confirmed to the Committee the contents of the written statement that he had provided, which contained further detail about the sexual abuse that he alleged against Br Lazarro.

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<sup>35</sup> This is a pseudonym.

- 3.257** The witness was complimentary about the Resident Manager, despite the punishment he said that he received. He liked Fr Rafaele, and felt pleased that he had got rid of the offending Brother as quickly as he did.
- 3.258** Fr Matthew Gaffney, Provincial of the Rosminians, made a written response to these allegations on behalf of the Order in 2001. He stated that ‘the passage of time since the event described ... make it impossible for me either to respond to them or to investigate them adequately ...’. However, he added that ‘if the allegations of sexual abuse made by the complainant are true, the abuse was shameful and horrific, and I should apologise for the terrible injury he must have suffered’.
- 3.259** In the time between the writing of that statement and the hearing of the complainant’s evidence, the Rome files came to light, containing documents which identified Br Lazarro as an abuser. As a result of this, the Order changed their response. At the commencement of his cross-examination of the complainant, counsel for the Rosminians said:
- We accept what you have said, we trust the truth of it completely. There is one very big thing which you have done today ... and it is a testament to the pain you suffered and others with you.*
- 3.260** Most of the other former residents who referred to Br Lazarro did so in the context of physical abuse. However, one resident present in the School in the late 1950s recalled one occasion when another Brother instructed him to fetch the leather strap:
- I ran over to the office and I ran into the room, into the office; when I went into the office Br Lazarro was sitting down with a boy on his lap, a young boy ... he was only probably 10/11 ... he shouted at me, "what are you doing in here, what are you doing in here?" I said "Brother Donato<sup>36</sup> sent me over for the leather, he wants to slap [a boy]". He gave me the leather and said "I will see you afterwards."*
- 3.261** Staff members who served in Ferryhouse at the time of Br Lazarro’s departure were unable to remember the circumstances of his leaving, which suggests that there was secrecy about the matter. It is nevertheless surprising that, in a small community, a sudden departure would not have generated a great deal of interest. Moreover, Fr Lucca’s letter cited above refers to talk and ‘*admiratio*’,<sup>37</sup> suggesting there was indeed curiosity about the departure.
- 3.262** In reply to an internal Rosminian survey, other members of the Order who were not in the School at the time recalled how they heard about the Br Lazarro episode. One priest, who was appointed teacher in Glencomeragh in the mid-1960s, stated in his questionnaire that he heard that Br Lazarro had been involved in improper behaviour and that the Rector, Fr Rafaele, was suspicious. Similarly, another priest described a conversation that he had with members of the Institute in the early 1960s, when he was a student in Glencomeragh, in which it was mentioned that Br Lazarro and Br Mario ‘were somehow implicated with some boys at Ferryhouse’.
- 3.263** It is unclear from the documentation whether Br Lazarro was assigned to work directly with the boys or for the staff.
- 3.264** In the case of Br Mateo,<sup>38</sup> he was given a warning for sexually abusing children in Upton and transferred to a post at Omeath that did not bring him in contact with boys. The Rector of Omeath, Fr Lucio, was given instructions to be ‘*vigilant*’.

<sup>36</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>37</sup> Latin for surprise and wonder.

<sup>38</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.265** Fr Lucio was still Rector when Br Lazarro was sent to Omeath, although he was replaced a few months after the transfer of Br Lazarro.

**3.266** When Br Lazarro joined Br Mateo in the early 1960s, there were two sexual abusers working in Omeath.

- 3.267**
- **The Order was unsure how to respond to allegations of sexual misconduct by Br Lazarro but, once the correspondence in the Rome files was found, the Order accepted unreservedly the truth of what the former resident said and apologised to him.**
  - **Although there is some doubt as to whether the two offenders worked together, it was particularly reckless to have two known sexual abusers working in proximity in an institution like Omeath.**

#### **Br Fausto<sup>39</sup>**

**3.268** Br Fausto was discovered to be sexually abusing boys in the mid-1950s, while he was serving in Upton. He was moved to Ferryhouse and his record card indicates that he was transferred 'during year'. His position in Ferryhouse was that of assistant superintendent of the boys' kitchen. He was transferred to Glencomeragh in the early 1960s. The account of how he was discovered to be a sexual abuser is told in the Upton section.

#### **Br Mario**

**3.269** Br Mario was transferred to Upton in the mid-1950s. In the early 1960s, he was sent to Ferryhouse, where he was appointed to an administrative role. He was discovered to have been sexually abusing boys during his posting in Ferryhouse in the early 1960s, to where he had been transferred following his term in Upton. Once again, Br Alfonso, himself then serving in Ferryhouse, was the discoverer. The full details of this case are given above, in the Rome files section.

#### ***The Department of Education investigation***

**3.270** Following the disclosure of sexual abuse perpetrated in 1979 by Br Bruno, Fr Stefano, having consulted the Provincial of the Order, made a decision to inform the Department of Education. He spoke to Mr Black,<sup>40</sup> an official in the Department dealing with industrial schools, early in 1980. No contemporary written evidence of this reporting has been found and furnished to the Commission.

**3.271** Mr Black gave evidence to the Investigation Committee, where he recalled receiving a phone call from Fr Stefano early one morning and being told that he wished to report a sexual assault on a pupil.

**3.272** Mr Black accepted that his recollection of the detail of the conversation was not clear, but he recalled being told that Fr Stefano had caught one of their Brothers in bed with a boy, that the Brother was *'now on a train out of his way out of the place'* and that Fr Stefano was very distressed.

**3.273** Mr Black told the Committee that he told Fr Stefano to leave the matter with him, and he then contacted Mr Orange,<sup>41</sup> the Secretary of the Department. He told Mr Orange exactly what Fr Stefano had relayed to him, and said that Mr Orange reflected on the matter for a few moments and decided that no further action was necessary, as the person responsible for the assault had been caught and was now removed from the School. He told the Committee that, as far as he could best recollect, that was what happened.

<sup>39</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>40</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>41</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.274** Mr Black said that he had not made a written record of the events. He accepted that he may have ‘slipped up’ in not making a note. He gave two reasons for not doing so: first, he had not been told to; and secondly, he understood the School would have kept a record in the daily register of the School which, under the terms of the Act, should record notable events to be laid before the Inspector.

**3.275** There is no evidence available to the Investigation Committee indicating that Mr Orange, Secretary of the Department, kept a written record either.

**3.276** Mr Black also confirmed that he had not asked whether Fr Stefano had reported the matter to the Gardaí. He explained:

*If I was doing it today – hindsight is grand, of course – the first thing I would have said is “Have you reported that to the Guards?” That is the first thing I would have said to Fr Stefano. Secondly I would have taken a note, even if only to protect myself. So, mea culpa.*

**3.277** He confirmed that there was no follow-up investigation, as the ‘culprit was found’.

**3.278** Mr Black explained that, at the time, there were no guidelines in the Department as to how one should handle a complaint of this nature. He did, however, refer to a complaints procedure, which had been handed down by tradition in the Department, to deal with complaints from ‘the woman who was making the complaint or whatever it was’. It involved sending an investigator out to interview the people concerned.

**3.279** When asked why this procedure was not set in motion in relation to the complaint against Br Bruno, Mr Black replied:

*Because the thing was finished, the crime was solved, the culprit was on his way off ... What more could I do at that time? I should have now have told the Guards, of course, you know, because it was a crime, but it wasn’t regarded in that light at that time.*

**3.280** The Department’s Child Care Advisor, gave evidence that he became aware of Br Bruno’s dismissal, shortly after it occurred, through a phone call from Fr Stefano:

*To the best of my knowledge, I then reported that to Mr Black, .... who I think already knew of the issue, and he said that he would be dealing with the matter or to leave it with him at that stage.*

**3.281** He was asked what procedures were in place to deal with information received in this way:

*To record it and to consult with the managers, to make certain it is all on record ... If the Secretary had been informed, you would obviously go back and keep him updated of where you were with that situation. You would then consult with the Order as to where they were with the situation. Because they have ultimate responsibility for – and I think there was, as far as possible, good communication.*

**3.282** It was put to him that one would expect the matter to go on record, and the record to go on file, because that is the way the Department worked and he responded:

*Yes. I expect there was a file in the Department, because when I am listening to the Chairman, my mind is thinking of – not an incident like that, but there was an incident of a fire in Cavan many years ago and I know that incident is on a file. So that’s the same sort of major incident we are talking of really.*

**3.283** He added that he did not report the matter to the Gardaí:

*I certainly didn't inform the guards, as Mr Black was dealing with that situation and he said to me, "leave it with me". I left it with him. Maybe on hindsight that was wrong.*

**3.284** It is clear that the Department of Education did not conduct any investigation into the events that took place in Ferryhouse in 1980. Nor did the Department facilitate any such investigation, whether by the Garda Síochána, by the Department of Health, by the local Health Authority or by any other agency.

**3.285** The position of the Department of Education in relation to the investigation and reporting of abuse is set out in its document, 'Statement to Commission To Inquire Into Child Abuse' dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and prepared in advance of the Phase III hearings. It states:

In detailing the allegations of abuse in Clonmel and the response of the Department, it is worth noting the Department's position with regard to dealing with allegations of this nature was that the Department does not investigate allegations of abuse. This is a matter for the employers of the staff (in the case of St Joseph's this would be the Rosminian Order), the Gardaí and the health authorities. The responsibility of the Department would be to ensure that the welfare and safety of children was protected and that the matter had been reported to the appropriate authorities and that appropriate steps were being taken to investigate the matter and protection of children.

**3.286** The Department's TN030 file was discovered to the Investigation Committee by the Department of Education. It had not been among the other documents disclosed earlier because it was an ongoing file, and was not in the archive, but among the files of senior Department staff. As Mr Black, former Principal Officer, told the Committee:

*They had in that Section in the Primary Branch, they had a safe for confidential files ... any offences with a suggestion of a sexual offence in them were kept there. I asked the girls about this thing ... one girl I knew in the section, "Did you ever remember any cases like this?" "Oh no, we wouldn't see them at all." They never went down. There was a rule at one time that girls were not to see any things like that, they were very sensitive creatures.*

**3.287** It is the only file of the period covered by the inquiry that deals explicitly with the reporting and management of sexual abuse. The file cover bears the heading, 'Meeting with Clonmel Authorities Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 1996'. The earliest memorandum it contains is dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1994. The file contains the Department's record of events involving sexual abuse commencing with the year 1994.

#### **Events of 1994**

**3.288** On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994, Fr Antonio, the then Director of Ferryhouse, telephoned Mr Grey,<sup>42</sup> Principal Officer in the Department of Education, in relation to allegations of sexual abuse made by a person who had attended Ferryhouse from 1971 to 1973. The alleged abuser was a member of staff in the School. Mr Grey's memorandum was headed, 'Note for Secretary's Information "Allegation of Sexual Abuse at St. Joseph's Industrial School, Clonmel, in 1971/1973. This school is operated by the Rosminian Fathers"', and it was dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1994.

**3.289** The note recorded the details of the phone call. According to Fr Antonio, these allegations had been made to Fr Stefano, who was then the Provincial. The alleged abuser is not named in the note, but Fr Antonio is recorded as saying that he was a member of the Rosminian Order at the time. He had left Ferryhouse some years previously and was no longer a member of the Order.

<sup>42</sup> This is a pseudonym.



- 3.290** Mr Grey recorded being told that Fr Stefano, on learning of the complaint, attempted to arrange a meeting with the person making the allegations but these attempts were rejected, and that the accuser had said he would be pursuing the matter through his solicitor. Mr Grey also recorded that the Order had held a Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1994 to discuss the matter (see below), and that Fr Antonio was unwilling to provide further details over the phone but suggested that the Department's Child Care Advisor should call to St Joseph's as soon as possible, where he would be given all the information available.
- 3.291** Mr Grey further noted he had explained to Fr Antonio that the Order should report the matter immediately to the Garda Authorities, and should not wait until a complaint was received by the Gardaí from another source. He requested that Fr Antonio should provide him with a written report on the matter. Fr Antonio agreed to bring Mr Grey's comments to the immediate attention of the Provincial, and stated that he considered that the course suggested by Mr Grey was the proper one in the circumstances. A handwritten note on the memorandum indicates that it was delivered to Mr Green,<sup>43</sup> the Assistant Secretary, at 10.30am on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1994. The word 'sexclon' is also handwritten on the top of the page.
- 3.292** Mr Grey addressed a further memorandum to Mr Green in December 1995. It was in this memorandum, dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1995, that Mr Grey became aware that the allegation was against Fr Valerio. The list of religious personnel indicated that, as of 1994/1995, Fr Valerio was still a member of the Order but seeking laicisation.
- 3.293** In it, Mr Grey referred to his earlier memorandum and recorded that, on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994, he was contacted by Fr Antonio, Director of St Joseph's, who explained that the allegation was made by a person who had called to the Order's house in Dublin at 2.00am. The person in question was very drunk and somewhat incoherent at the time, but agreed to leave a telephone number at which he could be contacted, and indicated that he was reporting the matter to his solicitor. Several attempts to contact the person by telephone and by registered letter, sent on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1994, were unsuccessful. In this letter, the Provincial sought more information on the allegation, and told him he should take it to the proper authorities and 'that Fr X is available to meet him anytime'.
- 3.294** According to Mr Grey, Fr Antonio explained that he had had lengthy discussions with the Order's solicitor, and that he had been strongly advised that, in view of the circumstances surrounding the making of the allegation, he should take no further action at that stage. Rather, he should await receipt of a formal complaint. The Provincial had been advised that he did not currently have sufficient grounds to formally confront the alleged offender, and that any such action on his part could expose him to legal challenge from that source.
- 3.295** Mr Grey made a note to the effect that he had been told that the alleged offender was effectively out of the Order for the last two years, a situation which was in the process of being formalised at present, and that the alleged offender was no longer dealing with children.
- 3.296** It is clear from these memoranda that the Garda authorities were not notified by the Rosminian Order in 1994, and that Mr Grey and Mr Green were aware of this fact.
- 3.297** It is not clear whether the Department officials were informed at this stage that Br Valerio had admitted: (1) the truth of a complaint of sexual abuse on a minor as far back as January 1980, to the Provincial; (2) that, in 1992, Br Andino had told him of a further incident circa 1990; and (3) that, when challenged in 1992, Br Valerio had admitted to him (Fr Stefano) that an incident had occurred when he was a scholastic in Clonmel (around 1968).

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<sup>43</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.298** Fr Stefano was aware of all of these facts when contact was made with the Department in December 1994.

**3.299** Several questions arise from the management of this case. Did the solicitor who advised no action have all the information available on this Brother? This advice prevented the Order from following Mr Grey's advice to report the matter immediately to the Gardaí. Was Mr Grey or Mr Green in a position to overrule the solicitor, whose main concern was for his client and not the abused children? Furthermore, having regard to what they actually knew about him, one might ask whether the Rosminians should have reported Br Valerio's activities to the Gardaí when the opportunities arose in 1980, in 1992 and in 1994.

**3.300** The issue was obviously a matter of grave concern to the Rosminians, as they appointed a media consultant to advise them almost as soon as the sexual abuse was reported. He attended their Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1994, and advised them 'that the media would "savage" anyone involved in sexual abuse and its concealment'. The minutes record that he strongly recommended 'that the Provincial and his Council appoint a group who would take responsibility for investigating any allegations and make recommendations in turn to the Provincial and Council'. He then advised them specifically about the allegations made by the former resident of Ferryhouse and discussed the 'civil and canonical rights of the accused'.

### Events of 1995

**3.301** On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1995, Fr Stefano met with Mr Grey, this time in relation to Br Bruno. At this stage, he also contacted the Garda Superintendent in Clonmel, to inform him of his 1979 discovery of Br Bruno's activities and of the allegation of sexual abuse being made against Fr Valerio. In his undated statement furnished to the Commission, Fr Stefano put into context how this came about:

I was serving as Provincial of the Irish Province of the Rosminians. The Protocol on Child Sexual Abuse was being developed by the Hierarchy and CORI. As we reviewed the Draft Document we decided that we should once again report these matters. Accompanied by Fr Vito<sup>44</sup> I first travelled to the Department of Education, Athlone and reported the matter again to the then Principal Officer, Mr Grey and, in the afternoon of the same day, reported the matter to the Garda Superintendent at Clonmel Garda Station.

**3.302** This is in line with his evidence during the Emergence Hearings, where it was conceded that, by then, there was already a Garda involvement '*not directly with us, but we knew, like, that Gardaí were asking questions*', and that past pupils had been making complaints to the Gardaí.

**3.303** Mr Grey's memorandum dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1995 puts a slightly different perspective on Fr Stefano's motivation for this visit. In this memorandum, Mr Grey first points out that there were two distinct allegations. He deals with the 1994 allegation, goes on to identify Fr Valerio as the person being referred to, and alludes to the complainant's failure to report the matter to the Gardaí. Mr Grey then recorded the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1995, at Fr Stefano's request, in connection with a second allegation, this time against Br Bruno. At that meeting, Fr Stefano advised Mr Grey that a former pupil had been approached by the Gardaí and questioned about abuse in the School in the 1979 period. The Garda enquiry arose from comments made by the former pupil that had been overheard. Fr Stefano explained to Mr Grey that the person who made the allegation was himself the victim of very serious physical abuse and torture at the hands of his own father, and it was not clear whether the overheard allegation related to abuse in the School or at home.

**3.304** Mr Grey recorded that Fr Stefano was seriously concerned at these developments. He was anxious that the Department should be made fully aware of what was involved, and he would also be travelling to Clonmel, where he had arranged to meet a Chief Superintendent of the Gardaí in

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<sup>44</sup> This is a pseudonym.

relation to the matter. He wrote that Fr Stefano then went on to tell Mr Grey in detail about the revelations in 1979 concerning Br Bruno, and the steps taken to remove Br Bruno from the Order and from contact with children. He also told him of his contact with Mr Black in the Department and that, in later years, Mr Black had confirmed to him that 'he had passed the matter on to protect the Order and the school'. Fr Stefano did not know the identity of the person to whom Mr Black was referring.

**3.305** Mr Grey recorded that, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1995, Fr Stefano contacted him again, on this occasion confirming that he had met with the Garda Superintendent in Clonmel on the previous afternoon, and had provided him with all the information at his disposal in relation to the 1979 allegation and the allegations against Fr Valerio. The memorandum goes on to detail the Superintendent's reservations as to whether any action would be taken in either matter.

**3.306** It is clear from the TN030 file that the Garda enquiry into Ferryhouse did not result from information provided by the Rosminians or by the Department, but from overheard comments made by a former pupil in a public place. It was not just the 'Draft Protocol on Child Sexual Abuse' that triggered Fr Stefano's decision to tell the Gardaí. The knowledge that a Garda inquiry was underway also led to their decision to contact the Garda authorities and contribute to their inquiry.

**3.307** It is enlightening that, at the meeting with the Superintendent on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1995 and in the course of his contact with Mr Grey on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1995, Fr Stefano did not also refer to the other complaint of abuse that had been made against a third Brother (Br Sergio). The decision to help with ongoing inquiries had not yet become a broader inquiry into sexual abuse. It was as if each case was seen as a separate problem, rather than as a single issue about child protection and crime prevention within St Joseph's, Ferryhouse.

#### **Events of 1996**

**3.308** In a memorandum of 10<sup>th</sup> December 1996, which was e-mailed to Mr Green, Mr Grey made a note of his meeting with the current Director of St Joseph's, Fr Vito, on 4<sup>th</sup> December, when he was informed that the Gardaí had now interviewed over 70 boys who were in Ferryhouse in the late 1970s. Arising from the Garda inquiries, at least five boys had made allegations, all against the same person, a former member of the Order, Br Bruno, who had admitted the offences to the Gardaí in respect of at least four of the cases, and the file had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**3.309** Mr Grey recorded that Fr Vito expected that 'once the matter became public, St Joseph's could expect a repetition of the Goldenbridge situation. The Order and the management were already planning for such an eventuality'. According to Mr Grey, Fr Vito was enquiring whether the Department would be in a position to assist the School, by covering the cost of legal representation for any member of staff interviewed by the Gardaí, the cost of delegating staff to handle anticipated enquiries and all contact with the media, and the cost of providing counselling services for staff who were likely to be traumatised by the developments. There was no mention of counselling for the victims.

**3.310** Mr Grey noted that the more critical issue was the need for the School to be able to offer adequate assurance that the children now in the School were not exposed to the danger of abuse; this he saw as a difficulty, because 'the main purpose of the meeting with Fr Vito was to discuss staff shortages and specifically, concern that staff and children are currently exposed because of inadequate staff cover'.

**3.311** Mr Grey recorded that this was an issue that needed to be urgently addressed in advance of the abuse cases coming to public attention. He noted that the issue of staff shortages had been recognised for some time, but the Department had not made a case to the Department of Finance

because the School authorities had failed to provide data to support the claim. At the meeting, it was agreed that the School would provide the information within weeks, and the Department would make the necessary approach.

**3.312** While Mr Grey expressed concern about the need to be able to offer assurances as to the safety of boys currently in the School, there was no expression of concern for those who had been abused by the Brother. The urgency was to resolve the question of staff shortages, thereby avoiding the Department's being exposed to serious criticism when the abuse cases became public.

**3.313** Again, it is worth noting that this memorandum also makes no reference to the complaint against Fr Valerio. The concern was to deal with each problem as it arose, rather than to survey the broader picture.

**3.314** Finally, there are two memoranda dated 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December 1996 addressed to the Minister, from Mr Green and Mr Grey respectively. These appear to be memoranda briefing the Minister about the allegations against Br Bruno, and are identical save for the date and the name of their authors. They begin:

Fr Vito ... contacted Mr Grey recently and advised that a number of former pupils of St Joseph's Industrial School, Clonmel had made allegations of sexual abuse against Br Bruno to the Gardaí ...

**3.315** These memoranda make no reference to the allegations against Fr Valerio, of which both Mr Green and Mr Grey had been aware since December 1994. They are somewhat misleading, insofar as they give the impression that their knowledge of Br Bruno's abuse had come to them in the recent past, and as a result of the contact recently made by Fr Vito. They fail to refer to the fact that, in November 1995, Fr Stefano had informed them of Br Bruno's activities.

#### **Events of 1997**

**3.316** According to the Department file, Mr Grey was first informed of a boy's allegation against Br Sergio on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1997. In his notes dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 1997, Mr Grey recorded being told by Fr Stefano that the previous weekend a former pupil had called to Ferryhouse and indicated that he now intended reporting the incident to the Gardai, and that the Clonmel authorities had indicated that they would co-operate fully in any inquiry which might arise.

**3.317** Though this information only came to the Department in 1997, the incident had occurred three years previously in 1994. The former resident had been working in Dublin and staying in a house maintained by the Rosminian Fathers as part of their aftercare programme. He went on a prolonged drinking spree and returned to the house. That night, he awoke to find Br Sergio 'on top of him'. The young man became distressed and left the house, and the next day he went to a relative of Br Sergio's to tell them about it. He did not take the matter further at that time, but moved to work in Clonmel. Mr Grey noted that the relative in turn told Fr Stefano, the Provincial, who immediately had Br Sergio removed 'to a facility in ... the U.K. which caters for the rehabilitation of members of religious orders'. Two years after this incident, Br Sergio applied for dispensation from his vows and he left the Order at the end of that year.

**3.318** There the matter rested until 1997, when the young man decided he would report the incident to the Gardaí.

- **This investigation was recorded in File TN030 of the Department which was not included in the Department's original discovery and was the subject of procedural hearings by the Commission in 2003.**

- The Department dealt with the case with extremes of caution that prevented the matter being dealt with properly as a report of serious crime.
- The principal issue for the Department was how to deal with the scandal.
- The children who had been abused or put at risk were not considered by the Department.
- It took a further 17 years before the matter was reported to the Gardai and the offenders' risk to children was addressed.

### ***Complaints made by witnesses***

**3.319** Two witnesses made allegations of serious sexual abuse by two staff members in the early 1970s.

#### **Br Leone**

**3.320** A witness who was present in Ferryhouse from the late 1960s alleged that he was sexually abused by Brs Leone and Valerio. The abuse took place in Br Leone's bedroom, when they would return to the School late after sporting tournaments. It continued for about two and a half years.

#### **Fr Daniele**

**3.321** A complainant who was present during the early 1970s alleged that Fr Daniele sexually abused him. He said that Fr Daniele sent for him and, when he arrived, started asking him about his past and educational history. Up until this point, he thought of Fr Daniele as a nice, jolly man who was very encouraging to the boys. However, on this occasion in his room, Fr Daniele told the witness to take off his clothes, as he needed to examine him. The witness was surprised at this request and hesitated, at which point Fr Daniele became very angry and threatened to beat him.

**3.322** Eventually, he complied with Fr Daniele's request, and he alleged that he was raped by Fr Daniele.

**3.323** Fr Daniele then gave him some chocolate and sent him on his way. When he went to bed, he awoke in pain and noticed that there was dried blood on his leg. He said that this happened on a few occasions. Fr Daniele would send for him in the evenings or ask himself if he bumped into the witness.

**3.324** The witness accepted that the Rosminians had a very high opinion of Fr Daniele but stressed that *'my memory is far different'*.

### ***Conclusions on sexual abuse***

- 3.325**
1. Sexual abuse by religious was a chronic problem in Ferryhouse throughout the relevant period but the full extent cannot be quantified. Some of the abuse is verifiable by contemporary documents or admissions.
  2. During most of the years between 1952 and 1988, there lived and worked in Ferryhouse a member or members of the Rosminian Order who at some time were found to have engaged in sexual abuse of boys. In more than ten of those years, there were at least two abusers present and in at least two different years there were three abusers there.
  3. Complainant witnesses from every era, from the early 1940s onwards, testified about the sexual abuse of children in Ferryhouse. The Rosminian Institute acknowledged that not all of those who were sexually abused have come forward as complainants, whether to the Commission, to the Redress Board, or to An Garda Síochana. In their Final Submission to the Investigation Committee they wrote, 'We know that some boys were sexually abused who have made no complaint to the Commission or otherwise, but have spoken to us about it'.

4. The Rosminian authorities discovered that some members of their Order had been abusing children, but their response was wholly inadequate. When sexual abuse was detected, the Order sought to cover up the situation by removing known abusers and transferring them to other institutions.
5. It was only when the Gardaí had already become aware of allegations that the Rosminians reported abuse to the Gardaí in 1995.
6. At no stage did the Rosminians query whether other boys had been abused when a known abuser was discovered.
7. The impact of sexual abuse on the boys themselves was not a consideration on the part of the Rosminians.
8. The Department of Education did not act responsibly when an allegation of sexual abuse was made to it in 1980 and distanced itself from the allegations, seeking to minimise the publicity and scandal which might arise for the Department and the Order.
9. The approach taken by the Department was an ad hoc one. There was no clear policy on the management of sexual abuse.

## Neglect and emotional abuse

**3.326** A senior member of the Rosminian Order told the Investigation Committee:

*That's my belief that every child that was ever in this situation was abused in some way, emotionally, physically or whatever the case may be and you would say that we were part of that because we didn't stand up at the time and probably say so.*

**3.327** This statement goes further than simply to admit that abuse occurred. It states that the kind of institutional life that was made available in Ferryhouse until the late 1970s was in itself abusive. Boys lived in a system of military-style regimentation, and endured a ruthless regime of control by corporal punishment. The objectives were to reform them, and mould them into obedient and subservient citizens, but the system did not allow for the fact that they were young children with emotional and developmental needs. It offered them the cruel and austere life of a nineteenth-century institution that had survived largely unchanged into the third quarter of the twentieth century. It had few caring adults who could show affection, compassion and sympathy. The rare staff member who did treat them as individuals, and offered them kindness and support, were singled out by former residents for special mention. For the rest, the adults were there to control the children, and the children had to look to each other for emotional and social support.

**3.328** Whether the boys had been orphaned, or sent in by the courts for juvenile criminal behaviour, they were dragooned into the same system, where the needs of the Institution dictated the way of life. They were forced to adapt to a lifestyle that did not meet their special needs, and if they rebelled they were always seen as trouble-makers rather than unhappy children.

## Orphans and delinquents

**3.329** A senior Brother, who served as a Prefect in Ferryhouse in the 1960s, explained how the presence of orphans and delinquents was a major problem in the institutions:

*Well, you see, after all, I remember somebody saying to me that it was a good thing for the orphans to be exposed to the delinquents, that could make no absolute sense to me whatsoever ... there is an example of what I'm speaking about, of all the children being lumped together in one recreational facility, you see. You're coming from different places, orphans are coming from different places. Orphans needed entirely different treatment to delinquents.*



**3.330** It was put to him that the orphans came from broken homes, or homes where parents were ill or dying, or dead, and their need was for another family, for love and affection, and gentle guidance by example, but the delinquents were sent there by the courts, and their need was for control. They had families and homes, and wanted to return, whereas the orphans had no other home. The real problem was trying to administer a system which was treating both the same. Inevitably, it would become more a kind of prison for delinquents than a surrogate family home for children with emotional needs. The Brother replied:

*The system couldn't work any other way, that's the bottom line. I'm saying that that was the sad point about it. That it had to deal with the most belligerent if you like, if you like to put it that way. That there was no escape from it.*

### **Living conditions**

**3.331** In the 1940s, because of the Emergency, there was a period of deprivation and food shortage. One witness described the bitter cold they had to endure:

*There was a big freeze up and the children, including myself, we got chilblains between our fingers, on our fingers, on our toes and they swelled up. Some poor kid – they burst and the cold was bad enough, but the pain from those things when they burst made it ten times worse ... At no time were they put in any place warm, they were put in that old recreational place beneath the classrooms. There was a doorway but no door on it ... The Prefects would tell them to keep moving, they wouldn't let them stand still; keep on moving to try to get the circulation going.*

**3.332** This witness was lucky, in that he was given a job in the kitchen, where there was warmth and more food. He explained:

*Naturally I could eat more than the other kids because I was cooking it ... I was protecting myself, they could not protect themselves ... I have a lot of feeling for those little children. I didn't suffer half as much as a lot of them did. Don't forget they were hungry, not just for the six months I was hungry, some of them were there nine or ten years, they were hungry every day for nine or ten years.*

**3.333** His guilt about hiding in the relative comfort and warmth of the kitchen was worsened when, in his last year there, he was given the ingredients to make a Christmas pudding. There was some left over and he was told to put it away for 6<sup>th</sup> January. When he took it out on that date, it was covered in mould. He was horrified, but he was told to cut the mould off and serve it to the boys. It was the first time ever they had been given Christmas pudding, and it went mouldy. It was terrible, *'if you look at something like that and then you think of children going to eat it'*.

**3.334** Fr Antonio described the refectory as follows:

*One of the earliest nightmares you would have was being in charge of the refectory because you knew the food wasn't good and even the tables were coming to the sides and they used to use what they called hods, which was plastic bowls and plates and stuff like that. It was – nearly I would regret an awful lot, hindsight is a great thing but at that time it was a very cruel situation. And because there was only one person in charge of the 150 there would have been a lot of bullying ... I remember one occasion where the older boys were kind of selling slices of bread, which they used to call "skinners" to other lads. "I will give you a slice of bread for two sausages".*

**3.335** He singled out the conditions of the refectory for special criticism:

*I remember the tiles in the refectory were slippery and if the steam rose up you would slip and break your leg or anything on the floor there ... Let's be honest about it, there was a*

*chef there that used to stir the pot of stew with the handle of a brush. These things happened and I can't deny them.*

- 3.336** At one point, he made clear the abhorrence and disgust he felt, in retrospect, about how the boys had to eat. He said:

*For obvious reasons looking back now ... it was horrific. The question I would have to ask myself is, would I have eaten the food out of the bowls the boys were eating out, no, I wouldn't and I didn't.*

- 3.337** On the other hand, he admitted, '*It was a hell of a lot different*' for the members of the Order. He told the Investigation Committee, '*The quality of the food would have been better for a start. You had people serving you*'.

- 3.338** He had grown up as a child in Clonmel, so he knew of the School before he went to work there as a member of the Order. He recalled:

*My understanding of Ferryhouse at that time was as a child growing up in Clonmel. We used to see them going through the town in lorries with black stockings and red tops in lorries going through and the threat of my age group, and indeed everybody else at that time, was that you would be sent to the monastery if you misbehave. Ferryhouse at that time was known as the monastery. I would have visited and played football against the Ferryhouse boys at that time.*

- 3.339** When he went to work there in the 1970s, he had found the physical conditions even more stark and primitive.

- 3.340** The Department of Education's Medical Inspector, Dr Lysaght's report of 1966 described the dormitories as the worst he had ever seen. They bordered on being overcrowded, and had 'a depressing air of mass communal living'. There were no lockers or wardrobes and 'as is usual then the boys store personal belongings under the mattresses and of course destroy the springs'.

- 3.341** Almost a year later, a Public Health Inspection found the conditions overcrowded and 'a hazard to the health of the child'. As a result of this report, the Department of Health withdrew their children from the Institution.

- 3.342** In his evidence to the Investigation Committee, Fr Antonio, a former Resident Manager, spoke about an experience he had dealing with boys who were sent to Ferryhouse from Artane:

*One of the – I suppose one of the things that made me angry ever since was that I was sent up on a bus to Dublin to collect the Artane boys and the instruction I was given at the time, go up – the Artane boys were told, I don't know where they were told they were going but they weren't told they were coming to Clonmel. My instructions were go up on the bus and don't stop the bus or let them out because they will run away. I stand very guilty of that that I hadn't enough courage at that time to say this is not right. I remember well, coming down on that bus and they were arriving in Ferryhouse. From what we heard at that time, I couldn't swear by this, at least there were nuns cooking in Artane, their standard of food was a lot of better. Certainly their standard of clothes were a lot of better. Because I remember them coming down and they were all given three khaki pants and three T-shirts and whatever and they were light years to what our lads were doing. That would have made me quite angry at the time that I was going up to bring all these lads.*

- 3.343** The boys from Ferryhouse looked different. Taken from homes that were deemed to be poor and unable to provide proper care, they were placed in an institution that made them look poor and in need of proper care. It is no wonder that they resented the experience.

## Family bereavement

**3.344** A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the 1940s came from a family where illness, poverty and death led to social upheaval. He was the eighth in a family of 13 children. His mother died of pneumonia. Her youngest child at the time was just one month old, and the complainant was seven years of age. The entire family was placed into various institutions. The four brothers were initially sent to Ferryhouse, but then were split up and the younger two were sent elsewhere. He was unaware that one of his brothers was later returned to Ferryhouse. The witness explained:

*After he became a certain age, five years of age or that, he was sent to Ferryhouse. But the point about it was he was two and a half years in Ferryhouse before anybody told us he was our brother. So he was in the school for two and a half years and nobody knew he was – well, at least we didn't know – we knew he was [names the boy] but that was it. We never knew he was our brother.*

**3.345** He was frightened and confused on entering the School, and he was 'never prepared' for leaving it. He recalled leaving the School and meeting his brother-in-law who took him into his flat. There was no job found for him, and the Rosminians never checked on him after leaving the School. He lived in dire circumstances with his sister and brother-in-law until he joined the Irish Army.

**3.346** A witness, who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1970s, told the Investigation Committee of his family circumstances. He was the youngest of five children, with two brothers and two sisters older than himself.

**3.347** He was physically abused in his primary school, so stopped attending the school. After a number of appearances before the District Court, he was sent to Ferryhouse. His mother was ill with epilepsy and this also contributed to his school non-attendance as he would remain at home to help his mother. He recalled the judge telling him that his parents did not care for him, as they were not even in court. He felt this was a huge injustice. He explained:

*My mother was after taking an epileptic fit as she was getting off the bus at Christchurch and it took some time to revive her. When my father got to the Court that time he pleaded with [the judge] who, could do nothing at that stage.*

**3.348** His mother in fact was terminally ill, and she died while he was in Ferryhouse. He was called to the office. He then told the Investigation Committee:

*I went into Fr Antonio's room and Fr Antonio started crying. And he said to me, "I have something to tell you." And I said "What? is it my mother, my father, my family, something's wrong." He said to me, "Your mother has died", he said. He started crying and I looked at him to say "what are you crying for?", because it was all coming down now, what my father was crying for [in the Court].*

**3.349** He was driven to Dublin by a Brother. Instead of taking him directly to his family home, the Brother took him to a pub near his home. The witness remained in the car for hours and it was almost 8.15pm when he arrived at his family home. The Brother walked in through the door of the house and gave his condolences to the witness's sister and then left, saying that he would see her at the grave. He then described the funeral:

*She was buried on the following day, as far as I know, after Mass in [the cemetery]. I was at the grave in [the cemetery], just inside the gate, and [the Brother] said – he was at the grave as well and just as the ceremony was over and people were starting to walk away, he said his condolences again to my father and to my sisters. I don't think he said anything to my brothers and took me by the hand and just brought me over and put me in the car. I was brought back then ...*

*On my first night back to Ferryhouse, it was actually the early hours of the morning I woke to find another chap, a boy in the school, and he was at my bed as well and he said he was only trying to climb into my bed to comfort me over my mother's death. That's what I remember about my mother's funeral.*

### **Family separation**

- 3.350** A witness, who was in Ferryhouse in the late 1960s and early 1970s, described a family breakdown when his stepmother rejected both him and his brother. He knew his brother was placed in another institution and, when he got out of Ferryhouse, he went in search of him:

*I found out when I came out of Clonmel, I found out that is where he was and I went. I only found my brother five years ago, if you can understand that. That is how long we have known each other, other than the childhood ... Some family ... took him ... I knew he was in [another institution] and I knew where that was and I went up and I wanted to see me brother ... he was the only brother I had ... I was bigger so I had to protect him.*

- 3.351** He never found him, and discovered his whereabouts only because his brother kept his surname. 'An aunt of mine found him', he said, and the two of them had to get to know each other after being separated for nearly 30 years.

- 3.352** A witness who was in Ferryhouse in the 1950s also recounted how his family was separated and dispersed into the care system, and where no contact was provided for the siblings. There were five children, three sisters and two brothers in the family. The mother died in childbirth, and the witness was sent to stay with an aunt and uncle for four or five months. One other member of his family was sent with him to these relations. His new baby sister was sent to other family members, along with his brother. His other older sister was sent to another institution. He could recall being taken to court and being sent to Ferryhouse on his own. He was devastated by the separation from his family.

- 3.353** From then on, he had 'No contact, no contact as such, no. I did write letters. The regime was a letter once a month, I think'. When he got out of Ferryhouse, he went in search of his sisters who had been placed in an industrial school in Leinster. Unfortunately for him, the girls had no memory of him and did not even remember having any other siblings:

*I found the school ... and I knocked on the door and looked for the two people by name ... The Sister in charge invited me in and after about 20 minutes or so she came up with these two other girls and they were my younger sister and her other sister. That was the first time really I had seen the baby since our mother died ... she would have been only nine or ten at that stage. [The other sister] would have been about 11 or 12 or something like that. They didn't know anything, in fact it was completely blotted out of their minds, that they had any other members of family.*

- 3.354** The break-up of the family unit meant that there was no real connection between any of them:

*It kind of, if you know what I mean, it ended with no closeness at all, it is just that we know each other. There is no connection as such. We just know we are brothers and sisters like.*

- 3.355** He left a loving family, and went to an institution where he found no love. He said:

*No one cared, that's what it seemed to me, devoid of any emotional context or devoid of anything. The only thing that was there was physical approach ... I thought, it seemed to be deliberate. It appeared to me that it was deliberate at that time to break the strings. I don't know why, that's the impression I got that, that the strings separate and cut the string so you have no one left, you are more or less on your own as an independent. It*

*was probably easier to control as well I suppose in the school situation, that maybe after a couple of years you forget that you had any connection with anyone at that time ... I don't know if anyone made friends there, if they just gathered together. One thing that struck me when I left the school there was no goodbyes or anything like that, it wasn't "come back" or anything like that, there was boys, no farewells or anything like that, just under the arch and up to get the bus away from there. Basically it was cold ... A cold environment.*

### **The State's knowledge of the conditions in Ferryhouse**

#### **Evidence from a local health inspector**

**3.356** In 1967, a local health inspector visited the School, following the death of a boy from cerebro-spinal meningitis. His report to the Department of Health was thorough, beginning with an examination of the living conditions that might have caused the disease. He wrote:

Now this disease can be due to overcrowding, so I accordingly caused accurate measurements to be made of the dormitories, school, etc. and what emerged is what we expected: The school holds twice the number of children – there are 192 boys. The floor area and the cubic space available to every bed is 25 sq. ft. instead of 55 sq. ft. which is the normal and 200 cubic ft. instead of 400 c. ft.

We introduced every protection for the pupils by way of prophylactics. However we run a serious risk of recurrence. The matter is grave, in fact more than grave, it is unjust, and a hazard to the health of the child ... You will note by the detailed report attached that the school structure where the children are taught is also doubly overcrowded. Again a serious hazard is the level of overcrowding.

**3.357** Having found that 'the dormitory sleeps exactly twice the number of boys recommended', the two officials drew the Department of Health's attention to a number of serious matters, namely:

1. Social malaise. There is clear evidence of social malaise in the institution among the younger "denizens". 43 out of a total of 192 boys are bed-wetters. This matter I have taken up with the M.O. to the institution and also with the Assistant Co. M.O., and will deal with it as well as possible,
2. Dental Care. This question I have taken up with the Chief Dental Officer. I feel we should give very full dental care to the boys in Ferryhouse from the clinic during school closure periods etc. Without parents, you will appreciate, it is difficult for them unless the County Council acts broadly in lieu thereof.

**3.358** Unlike the School, which traditionally saw bed-wetting as a matter for discipline and learning, the Public Health Officer saw it as a symptom of the level of distress among the boys. Furthermore, he did not see the Order as being *in loco parentis* because he asked for the local authority to take on the role of parents in caring for dental health. The full report contains other examples of neglect. Among the facts listed were the following:

1. Another unsatisfactory item is that toothbrushes for boys in each dormitory are kept in a wooden box (measuring 4' x 5"). The brushes standing close together each in its own slot. This would appear an excellent method of spreading 'flu, mouth infections and throat infections etc.
2. On inspection only four of the ten w/c's worked properly. Some were blocked or partially blocked, some did not flush. The anti-syphon pipes on these particular w/c's were not connected back to the soil pipes, and flowed over after being flushed. These should be either adequately connected or blocked, as they cause the floors to be continually saturated. Ventilation is through one large roof window and is inadequate.

**3.359** Within the main letter is another complaint about the closed nature of the Institution. The Public Health Officer wrote:

There is a question, now advanced, of building a new National School within the walls of the Institution. It is my opinion that this is a grave mistake. This is also the opinion of the Medical Officer to the Institution and of [the], Ass. Co. M.O.H. who know fairly well, as I do, that children going out of this Institution because they have no contact outside find it difficult to adapt. We feel the children should go outside to school ... where at least there will be some dilution with children with some pennies in their pockets, or the Clonmel Schools.

**3.360** The Department of Health Boarding-Out Inspector, Ms Fidelma Clandillon, seized on this report and wrote:

This shocking report confirms some unofficial information I have had over the years concerning Ferryhouse – yet two smaller and better schools were closed for economic reasons. From what I have heard the ill-treatment of the boys could do with investigation also. One person who spoke with me about this matter was an inspector of the I.S.P.C.C. It is scandalous that only the death of one of the boys has led to the conditions there coming to light ...

[The Secretary, Tipperary (S.R.)] ... informed me that the report had not been sent to the Department of Education but had been sent here as a health matter. I would urge the necessity of this Department's informing the Department of Education of the findings of this report.

**3.361** At the time of the report, there were 23 boys maintained in Clonmel under the Health Act, and they were transferred without delay to other placements. The other boys, some 169 in number, had been admitted through the courts and came under the Department of Education's remit. They remained in Clonmel while the Department and the Rosminians discussed how best to handle the problem.

**3.362** On 21<sup>st</sup> July 1966, less than a year before the local health inspector's report, Dr Lysaght, the Department of Education's Medical Inspector, made a thorough inspection of St Joseph's, Ferryhouse. At that time, there were approximately 160 boys in the School. The numbers were later swelled when Upton closed, and 31 boys were moved down to Clonmel. Under the heading 'Conditions of Premises' he wrote:

The structure appears for most part in good repair. Several parts require decoration and repairs to fitments in washrooms, and sanitary annexes are needed. It would appear from what I saw in this regard they are inclined to be destructive.

**3.363** He seemed to be blaming the boys for the broken sanitary facilities.

**3.364** Under the heading 'Dormitories' he wrote:

Two in number ... Very large, extending the length of building – contain each about 80 beds ... The size of these dormitories and the presence of so many beds conveyed a depressing air of mass communal living ... While there was free passage way between beds and most probably sufficient floor space to avoid justification of any accusation of overcrowding it would be only marginal and there was not room for any further beds.

**3.365** In the same month as he was writing the report, a fire broke out in the east wing of Upton Industrial School, and 31 boys were transferred to Ferryhouse. Dr Lysaght's report made it clear there that there was no room for them.



**3.366** Dr Lysaght went on to say:

In any event these dormitories are much too big and they should be broken up into smaller units. I can appreciate the need for supervision but it can be got as in the case of Salthill without resort to what I regard as a soul destroying and de-humanising expedient. There is little use in discussing the desirability of having small homes or schools with less than 50 beds, the avoidance of institutional atmosphere from every aspect and at the same time countenance the concentration of double the number sleeping in one room in serried rows of beds, end to end ...

I had the feeling that these dormitories were the worst I had seen ... There was a general air of "dinginess", bare boards none too clean, bed covers dull and unattractive etc. which did not impress favourably ...

**3.367** He found the beds adequate though spartan, there were adequate blankets and sheets, but the latter were 'none too clean at that'. He then added:

There is a large sanitary annex containing W.Cs. and urinals and washbasins off each dormitory. The walls are just bare concrete and stained and discoloured. Damage to fittings were seen – evidence of destructive tendencies.

**3.368** He found 'a rough and untidy look about the dining room', but the food was good and ample in amount. There were only 10 boys in the School at the time, as the others were on holiday at Woodstown, so his judgements were made under exceptional circumstances. Of their clothing he wrote, 'The ten boys seen were reasonably well clothed'.

**3.369** His comments on aftercare expressed deeper concerns. He wrote:

They try to get them jobs on leaving. Most do not want to work on farms – they say it is too lonely ... Many join the army but unfortunately the army won't take them til they are 17 ... Those who have training in trades ... would have to serve their time all over again as apprentices outside ... They manage to frequently get places as men servants in religious houses for boys. It would seem, however, that in the case of illegitimate and orphans with no living near relatives the dice is heavily loaded against their getting a fair start in life. This constitutes a social problem, which should be capable of remedy.

**3.370** There is plenty in this report to alert the Department to the dangers of overcrowding and poor hygiene within Ferryhouse, but the report falls far short of being a shocking indictment of the place. It did not stop the Department allowing 31 more boys into the crowded School.

**3.371** Apart from Dr Lysaght's report, there were three reports from Dr Anna McCabe for August and September 1963 and January 1964, when the School population was nearly 200 boys. They are generally very positive. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1963, she wrote under the heading 'Condition of premises', 'Clean well kept. Improvements have been made and will be made. Outside and inside re-decoration is being done'. Equipment, sanitation and health were all described as very good. Food and diet, and clothing were described as 'Improved'. Her general observation was that the new Manager was 'keen to make improvements'. She recorded that she had 'discussed many points with him and he will endeavour to have improvements made'. In an addendum following an incidental visit, she wrote, 'Improvements are being made and in time the school will be much improved'.

**3.372** In January 1964, she wrote an almost identical report. Again, the premises were 'clean well kept' and she commented, 'Improvements are being made and continue to be made'. Accommodation, equipment, sanitation, and health are all described as 'V.Good' and food and diet and clothing

are again described as ‘much improved’. She again ended with another optimistic comment. She wrote:

Improvements have taken place and the new manager is most anxious to help in every way he can to making the school brighter and more cheerful.

**3.373** Just two years later, Dr Lysaght found the dormitories ‘the worst I’d seen’, with a ‘depressing air of mass communal living’ and a ‘general air of “dinginess”’. He found the number of boys, about 160, bordering on overcrowded. A year after his report, the Public Health Officer found the dormitory was sleeping ‘exactly twice the number of boys recommended’ and the School was ‘a hazard to the health of the child’. The numbers were about the same as when Dr McCabe inspected the School three years earlier.

**3.374** It is hard to explain the inconsistencies in these reports. The Department of Education Inspector concluded ‘in time the school will be much improved’ and found the accommodation ‘very good’.

**3.375** Just three years later, a Public Health Officer had the Health Board remove their children to protect them from a ‘grave’ situation wherein children’s health and lives were at risk. Ms Fidelma Clandillon, in her memorandum of 17<sup>th</sup> June 1967, did indeed have grounds to write, ‘It is scandalous that only the death of one of the boys has led to the conditions there coming to light’.

**3.376** There were rumours and innuendo about cruelty and neglect in Ferryhouse, so it would be expected that the Department of Education’s Inspector would have heard and seen things to cause concern. However, Dr Anna McCabe’s reports gave no indication of the conditions found by Dr Lysaght and the Public Health Inspector just two or three years later.

**3.377** Even when the ‘shocking report’ arrived, and after the death of one boy through meningitis, there seemed to be no sense of urgency to effect change. On 8<sup>th</sup> January 1968, the following letter was sent from the Department of Health to the Minister for Education:

I am directed by the Minister for Health to refer again to the minute of 12<sup>th</sup> September 1967 (ref. 6.43) regarding conditions at St Joseph’s School, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, and to request you to indicate the present position regarding the arrangements for the provision of increased accommodation in the institution.

**3.378** A handwritten note is added by an official in the Education Department. It reads:

Phoned Miss Little<sup>45</sup> to inform her that Inspector T. McD. had visited Clonmel recently but was unable to complete re-assessment of school’s capacity owing to illness of Manager; that Inspector had since sustained broken ankle and would re-visit Clonmel to complete inspection as soon as possible.

**3.379** Reading this note, one would never guess that the matter under consideration was the ‘serious hazard of overcrowding’, causing a grave risk to the health of some 170 boys.

### **The condition of the School in the 1940s and 1950s**

**3.380** If Dr McCabe’s reports in the 1960s are not a good indicator of the conditions within Ferryhouse at the time, her earlier reports are more illuminating. The DES records include a report of a visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1939. Inspection Reports are available for each of the years that follow until December 1944.

**3.381** Initially, she reported that the School and premises were in a satisfactory state, and that she found the Resident Manager very capable and kind. During the years that followed, conditions began to

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<sup>45</sup> This is a pseudonym.

deteriorate. In April 1941, the sanitation came in for criticism and she referred to a general slackness about the School. In October 1942, she found the premises very unsatisfactory and complained again about the outside sanitation facilities. This time, she warned that, if there were not appreciable improvements all round, 'drastic measures' would have to be taken.

**3.382** This threat had some effect because, in July 1943, she noted 'much improvement'. The premises had been cleaned and painted. However, she condemned the fact that most of the boys were barefoot. She noted that, whenever she recommended improvements, the Resident Manager complained that he did not have the money. She added that, with the increased grants, her suggestions for improvements should be insisted upon. In a further discussion of her visit on 19<sup>th</sup> July, she added details: she had found the sanitary annex obsolete and 'dangerous to the health of the inmates', and the improvements needed included a whole new water carriage system and modern W.Cs. She continued, 'If this is not done immediately the money will be used for some other purpose and on my next inspection the same rigmarole will start'. Apart from condemning the boys going barefooted, she asked for a height scale to be bought, for the toothbrushes to be replaced and the bathhouse improved.

**3.383** The report of October 1944 is quite damning. While there were some improvements – the new sanitary block had been erected and the bathhouse had been repaired – there was a general lack of supervision. The boys were untidy and unkempt, the food and diet were unsatisfactory, and the children were underweight.

**3.384** She blamed the decline on the rheumatic disability of the Resident Manager, who was 73 and gradually becoming senile, and she felt he was 'unable for the arduous task of Resident Manager'. She wrote:

He always looked after his boys well and I feel if he were active and capable would still do so. He is unable to get about as actively as heretofore. The chaplain is on his sick bed too and poor old Brother B. (76 years old) is nearly past his work too.

**3.385** She called for the introduction of younger staff. She persuaded the Chief Inspector to write to the Provincial to get him to appoint a successor to the ageing Manager. The Provincial brought in Fr Eduardo<sup>46</sup> to assist the Resident Manager, and appointed Fr Ambrosi<sup>47</sup> as Dispenser to take charge of the physical welfare of the boys, and in particular their food and clothing, which needed a full-time staff member in view of the difficulty getting supplies.

**3.386** Surprisingly, Fr Giuseppe<sup>48</sup> disagreed with the conclusions of Dr McCabe's report, the National School Inspector had never expressed any discontent and had found the Principal teacher to be 'highly efficient'. He contested her view that the children were underweight and asked her to submit proposals as to what should be done in the top dormitory and sanitary annex. 'In these days of high prices', he wrote, 'constructural alterations are not undertaken except with great caution and after proved urgency. Cost may be regarded as about three times what they were before the war'.

**3.387** He accepted, however, that Fr Basilio<sup>49</sup> should not have accepted more boys than the 160 maximum. The School now accommodated 200 boys, and 'the produce of the farm and garden of 70 acres would be ample for a school of 160 boys; a larger number necessitates extern purchasings and greater cost per caput'.

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<sup>46</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>47</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>48</sup> This is a pseudonym.

<sup>49</sup> This is a pseudonym.

**3.388** This extraordinary letter not merely denied that the boys were not gaining weight, a fact that could be easily proven and was not just a matter of opinion, but stated that the farm produced enough food to feed 160 boys. He did not state whether additional food had been brought in, but implied it was not a customary procedure. Nor did he even consider the effects of overcrowding on the health and welfare of the boys.

**3.389** Dr McCabe was shown his letter and was asked to comment on it. She took him on roundly. In her letter to the Chief Inspector dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 1944, she set out in detail her thinking on the nutritional needs of growing children and the importance of weight and growth charts in monitoring a child's health. She wrote:

No well cared for healthy child should lose weight. Weight may tend to increase more rapidly in one child than in another, but there should always be a gain.

**3.390** She stressed the importance of diet, the need for vitamins A, B, C and D, minerals such as iron, and calcium. She described milk as the most important single item of food, and that it was known as the perfect food because it contained protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and calcium and iron, all important for growth and bone formation. She added:

That is my reason for so strongly advocating its use in the schools, and eventually I hope to have each child supplied with one quart of milk per diem.

**3.391** She went on to describe how she had been campaigning for an improvement in the diet scales in the industrial and reformatory schools. Shortly after her appointment in 1939, she had revised all diet scales and had advised the individual schools about the deficiencies in diet. She had introduced many new items of food into the school dietary that had hitherto not been in use, because they were unknown to the school managers. Things had gone well in the halcyon days, when food was plentiful and cheap, but matters now could not be regarded as satisfactory. She explained:

In practically every school which I visit, I find, with a few exceptions, that the children are insufficiently fed. I have evidence in support of this statement from the medical charts which, after considerable opposition from managers are now used in all the schools. I have obtained verbally particulars of the quantities of the different foodstuffs supplied for meals – such particulars are often imparted to me very reluctantly by the Sisters in charge of the school kitchens. The quantities are, in my opinion, far short of what should constitute an adequate meal.

**3.392** After this resounding criticism, she went on to set out definitive standards of food provision for each day of the week.

**3.393** On 11<sup>th</sup> December 1944, the Provincial had replaced the Resident Manager in Ferryhouse. The Chief Inspector wrote to him on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to say:

We are particularly gratified at your choice of a young man. The position of Resident Manager of an Industrial School is only too often regarded as a “retirement job” whereas it is pre-eminently one for a young, active man, whose life's work is still before him and who can approach it with the fresh idealism of youth. A Resident manager shoulders the heavy responsibility of father to hundreds of unfortunate boys. He moulds their whole lives during the vital formative years they spend in his school, and there is no limit to the good he may try to do for them except the limits imposed by his own capacity and will.

**3.394** He then went on to comment on the standards being applied by the Department to clothing and diet. He wrote:

If we have criticised the standards of diet and clothing at St Joseph's, you may be assured that, when doing so, we were only too well aware of the difficulties of obtaining supplies.

It is in no spirit of contention that I say that our standards in these matters are based on actual conditions at the present time and on the average prevailing in the schools as a whole.

- 3.395** He makes it quite clear that, even by the standards of the day, the School had been found wanting. He defended the inspection system and commented on the excrement defiling the walls of the sanitary annex.
- 3.396** The Department had hoped the new Manager would be a new beginning. Instead, he took up the fight where his predecessor had left off. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1945, he replied to the Chief Inspector's letter: 'As to diet; I do fear it will be very difficult to comply with all your wishes in this matter'. He gave details of the boys' diet and said he was at a loss to account for the weight loss noted in very many cases. He estimated the cost of providing the diet recommended by the Department, and protested, 'Even managers of industrial schools have to meet their bills, so I fear on our present allowance it just cannot be done'.
- 3.397** Dr McCabe was again showed the letter by the Chief Inspector, and she told him:
- I do not like the attitude taken up by this new Resident Manager – What I have recommended in the matter of diet is of very ordinary proportions and in no way could it be called extravagant ... Financially the school management is better off since 1942. I cannot see how he has such difficulty in managing on the state grant.
- 3.398** The Chief Inspector wrote back to the Manager on 31<sup>st</sup> January: 'If the diet is adequate the children put on weight at the normal rate – more rapidly, even, when they were undernourished before admission to the school'. He again reiterated that Dr McCabe's requirements were the minimum requirements in all schools.
- 3.399** The Inspection Reports for 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1946, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1946 and 18<sup>th</sup> June 1947 indicate progressive improvements in all areas. She warmed to the new Manager, despite the earlier acrimony. In 1946, she wrote, 'the present Resident Manager is an excellent man. Already he has made many improvements ... He is trying to get a community of nuns to take on the domestic side of the house'.
- 3.400** In 1947, she again praised his good ideas and added, 'he considers that a separate amount should be paid for food, clothing and maintenance'. She made no comment about the fact that the capitation grant was intended to cover these things, and the Rosminians were meant to care for their property themselves.
- 3.401** There was a terse exchange of letters dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1946. The letter from the Resident Manager was not furnished, but it was clearly about the cost of equipment in industrial schools. The official in the Department replied:
- The suggestion made in your letter that the Minister, whether by design or otherwise, is endeavouring to obtain a control over private property (Religious Property) to which he has no right is altogether unwarranted, and I fail to see what evidence you can adduce in support of that statement.
- 3.402** The letter then went on to deal with an increase in the rates payable per child as of various dates in 1946.
- 3.403** A report exists for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 1948, and then there is a gap until 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1952. Dr McCabe had been absent owing to illness. The reports simply note improvements all round. With Fr Pietro as Resident Manager, there were reports during the early to mid-1950s.

**3.404** In February 1952, a new kitchen was being constructed, and Dr McCabe noted 'While food and diet have improved, much remains to be done'. The second visit, in October of that year, had the same comment. 1953 recorded the diet to be 'well balanced, varied' and noted the new building had made a 'vast improvement to school'. In 1955, she gave the School an excellent report. From 1956 to 1959, the reports remained positive, calling it a well-run school and commenting on 'the modern facilities' and calling the cooking facilities vastly improved and the food 'better and varied'. In 1956, she noted 'knitting machine very good – all jumpers and stockings made at home'. In 1959, she noted with approval the new bakery, and in 1960 she noted the clothing had improved, and that 62 new suits had been made for Confirmation 'and very good they were'.

**3.405** Her reports indicate that diet and health had improved, but the improvements were from a very low standard indeed in the 1940s. At no stage did she comment on matters such as corporal punishment, which, during the 1940s and 1950s, became both harsh and more frequent.

### ***Conclusions on neglect and emotional abuse***

- 3.406**
- 1. Ferryhouse was a large institution and would have received adequate funding to provide a reasonable level of care for the children for most of the relevant period. In addition, it operated a farm and had trades such as tailoring and boot-making that provided for the needs of the boys.**
  - 2. The boys were poorly fed. For much of the period, the food was of insufficient quantity and quality.**
  - 3. Poor hygiene and overcrowding were serious problems in the School, and these conditions placed the health and well-being of the boys in danger.**
  - 4. The boys were poorly clothed and looked different from children outside the Institution.**
  - 5. The accommodation was unsuitable, unhygienic and badly maintained.**
  - 6. Family contact was not encouraged or maintained. Boys became cut off from their families and friends.**
  - 7. The aftercare was minimal and often non-existent. Young teenagers unprepared for the outside world were thrown into it and had to fend for themselves.**

## **Some historical milestones**

### ***The Submission by the Rosminians to the Cussen Commission, 1936***

**3.407** The Cussen Commission received submissions from the various Orders that had been running the schools, and a very detailed submission prepared by the Rosminian Order has survived. It was published in the recent history of the Rosminians by Bríd Fahey Bates.<sup>49</sup>

**3.408** The Rosminians' submission was prepared by the Provincial, the Very Reverend Giuseppe, who was Manager of St Patrick's (Danesfort) Industrial School, Upton. It was a lengthy document, describing the industrial and reformatory school system operating in Ireland in the early 1930s, and it outlined many of the problems and issues facing those working in this field. It is an interesting document because its criticisms, detailed below, and recommendations closely resemble the conclusions reached by the Cussen Report.

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<sup>49</sup> Bríd Fahey Bates, *The Institute of Charity: Rosminians. Their Irish Story 1860–2003* (Dublin: Ashfield Press Publishing Services, 2003), pp 399–405.



## The committal procedure

**3.409** Fr Giuseppe contended that the Children Act, 1908 was not a suitable Act because it implied that the children placed into this care system were either criminals or criminally inclined. They were in fact, he pointed out, committed because of 'poverty, the loss of one or both parents, or the negligence of some parents', but the actual procedure of committing a child to the industrial school system through the courts nonetheless placed a 'criminal taint to the whole system'. This association of the child with the courts 'created in the public mind a misconception that is exceedingly difficult to remove'. It also created a feeling of inferiority in the child, which lowered his self-confidence. The result meant that, despite all attempts made to help and encourage the boy forward, he was already affected by what had occurred to him even before he arrived in the industrial school. The children were brought to the schools by guards in uniform, and in some places in the prison van. In some cases, the children were kept waiting in the public court until they were called into the private court or justice's room.

**3.410** The Cussen Committee agreed completely with Fr Giuseppe on these particular points. The Cussen Report recommended the following:

That the practice of hearing children's cases in the ordinary Courts is objectionable. The arrangement, which obtains in Dublin – a Children's Court housed separately from the District Courts – should be adopted wherever possible throughout the country.

The term "Committal Order" should be abolished and "Admission Order" substituted.

The Justices when hearing children's cases should not wear the robes of Office. Gardai, should not wear uniform when in attendance at Children's Courts and when bringing children to the schools.

## Aftercare

**3.411** On the subject of aftercare, Fr Giuseppe argued 'that the aftercare of children, particularly in the commencement of their career, is, in many respects the most important duty of Managers, who should stand legally *in loco parentis* to the young persons for, say, two years'.<sup>34</sup> He stated, 'care has to be taken that children do not return to unsuitable homes or surroundings', for there was a risk of their being exploited commercially. The School Manager, he went on, already carried out the required work for the aftercare programmes efficiently.

**3.412** The School authorities were the best suited to carry out this work. There was a mistaken impression that the Managers lost interest in the children once they left the School. Boys frequently returned to the School when unemployed, and were housed in the Schools until suitable work was found for them. Even so, he contended that unemployment rates for former industrial schoolboys were low but 'relative'. Given the value of this work, the State should provide expenses for aftercare in the industrial schools.

**3.413** Again, the Cussen Report's recommendations concerning the issue of aftercare agreed with Fr Giuseppe's argument. Recommendation 28 of Cussen asserted, 'There is room for improvement in the methods of supervision and aftercare of children discharged from the schools'. The Report then recommended:

29(d) The after-care of pupils should be carried out by the Manager of the school or by a carefully selected and experienced assistant.

29(e) Managers should be required to explain to all the children at the time of discharge that if ever in difficulties during the statutory period of after-care they are entitled to return to the school for advice and help.

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<sup>34</sup> Brid Fahey Bates, p 401.

- 29(f) The co-operation of charitable organisations should be enlisted in the work of after care. The priest in the parish to which a child is sent should invariably be notified by the School Manager of the place of residence and the name of the employer.<sup>50</sup>

## Teaching

**3.414** Fr Giuseppe discussed at length the situation of teachers of literary subjects in the industrial schools. He pointed out the major problems facing the School Manager was keeping such teachers in their Schools. These teachers, first and most importantly, were not recognised as National School teachers. This occurred even though they were required to follow, in its entirety, the National School programme and were subject to inspection by National School Inspectors. This non-recognition made it difficult for Schools to retain fully qualified teachers. Teachers stayed until he or she found a vacancy in a recognised National School. Industrial School Managers could not bind them to any terms of service and they could not pay proportionate salaries. He argued that a specific educational grant was required, out of which certified teachers would be paid on the same basis as assistants, as set out in the National School scale. The balance of the grant would be apportioned among the remaining approved teachers.

**3.415** The Cussen Report agreed with the problems facing School Managers and literary teachers, and agreed it required change. It recommended that the conditions of service for lay teachers in these Schools called for substantial improvement, and recommended the following:

- 36(a) That the cost of literary education should be defrayed out of the State grants for Primary Education (apart from the normal grants for maintenance).
- 36(b) That future appointment of teachers should be on the same conditions as in the National Schools, and duties other than teaching should not be assigned to recognised teachers who are not members of a religious community.
- 36(c) That unqualified teachers who have given long and faithful service but whose teaching efficiency is not satisfactory and whose services could be otherwise availed of, should be employed on other duties in the Institutions or, if this is not possible they should be retired with compensation or pension, the cost of which should be defrayed by the School Managers.<sup>51</sup>

## Finance

**3.416** Fr Giuseppe's central argument was that the basic capitation grants were so low that most if not all of the Schools were burdened with heavy debts and loans. Under the system, the local authorities paid a sum of 4/6 or 5/- per week and the Treasury paid 7/6 per week. This sum, he argued, was inadequate: 'There remain rents, rates, and taxes, insurance, clerical, managerial, literary and trade expenses, repairs, interest on money borrowed, expenses of after-care etc., all to be met out of grants amounting to 12s or 12s6d per week per child'. The Religious had to meet the deficit. Also, children under six years were not paid for by the Treasury.

**3.417** Again, the Cussen Report agreed with Fr Giuseppe to a large extent with these arguments on finance. It stated:

- 39 After carefully reviewing all the relevant circumstances we are of opinion that the representations of the School Managers as to the inadequacy of the existing grants would be reasonably met, if, in addition to being relieved of the cost of literary teaching, the present State payments were supplemented by a grant of equal amount from the local authorities, such payments being subject to periodic review so as to bring them into line with any appreciable variations in the cost of living figure, or with any material alterations in the numbers of children committed.

<sup>50</sup> Cussen Report; p 53.

<sup>51</sup> Cussen Report, p 54

- 40 Grants at a rate somewhat lower than that for other children should be paid in respect of children committed under the age of 6 years.
- 41 Grants should be paid at the full rate in respect of children committed at the instance of parents or guardians as incapable of control.<sup>52</sup>

## **Training**

**3.418** On the question of industrial training, Fr Giuseppe argued, 'Owing to the great increase in the use of machinery and of skilled workers, the trades of boot making, carpentry, tailoring etc in the rural districts and to a great extent in the urban areas have gradually become diminished, and in some cases have become defunct or obsolete'. Furthermore, the Rules and Regulations of Trade Unions often debar certain classes of children from being apprenticed.

**3.419** Fr Giuseppe argued that the training of boys 'had to be adjusted to meet modern requirements and the chances of obtaining employment after being discharged'. He believed that training of boys in 'Agriculture (Tillage), Horticulture, Dairy Farming, Forestry, Bee-Keeping and Rural Science' would better equip the boys for the positions in life they would occupy. In an agricultural country, most of the boys must be put to agricultural work. He pointed out that there was very little unemployment of boys so trained. Fr Giuseppe believed also that there should be scholarships in Agricultural Colleges reserved for the boys from industrial schools. They had obtained preliminary training already, and should be given an opportunity of advancement.

**3.420** The Cussen Report made several recommendations reflecting the thinking of Fr Giuseppe:

- 29(c) Trade Unions should be approached by Managers with a view to endeavouring to secure a modification of any regulations, which might act as a barrier to a boy's admission to a particular trade.
- 22 Where agricultural training is given, in addition to tillage operations such adjuncts as poultry keeping, horticulture, and bee keeping should be included ... Instruction in allied crafts associated with farming especially woodwork, thatching, hedging, and harness-making should, in addition, be afforded in schools in purely agricultural districts.
- 24 Special attention should be paid in the schools to training in the following:- house-painting, paper-hanging, plumbing, electrical work, plastering, glazing, upholstery and general house repairs.<sup>53</sup>

## **Conclusions to be drawn from the Rosminians' submission to Cussen**

**3.421** The Cussen Report did lead, over a period of time, to some changes, largely related to the internal management of the School. Capitation grants were increased and, by 1940, the teachers within industrial schools did acquire additional status to put them on the same footing as the teachers in National Schools. However, Cussen's conclusion that the industrial school system 'should be continued subject to the modifications suggested in the Report' and that 'the Schools should remain under the management of the religious orders who have undertaken the work'<sup>54</sup> led to a protracted retention of the status quo for decades to come. Impoverished children who had lost one or both parents through death or social hardship, or who had been neglected or abandoned, continued to be stigmatised by a system that incarcerated and punished them for being in need. Both the Rosminians and Cussen deplored the effects of this system, yet they both seemed to accept that a life in an institution run by a Religious Order was to be preferred.

<sup>52</sup> Cussen Report, p 55

<sup>53</sup> Cussen Report, p 52.

<sup>54</sup> Cussen Report, p 49.

**3.422** The Rosminians recognised the defects in the existing system, but did not advocate more strongly the changes they knew were necessary. They knew that the system itself, no matter how well funded, ‘militates against the child’s future and gives origin in the child to a feeling of inferiority which robs him of his courage and lessens his confidence in himself in spite of all attempts made to encourage him to realise his potentialities’, but they simply accepted more money to run the malfunctioning system, making no changes until the post-Kennedy upheaval in the 1970s.

**3.423** As quoted earlier, a senior member of the Rosminian Order told the Investigation Committee:

*That’s my belief, that every child that was ever in this situation was abused in some way, emotionally, physically or whatever the case may be, and you would say that we were part of that because we didn’t stand up at the time and probably say so.*

**3.424** The submission they made to the Cussen Commission began to say so, but thereafter the voice of the Rosminians became inexplicably muted.

### ***The rebuilding of Ferryhouse: the possibility for change***

**3.425** Fr Stefano was appointed Resident Manager of Ferryhouse in the mid-1970s, and he remained in that post until the early 1990s when he was appointed Provost Provincial of the Rosminian Community in Ireland. Prior to his appointment as Resident Manager, Fr Stefano had previously worked in Ferryhouse in the early 1960s and again in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He also had worked as a volunteer in Ferryhouse.

**3.426** During his tenure as Resident Manager, Fr Stefano carried out an extensive building and renovation programme in Ferryhouse. As Fr Francesco<sup>55</sup>, Provincial of the Order, stated in the early 1980s at the official opening of the new School in Ferryhouse:

The planning of to-day’s reality was begun even before I entered the Order. I recall the late Fr Rafaele working on same. He was followed by Fr Lucio whom I am happy to see here today. With the appointment here of Fr Stefano a necessary intensity and a vital momentum was generated and the ideas became realities.

**3.427** The conditions in Ferryhouse, despite some improvements in the late 1960s, were very poor. It was for this reason that Fr Stefano set about an extensive rebuilding programme, which was necessary in order to bring about the changes recommended by the Kennedy Report.

### ***The rebuilding programme***

**3.428** Woodstown was a holiday centre in Waterford used by the Rosminian Order for holidays for the boys during the summer vacation. The site in Woodstown was purchased in 1957 and, according to Fr Stefano, was fairly basic. The camp provided basic facilities, which by 1979 were considered inadequate. Fr Stefano’s first redevelopment project was the rebuilding of Woodstown. The renovation in Woodstown began in 1977 with the addition of new kitchens, and a recreation-cum-dining hall; and, by the following year, a new block which housed the sleeping accommodation for the boys was built. According to Fr Stefano, they raised most of the money themselves, but the Department of Education did provide a grant towards the building works. Justice Eileen Kennedy officially opened the new Woodstown in 1979.

**3.429** Fr Stefano’s next project was to rebuild Ferryhouse itself. One of the principal recommendations of the Kennedy Committee was for children to be cared for in smaller group homes rather than the large dormitory-based, institutional buildings. A scheme of capital funding for the provision of group homes was introduced by the Department of Education with the approval of the Department

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<sup>55</sup> This is a pseudonym.

of Finance. The scheme provided for 90% grant aid towards building costs and service installations.

**3.430** The Department of Education, however, had a different view in relation to the group homes scheme being specifically introduced into Ferryhouse. In 1974, the Government established a Task Force on Child Care Services, which reported in 1980. The main purpose of the Task Force was to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Kennedy Report. The Task Force had difficulty with the Department of Education's proposal to reconstruct Ferryhouse in order to cater for 100 boys. The Task Force saw these proposals as being contrary to the future childcare system, as set out by the Kennedy Report. Furthermore, the Task Force argued that, once the full range of services they had recommended were fully operational, there would no longer be a need for a large centre like Ferryhouse. Their interim report led to further discussions and, in December 1975, the design team was asked to carry out a comparative cost study of a school for 60 rather than 100 pupils. By early 1976, it was proposed that a school for 80 pupils was the most economical number, with provision for 10 in a pre-leavers unit, and sanction was sought for such a school from the Department of Finance.

**3.431** The Kennedy Report and the Task Force envisaged that St Joseph's, Ferryhouse would be the centre charged with looking after boys with poor school attendance records or boys unsuitable for foster care. The Task Force was very specific in designating Ferryhouse as a specialised educational establishment, catering for the following categories of children:

- Those whose educational progress had been hampered by their home circumstances and whose progress, even where they were attending special classes in special schools, was grossly impeded by such circumstances.
- Children for whom schooling presented particular difficulties and who required special educational help in a sympathetic and understanding environment.
- Children in trouble with the law or persistently truanting from school and who would not have a community-based service available to them.
- Children educationally retarded requiring special educational help.

**3.432** The existing services and buildings at Ferryhouse were out of date and totally unsuitable for the role that was being planned for the School. As a result, an extensive building programme then began in Ferryhouse. A complete transformation of the Ferryhouse complex began in 1980. The planned reconstruction included:

- An open plan school building to replace the pre-fabricated classrooms.
- A bungalow style unit to be known as Piccola Casa. This was opened in 1980.
- A new sports centre, including a gymnasium, sports hall, swimming pool and canteen.
- Six two-storey residential houses, each designed to accommodate 10 to 14 boys.
- A new dining hall, reception area and service buildings.

**3.433** The Department of Education funded this building programme. The Rosminians stated, however, that they supplemented the cost of these buildings with charitable donations raised by their members locally. Ferryhouse was now a much smaller complex, with state-of-the-art facilities, caring for a much smaller number of boys. A General Inspection Report for Ferryhouse completed in the post-reconstruction period (Report dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 1985) detailed the school conditions and services. The Report stated that the diets and meals were excellent for adolescent boys. No complaints were noted and, as diet was a central pivot of care, it must be highly commended. It noted that the School had a consistent long-term psychiatrist, and provided an excellent psychological service on a seasonal basis, with excellent reports on individual children. It concluded that the School was an excellent and well-run, caring School and residential centre

that provided stability and security for boys, with well-balanced controls that were both meaningful and sensitive.

### ***The Kennedy Report and the staff today***

**3.434** After the publication of the Kennedy Report in 1970, fundamental changes in childcare policy in Ireland began. Residential care was now viewed as the last option. The numbers of children in full-time residential care would drop dramatically within this decade and would continue to do so throughout the 1980s. Running parallel with the drop in numbers of children in care was an increase in the numbers of staff working in the remaining residential schools.

**3.435** Fr Stefano, in his evidence to the Investigation Committee, spoke about the increasing numbers of trained staff made available to him during his tenure as Resident Manager in Ferryhouse.

**3.436** As Fr Stefano stated in evidence:

*I would like to compare that to the manager in Ferryhouse that comes on duty this morning. He has two full-time deputy directors. Now, neither he nor the deputies, unless there is severe crisis, would ever have to work a weekend, and they would work a nine to five day. Underneath the two deputy directors there are eight unit managers. Underneath the eight unit managers, there are eight assistant unit managers, and these sixteen people run the school really on a daily basis, 365 days of the year. Under the eight assistant unit managers, there are forty care staff, and most of these staff are highly professionally trained staff. To assist them, there are ten night supervisors and, as Fr O'Reilly said in the last day or two, you know, the average number of boys in the school now would be 30 boys, and very happy about that, you know. These are the objectives that we worked for over the years, but it puts in perspective what a person arriving at Ferryhouse in 1960, 70, 75, the responsibilities that that person was taking on.*

**3.437** Today, the staff to pupil ratio is heavily in favour of the staff member. In earlier years, there were just 2 or 3 young, untrained men in charge of 200 or so boys. The consequences of this imbalance are evident from this report.

### ***Improving the staff***

**3.438** Fr Stefano had noted that the residential group homes at Rathdrum, Lenaboy, Lakelands, Moate, Cappoquin and elsewhere had been financed by 90% grants sanctioned by the Department of Finance for the building of group residential homes. Fr Stefano also noted the State's building of three schools, Oberstown Boys Centre, St. Laurence's, and St. Michael's, and he was envious of the staffing and conditions offered to residents at these schools. In response, Fr Stefano sought the services of a consultant, to undertake an evaluation of the Ferryhouse services. Fr Stefano then held a formal meeting with the Principal Officer (Special Education) to discuss the findings of the consultant. The Rosminians, according to Fr Stefano, laid down an ultimatum to the Department of Education. They required the funding to employ 16 lay childcare workers, as there were no professional childcare workers in Ferryhouse. Furthermore, the Rosminians required a budget system of funding for the School. Fr Stefano wanted Ferryhouse financed on a proper budget system, and staffed with generous staffing schedules, in line with the other three new schools recently built by the Department.

**3.439** The Rosminians sought 16 care staff, to provide adequate cover for night shifts and weekends. The Provincial informed the Department of Education that, if these proposals were not given, he would close Ferryhouse.



**3.440** The Department of Education acquiesced, and provided the staffing required by the Rosminians. The staff changes, according to Fr Stefano, directly altered in a beneficial way the boys' lives in Ferryhouse. He told the Investigation Committee:

*From the beginning, the early staff, we made a conscious decision that we would take on female childcare workers rather than male childcare workers at the start because we had four Rosminians and the balance was very overloaded in the boys' lives so all the early childcare workers were female and there was a great sense of well-being and happening in the air. They were young people who were very energetic and very enthusiastic.*

**3.441** Fr Ricardo gave evidence to the Investigation Committee. He was asked what improvements he saw in Ferryhouse when he returned in the mid-1980s following a time of absence. He said:

*At that time there were huge, I think, changes. No. 1, lay staff – I know lay staff had come in on the scene. One thing I do remember when the first lay staff came – like before they came, the boys would be quite boisterous. I remember the Community having a long discussion shortly after lay female staff came, how the boys had mellowed or softened in general. That to me was one of the huge changes or factors. Also staff were being trained as well, because the Waterford Regional College had set up a training course ...*

**3.442** The lay staff now employed in Ferryhouse had received proper training. This was a direct result of the Kennedy Report, which had recommended that priority be given to proper training of staff in residential institutions. The Department of Education state that their response to this recommendation was immediate. A full-time residential course in childcare at the School of Social Education, Kilkenny was established in 1971 with funding from the Department of Education. All the industrial schools and reformatories were given funding to send their staff on the course. The Department of Education was also involved in the organisation of in-service training courses at numerous colleges nationwide. By 1974, approximately 75% of staff working in residential homes had received training in childcare.

### **The budget system**

**3.443** The second part of the ultimatum given by Fr Stefano to the Department of Education was an adequate budget system along the lines of the budgets provided by the Department to the newly constructed schools. Fr Stefano told the Investigation Committee that the capitation system was the only significant funding received for the School. The farm was '*not making money at that stage*' and he was determined that he '*would never fundraise to put food on the table or clothes on a boy's back or anything that was the responsibility of the State*'. He resolved that all fundraising by the Rosminians was to enhance the lives of the boys and not to provide the basics.

**3.444** This ultimatum in relation to budget funding for their School was in line with the thinking of numerous other groups and individuals. The Kennedy Report recommended that the system of payment of grants on a capitation basis should be discontinued, and replaced by an annual grant based on a budget of estimated costs submitted by each school sufficient to cover all costs. The grant was to be paid direct to the schools by the State. The criticism of the capitation system was that it encouraged institutions to detain children rather than to release them to their families.

**3.445** Fr O'Reilly spoke about the problems caused by the capitation system:

*You needed to have a certain number of children in the School in order to make it financially viable, which is not a good way to look at it, but that was the economic reality at that time and therefore at times they were complaining about not having enough children in the school and they wanted more children to be able to have a greater income to spread across ... The system of its nature sought to, or it forced Managers into, trying to have a greater rather than a lesser number of children.*

**3.446** The Department did not give Fr Stefano his required budgetary system immediately, but he succeeded in obtaining a system whereby the School would receive deficit payment on production of financial records every three months. This was a considerable improvement financially for the Rosminians, as Fr Stefano stated, *‘so with money starting to come in, we could start planning’*.

**3.447** By 1984, a budget system of funding had been introduced into all the schools.

### ***The changes to the education system***

**3.448** A number of critical factors combined to bring about fundamental changes in the education provided for the boys in Ferryhouse and industrial schools generally. The Kennedy Report noted that ‘if the task of integration of children in care into society is to be successful it is essential that those in care for one reason or another should have educational opportunities to the ultimate of their capacities’.<sup>56</sup> The Report stated that the children in care were educationally disadvantaged, and the industrial school educational system had failed to take this into account in catering for the children’s educational needs. Therefore, in the light of deprivation suffered, the children should be provided with more than normal educational facilities so that they could be educated to their ultimate capacities. The Department of Education policy from the 1970s onwards, in relation to education, focused on rehabilitation and compensatory education, provided by well-trained staff. St. Joseph’s Industrial School building programme provided the opportunity to put these policies to work.

**3.449** With the new school building completed, class sizes were reduced considerably. This allowed intensive remedial teaching to occur for the boys. The numbers of boys detained in Ferryhouse had fallen dramatically, while the number of trained staff had increased. Additional teachers were also put in place to provide teaching in the practical subjects. As a direct result, older boys would undertake preparation for the State examinations in the School. The first State examination was held in Ferryhouse in 1987.

**3.450** The education provided in Ferryhouse today enables most of its residents to sit a State examination, while a number complete the Transition Year programme, with the option of completing the Leaving Certificate Examination while in Ferryhouse.

**3.451** In September 2001, the Rosminians withdrew from active management of Ferryhouse and, in June 2002, they transferred ownership of the centre to the Department of Education and Science.

**3.452** The words of the then Provincial, Fr James Flynn, at the opening of the new Ferryhouse on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1990, already quoted above, remain apposite:

Like any human institution, old Ferryhouse had its bad points as well as its good points, its weaknesses as well as its strengths. It damaged some boys and those have looked back in bitterness and anger to their time here. For many of them, this was the only home that they ever knew and sadly they did not find it a good one. Let me say that a lot of that anger is justified ... The greatest guilt has to be borne by those of us who utilised or condoned or ignored the extreme severity, even brutality which characterised at times the regime at old Ferryhouse. An occasion like this is an opportunity for me on behalf of the Rosminians to publicly acknowledge this fact and to ask forgiveness of those who were ill treated or hurt. We have sinned against justice and against the dignity of the person in the past and we always need to be on our guard that we do not do the same today in more subtle or equally hideous ways.

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<sup>56</sup> Kennedy Report, Chapter 7.

## General conclusions

### 3.453 *Physical abuse*

1. Corporal punishment was the option of first resort for problems. Its use was pervasive, excessive, unpredictable and without regulation or supervision, and was therefore physically abusive.
2. Corporal punishment was the main method of maintaining control over the boys and it created a climate of fear that was emotionally harmful to the boys.
3. The system of discipline was the same in Ferryhouse as in Upton. The Rosminians accept that there was excessive corporal punishment in both institutions.
4. Young and inexperienced staff used fear and violence as a means of asserting authority. Punishments were inflicted for a wide range of acts and omissions. The severity of punishment was entirely a matter for the staff involved.
5. Rules and regulations governing corporal punishment were not observed.
6. Excessive, unfair and even capricious punishment did lasting damage to many of the boys in Ferryhouse.
7. Boys were punished for bed-wetting and were subjected to nightly humiliation, degradation and fear.
8. The regime placed excessive demands on the few men who did the bulk of the work.

### *Sexual abuse*

9. Sexual abuse by Brothers was a chronic problem in Ferryhouse and it is impossible to quantify its full extent.
10. Complainant witnesses from every era, from the early 1940s onwards, testified to the Investigation Committee about the sexual abuse of children in Ferryhouse. The Rosminian Institute acknowledged that not all of those who were sexually abused have come forward as complainants, whether to the Commission, to the Redress Board, or to *An Garda Síochána*. In their Final Submission to the Investigation Committee they wrote, 'We know that some boys were sexually abused who have made no complaint to the Commission or otherwise, but have spoken to us about it'.
11. The succession of cases that confronted the authorities must have alerted them to the scale of the problem, and to the need for a thorough ongoing investigation as to how deep the problem went among the Brothers and staff in Ferryhouse. Such an investigation did not happen. Instead, each case was dealt with individually, as if no other case had occurred. The Order was aware of the criminal nature of the conduct, but did not report it as a crime.
12. Sexual abuse was systemic. When it was uncovered, it was not seen as a crime but as a moral lapse and weakness. The policy of furtively removing the abuser and keeping his offences secret led to a culture of institutional amnesia, in which neither boys nor staff could learn from experience.
13. The extent and prevalence of sexual abuse were not addressed although the Order had some awareness of its impact on children.
14. Once placed in posts, priests and Brothers had complete autonomy, and there evolved a convention of not interfering with what other people were doing.
15. The Department of Education did not act responsibly when an allegation of sexual abuse was made to it in 1980.

### ***Neglect and emotional abuse***

16. Living conditions in both schools were poor, unhygienic, inadequate and often overcrowded.
17. Boys were hungry and poorly clothed in circumstances where funding was sufficient to provide these basic needs.
18. Education and aftercare were deficient.
19. Family contact was not encouraged or maintained.
20. As their submission to the Cussen Commission reveals, the Rosminians knew the detrimental consequences of the industrial school system, but did nothing to ameliorate them. They could have changed the regime, but they did nothing until the 1970s.

### ***The attitude of the Rosminians***

21. The Rosminian Institute of Charity is to be commended for its attitude to the Committee. The Rosminians' refusal to take the conventional adversarial approach, their sympathetic questioning of the witnesses, and their proffering of apologies to the witnesses at the end of hearings, all contributed to an atmosphere very different from that of other hearings.
22. The Rosminians used the memories of former residents to add to the Order's knowledge of life and conditions in their schools. The witnesses became a source of information and, by tapping into it, the Rosminians helped the Committee's inquiry.
23. The Rosminians' attitude to the allegations evolved before, during and after the hearings. They were the first Order to apologise publicly in 1990. They sometimes modified their approach during the course of a hearing, and they issued a final submission that was a balanced and humane response to the evidence they had heard.

# Appendix

## Report by Mr Ciaran Fahy

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### 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe the physical surroundings of St Joseph's School in Ferryhouse with particular reference to the buildings. It is based on research carried out by Mr Ciaran Fahy and Mr. Neil Gillespie during the course of which, all of the documentation in relation to Ferryhouse in the possession of the CICA was examined, including a model prepared by the Rosminians shortly after the original buildings on site were demolished.

This report should be read in conjunction with the attached map and photographs.

### 2.0 Background

St Joseph's School is located in the townland of Ferryhouse some three to four km due east of the centre of Clonmel on the northern bank of the River Suir. The site is bounded to the north by the N24 which is the road from Clonmel to Carrick-on-Suir, while on the east it is defined by a secondary road running due south from the N24 continuing across the River Suir at Sir Thomas' Bridge and continuing generally towards the Comeragh Mountains. Map 1 shows the school as it was about 1951 and in particular, it shows the school buildings laid out in a quadrangular form approximately 60m north of the River Suir. This map also shows the position of the N24 and the road running due south from this towards Sir Thomas' Bridge which obviously provided access into the school. In addition, the school farmyard was to the north of the school buildings facing onto the N24 and it will be seen there is an internal road linking this with the school buildings. The distance from the N24 to Sir Thomas' Bridge is approximately 320m and the distance from the farmyard to the school buildings itself is some 150m.

St Joseph's in Ferryhouse dates from 1884 when the Rosminians were invited by Count Arthur Moore, the local MP to take over a house which he had built shortly beforehand. Count Moore constructed the main red-bricked three storey house at a cost of £10,000 and he handed it over on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1884, to the Rosminians apparently on 3.6 hectares of land and in addition, he gave them a further £1,000 to furnish the house. It appears the land was rapidly increased to approximately 16 hectares and in addition water was found and pumped while walls, gates, outhouses and workshops were built and the house was furnished. In January 1885, the institution was certified for 150 boys and apparently it had reached that capacity by May 1886.

The indications are that the buildings at Ferryhouse in the main were constructed very shortly after the school was opened in the mid-1880s and this is evident in photograph no 8 which is an old postcard apparently dating from about 1920. This was taken looking to the north and shows in the centre the main three storey building with the three wings behind it forming the square or quadrangle and behind this again there are three pitched roofs running more or less north-south together with a further building just north of the quadrangle. There were some improvements and changes over the years but the general arrangement described appears to have remained intact until the construction of the new school commenced in the 1980s. This was constructed in phases

involving the removal of the original buildings and continued until the late 1980s when the original main three storey building was demolished.

## **3.0 Details**

### **3.1 Farm**

There was a farm associated with the school from its inception until around 1979/1980 when it was closed down completely and after that the land was sold off in pieces. The farm itself started as approximately 16 hectares very shortly after the school was opened and this was initially intended for the feeding of the pupils. The farm was enlarged over the years to about 32 hectares or possibly up to 50 hectares and it extended from the house north towards the N24. However, a portion of the farm was also located south of the river, while as stated previously the farmyard itself was located alongside the N24. The main use of the land was for potatoes, dairy and also hens and in addition, there was an orchard beyond the west wing. The farmyard has been completely demolished and no detail of it remains. It apparently was updated some time in the 1960s with a milking parlour and a chicken house being added at that time. Finally, it should be noted that all of the buildings and the land still in possession of the Rosminians was transferred to the State in 2002, apart from approximately three hectares of land unsuitable for farming south of the River Suir.

Some impression of the farmyard can be obtained from map 1 showing the layout in 1951. It has been completely demolished and all that has been retained is a lodge alongside the N24.

### **3.2 School Buildings**

Details of the school buildings are shown in the map. Essentially, this consisted of a quadrangle formed by the main house which was the red brick three storey building constructed by Count Arthur Moore in 1884, together with an east and a west wing extending north from it with the entire enclosed by a north wing. Beyond that and just north of the quadrangle there were three or possibly four other separate buildings. The main house itself was three storey, while the east and west wings were each two storey with the north being single storey. The three or possibly four other buildings north of that again appear to have been single storey industrial type buildings. The general arrangement is quite clear in the photographs of the model number 1 and 2 and also in the earliest photograph no 8 taken about 1920.

From scaling the Ordnance Survey sheet the outside measurements of the quadrangle were approximately 66m x 66m. The inner space was approximately 48m east-west x 44m north-south without making any allowance for the projection at the rear of the main house.

### **3.3 The Main House**

The main house originally constructed by Count Arthur Moore was a three storey red brick building shown clearly in the photographs of the model number 1 and 2. The main axis of the building ran east-west and in plan it appears to have been approximately 35m x 12m. As originally constructed however, the house was cruciform in shape with a significant front projection and also one to the rear which incorporated the main stairs. As shown in the model, this had four floors and it may well have been added subsequent to the construction of the original house. In addition, the main house also contained a single storey extension at the rear or northern side known as the cloister which connected into the west wing and which ran across the back of the house.

The main house is also shown from the rear in photograph 4 and this shows a fire escape leading down to ground level alongside the cloister which runs as far as the gable. In the lower left hand corner of this photograph, it is possible to see another external stairs, which apparently gave



access to the first floor level on the eastern wing. The photograph also shows the projection at the rear of the main house, consisting initially of a high pitched section which was original and incorporated the main stairs. Behind this, there is a four storey section with a flat or a low pitched roof and which quite clearly was constructed in different phases.

The earliest photograph of the main house is no 8 which apparently was taken from postcards dating back as far as 1918/1920. Photograph 8 shows that the construction of the house is effectively unchanged in the later photographs.

Just inside the main entrance at ground floor level as shown in model photograph 1 and photograph 3, the Resident Manager's office was on the right hand side while there was a parlour on the left hand side. Just beyond the Manager's office on the right hand side there was a secondary stairs which led to the first and second floor level and from which it was possible to gain access to the dormitories. This, however, was not the main stairs and was not used by the boys since the main stairs was in the rear return of the building. The upper floors of the front projection apparently contained Community bedrooms used by the Resident Manager who apparently slept above his office and also for the Prefects.

There appears to have been no main corridor at ground floor level within the building since this purpose was served by the cloister at the rear. This cloister is shown in photograph 7 and also in photograph 9, both of which were taken looking towards the west wing. Photograph 9, shows the start of the main stairs on the right, while facing this, the doorway leads towards the main entrance. The windows on the right hand side of the corridor obviously lead to the outside and the yard enclosed by the quadrangle, while on the left hand side there was a Community room which apparently had a large billiard table in it and beyond this again on the western gable was the Community dining room. This is shown in photograph 10 which again was taken from an old postcard dating from around 1920.

The upper two floors of the main house were used as dormitories with the junior boys being allocated to the second floor and the senior boys to the first floor level up until the mid-1960s. In each case, the dormitories ran the full length of the building and are described in a questionnaire completed by the Rosminians in 1944 for the Department as being 33.5m long x 7.3m wide. Up until the 1960s, it appeared each dormitory was laid out to accommodate 100 children without any partitions. A report compiled in the 1940s says the first floor dormitory for the senior boys contained 92 children, while the second floor for the junior boys contained 100. It describes each of them as having central heating and electric light and it says the senior dormitory had 16 windows while the junior one had 26. The windows in the junior dormitory were obviously much smaller, as shown in the photographs and in fact photograph 4 shows that two of them have been removed to facilitate the fire escape. This 1940s report gives the height of the senior dormitory as 4.25m while that of the junior dormitory is 6m. Finally, it says there were 28 wash basins and two lavatories for the senior dormitory and 17 wash basins and two lavatories for the junior one.

After the mid-1960s the boys were reclassified as A or junior boys up to the age 12, while the B boys were from 12 to 14 and C boys were from 14 up. The junior or A boys were moved out to the east wing while the B boys were placed on the second floor and the C boys on the first floor level. At about that time, the arrangement of the dormitories was significantly altered with partitions being introduced to give a cubicle type arrangement with four beds in each around a central corridor. This reduced the capacity of the dormitories to approximately 40 beds in each case. Photograph 17 was taken about that time and gives an impression of the layout in the first floor dormitory.

There is a reference in the documentation and in particular, in a letter of October 1944, to a new sanitary annexe having been constructed and prior to that there were only dry closets in the

playground. Consequently, it seems likely that this section of the building was originally two storeys constructed in the 1940s and was subsequently extended to four floors in the mid-1960s. Originally, the ground floor contained wash rooms, in other words showers and toilets while the first floor was traditionally bedrooms used by the farming staff. When the second and third floors were added these contained showers and toilet facilities allocated to the dormitories on that floor within the main house. In addition, they contained linen rooms or store rooms for use by each of the dormitories. The washing facilities at the top floor in this area are shown in photograph 18, apparently taken about 1968.

### **3.4 East Wing**

The east wing is shown in photograph 5, while it is also shown in photograph 6 where it joins the northern wing. This shows an archway which was the only vehicular access into the yard as well as a further fire escape or access point to the upper level. At ground floor level the east wing contained the assembly hall as well as some storage and beyond this there was a recreation room and also a visitors' room at the northern end of the block. Access to the upper floor was via an external stairs which gave onto a balcony running the length of the wing. Initially, this was open and gave access into individual rooms but about 1967/1968 this balcony was covered and enclosed and in fact photograph 13 was taken at that time showing the enclosed balcony. Photograph 2 of the model also shows the enclosed balcony with the stairs near the main house giving access to this level and the bottom of this same stairs is just visible on the lower left hand corner of photograph 4.

Initially, the upper floor of the east wing contained five classrooms and also the tailors' shop but after about 1967/1968 the junior or A boys up to the age of 12 were moved to the first floor displacing the classrooms and the tailors' shop. At that time, it appears the first floor was divided into three dormitories and in addition, there was a Prefect's bedroom and bathroom/toilet located at the northern end of the wing.

By scaling the Ordnance Survey Sheet the east wing appears to have been approximately 48m long overall by 8m wide. The 1940s report referred to earlier describes five classrooms each of them 7m wide x 4.2m high, with two of them being 11.9m long, a further two of them 11.3m long and one 7m long. There is also reference to a play hall and a big school which may be the assembly room and hall taken together. In each case the width of these is 7.3m and the height is 4.6m. The play hall is given as 22m long while the big school is described as being 12m long with a 6m stage. The five classrooms are described as having stove heating and the number of pupils ranged from 34 to 50. The tailors' shop is shown in photographs 14 and 15.

### **3.5 West Wing**

Access into the west wing was via the cloister at the rear of the main building and there was an internal stairs at the southern end of the wing giving access to the first floor level. The first floor was mainly taken up with Community bedrooms with the washroom/bathroom for them at the southern end near the top of the stairs. Apparently there were nine Community bedrooms on this floor and at the northern end of the wing there was a nurse's bedroom and beyond that again there was an infirmary with an outside fire escape.

At ground floor level there was the Community kitchen and then a storage area followed by the boys' dining room followed by the kitchen and the stores for the boys.

Overall, this block also scales approximately 48m x 8m. The boys' dining room again taken from an old postcard is shown in photograph 11, while the infirmary is shown in photograph 12. In the 1940s document this is described as being 6.7m x 8.2m x 4.2m high. It is described as having eight

beds together with a lavatory and a bathroom. No mention is made of heating, but photograph 12 clearly shows a stove.

### **3.6 North Wing**

The north wing was single storey and divided into a number of rooms whose use changed over the years. On the eastern side near the archway leading to the outside was the shoe shop or cobblers. This was followed by the toilets which appear to have been accessed by means of an open doorway and the model in photograph 2 for example, shows a flat roofed extension behind this, which apparently was a new toilet, built in the 1960s. The wing also contained a nurse's post, a Prefect's office and a recreation room. The dimensions of the north block appear to have been similar to the other two i.e. about 48m x 8m, but no information is available in relation to individual rooms. The cobblers shop is shown in photograph 16.

### **3.7 Other Buildings**

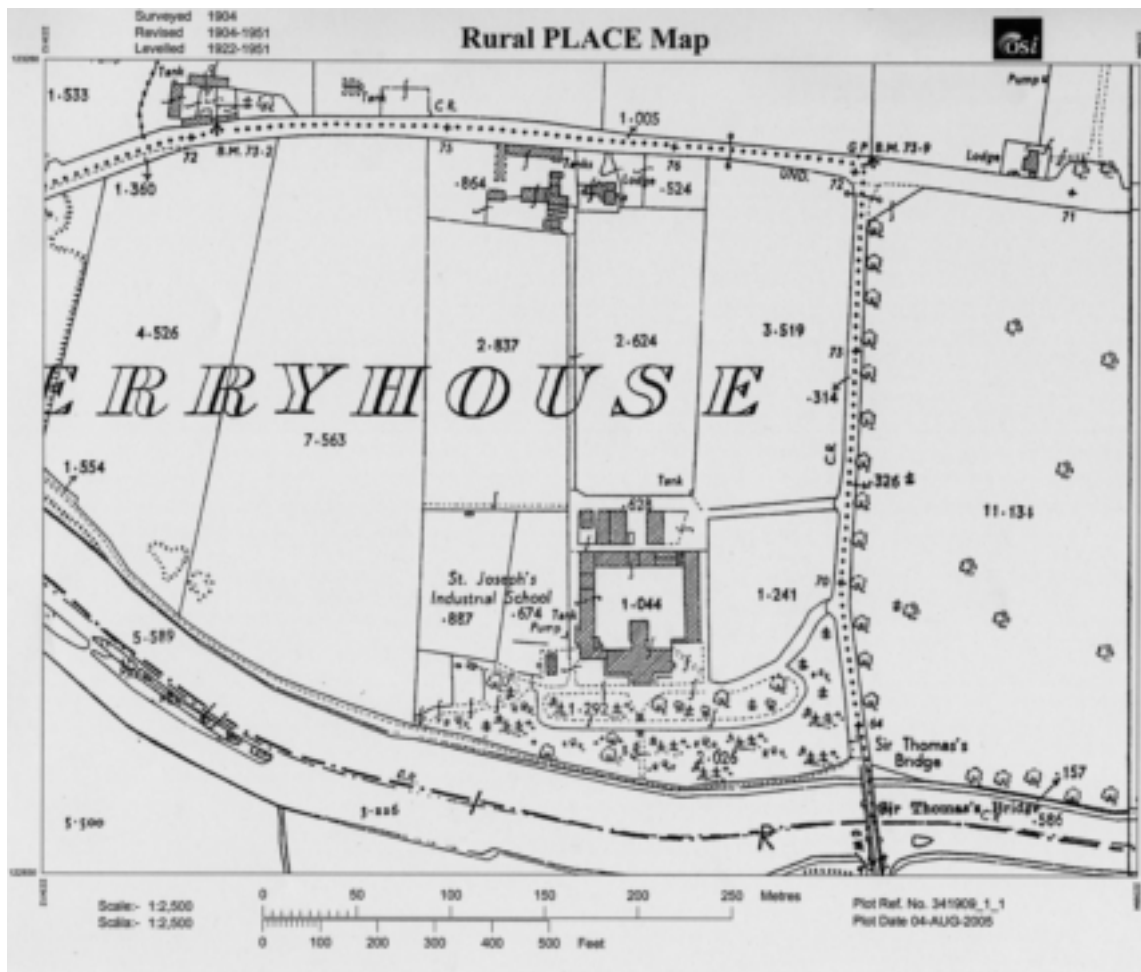
The model in photograph 2 shows three pitched roof buildings beyond the northern wing running more or less north-south. The one on the western side i.e. the right hand side of photograph 2 apparently was built around 1930 and was newer than the other two, which apparently were interconnected as shown on the model. The newer building apparently contained the bakery in the northern section while the band or music room was located on the southern side of this. The other two units which were interconnected contained the main laundry as well as the boiler house and maintenance workshops. The two interconnected buildings scale approximately 18m x 16m. In the 1940s questionnaire the music room was described as 6.7m x 7.3m x 5.6m high. Finally, there was a water tower as shown in the model just to one side of these.

At the end of the 1960s when the classrooms were moved out of the first floor of the east wing, prefabs were placed to the north of the existing buildings alongside the internal road running towards the farmyard. The positioning of these prefabs is clearly evident in the 1973 Ordnance Survey aerial photograph. It appears the prefabs contained nine classrooms together with an arts and crafts room, a tailor shop, a knitters' shop and a general purpose room.

An open and unheated swimming pool was constructed by the school in the 1950s and this was located on the southern side of the River Suir just beyond Sir Thomas' Bridge and it was open to members of the public as well as being used by the school.

### **3.8 Services**

The school was apparently supplied with electricity from early on, in other words shortly after its construction but the source of this is not clear. It is known that the gas company in Clonmel never serviced the school. There is a reference in the early documentation to water being found and pumped but it appears the main supply was from the Glenmorgan River south of the River Suir and this continued to be the case until mains water was supplied probably in the 1970s. Initially, the school was served by septic tanks and this continued until a small treatment plant was installed in the 1980s which apparently was not very successful. The use of this was discontinued approximately two years ago when a pumping station was installed to connect to the main town sewer. It appears the school had been provided with oil fired central heating from the 1960s and before that solid fuel was used. However, there is a reference in the 1940s report to stoves being used to heat the classrooms.



## Ordnance Survey Aerial Photograph

Taken 28 June 1973















"School for boys" - St. Joseph's - Ferryhouse - Clonmel





*Dining Room of the Religious, St. Joseph's Industrial School, Clonmel.*











