

**Introduction**

- 18.1 Fr Tyrus was ordained in the 1960s and had a problem with celibacy from the start of his priesthood. He sought laicisation in the 1970s due to his inability to adhere to the obligations of celibacy.

**Psychological report**

- 18.2 Fr Tyrus was interviewed by a priest psychologist in the 1970s. The psychologist sent a report to Bishop O'Mahony. The psychologist concluded:

*"It would seem to me that [Fr Tyrus] has not at this time any final and total commitment to celibacy. It is also my opinion that his undertaking of celibacy in the first instance was in some sense, perhaps even unconsciously, a conditional undertaking..."*

*He told me that he was reprimanded by the Principal of a school in which he was teaching for his relationship with a seventeen year old, and he is currently deeply involved with a twenty-one year old. There were apparently other liaisons also. The most surprising aspect of his own accounts of these matters is his apparent lack of concern for the girls involved."*

The psychologist expressed the view that the priest would not be able to sustain celibacy because of almost nine years of "rather frequent breaches".

- 18.3 Following this meeting Fr Tyrus applied for and was given a year's leave of absence. During this time he applied for a job as a youth worker. In order to obtain this job he needed a reference and he approached Bishop O'Mahony for this. Bishop O'Mahony gave him one in which he said:

*"I am happy to recommend [Fr Tyrus] as a person suitable for appointment; [Fr Tyrus] has wide experience in dealing with young people. I have no doubt he possesses the requisite qualities and personality for youth work. He should prove particularly successful in coping with young persons with serious behavioural and/or relationship problems".*

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This is a pseudonym.

18.4 Subsequently, in April 1978 a public sector organisation wrote to Archbishop Ryan regarding Fr Tyrus's suitability to work in an area of the public services that was not related to youth work. The organisation supplied the Archbishop with a questionnaire to be completed. Bishop O'Mahony advised the Archbishop to return the questionnaire unfilled and to inform the organisation that a reference would be supplied by him. Subsequently, Fr Tyrus was employed by this organisation.

18.5 In July 1978, Fr Tyrus sought to be laicised. His request for laicisation referred to his difficulty in keeping the vow of celibacy. One of his witnesses who gave evidence in the laicisation process referred to his relationship with girls. In 1980 his petition for laicisation was granted.

18.6 In 2007 the Child Protection Service notified the Gardaí and the HSE of Fr Tyrus's background. The Gardaí indicated that there was no evidence of behaviour of a criminal nature.

#### **The Commission's assessment**

18.7 The Commission has grave concerns about the fact that Bishop O'Mahony gave a reference about Fr Tyrus when he sought a job working with young people at a time when Bishop O'Mahony was aware that Fr Tyrus had had a relationship with a 17-year-old girl when he was a teacher. Bishop O'Mahony told the Commission that there was nothing to indicate that the relationship with the 17 year old was a sexual one. The Commission considers that the description provided by the priest psychologist makes it abundantly clear that the relationship was sexual.