

Introduction

26.1 In March 1982, Archbishop Ryan received the following letter:

“At 4am approx. on Sat., February 27th 1982, I was indecently assaulted by Fr. H. Moore C.C. of St. Josephs parish, Glasthule Co. Dublin.

Inquiries subsequently conducted by me lead me to believe that this was by no means an isolated incident.

I therefore earnestly request that appropriate action be taken without delay”.

26.2 The sender of this letter identified himself and his address. However, he did not give his age but he is likely to have been in his late teens. The response of Archbishop Ryan was as follows: *“In view of the fact that your letter of the 8th March was marked “Private and Confidential”, there is little I could do about the matter. If, however, you wish to discuss the matter further, I would ask that you get in touch with Monsignor Jerome Curtin, who is a Vicar General of the Diocese”.*

Priest’s history

26.3 At the time of this complaint Fr Harry Moore was a curate in Glasthule parish and the alleged assault was said to have taken place in the presbytery. Fr Moore was born in 1936 and was ordained in 1960. His first appointment was as chaplain to Artane Industrial School from 1960 - 1967. During his time there he compiled a report at the request of Archbishop McQuaid on the conditions under which the boys lived in Artane. This report was handed over by the current Archbishop of Dublin to the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse.⁸⁷

26.4 His next appointment after Artane was as a curate in Ringsend parish until 1975. He was then sent to Kilquade parish for one year. He asked to be

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The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was established under the *Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Act 2000* to investigate abuse in residential institutions for children. It issued its report in May 2009.

reassigned because of loneliness and he was given a position as assistant priest in a Catholic youth organisation.

26.5 During this period Fr Moore developed a serious alcohol abuse problem and was admitted to St John of God Hospital in 1977. A comprehensive medical report from this hospital was provided to Archbishop Ryan in March 1977. This report stated that Fr Moore was admitted "*ostensibly because he had a problem with alcohol*" which he said started about three years earlier and had progressively become worse over the years.

26.6 The report stated that Fr Moore had begun to drink heavily in his early curacy and was consequently sent to a parish in Wicklow for six months where, owing to maladjustment, he was removed to the Catholic youth organisation for another six month stint. This in turn was followed by a year's sabbatical to study theology. By this time, the report noted, he had had two hospital stays for alcohol addiction.

26.7 He underwent various psychiatric and personality tests while in the hospital. The doctor noted that he had real concerns about Fr Moore's sexual functioning as he had "*difficulty in satisfying his strong affectionate needs because of his inability to establish mature adult relationships*". He was described as a personality with "*a very strong element of psychopathy and hysteria*". He recommended Fr Moore for team-based occupations if supervised correctly, but he did not recommend him for parish work.

26.8 Despite this medical report, Archbishop Ryan returned Fr Moore to active parish ministry, appointing him a curate in Edenmore parish in November 1977.

26.9 Over the next two years he is recorded as receiving treatment for alcohol dependency. Despite leaving one of the facilities without completing his therapy, he was appointed a curate in Glathule in February 1980. It is while he was assigned to Glathule that the complaint of indecent assault noted above was conveyed to the Archdiocese (in March 1982).

26.10 In August 1982, it was suggested to Archbishop Ryan, by his auxiliary bishop, Bishop Comiskey, that Fr Moore needed treatment in Stroud. Fr

Moore himself reacted negatively to that proposition. Within hours of having been informed of this proposal he was reported as having been discovered drunk and “*with some young lay men*”. He had to be admitted to hospital suffering from an ulcer.

Treatment

- 26.11 In September 1982, Fr Moore was sent to a therapeutic facility in the UK (not Stroud). Archbishop Ryan wrote to the administrator outlining Fr Moore’s situation. He explained that various attempts had been made to rehabilitate him but all had failed. He stated that in addition to his alcoholism “*there is some evidence of sexual indiscretions during Fr Moore’s drinking bouts but it has been rather difficult to collect evidence concerning the nature and extent of these activities*”.
- 26.12 Of particular significance is the fact that Archbishop Ryan does not appear to have sent the report from the St John of God’s doctor although he did send a confidential letter from a friend of Fr Moore.
- 26.13 Fr Moore was relieved of his curacy in Glasthule due to ill health. He remained at the UK facility until March 1983. The final report from the facility said that Fr Moore had explored his use of alcohol “*as a means of covering his confused sexual identity, his way of evading responsibility...*”. Further therapy was advised.
- 26.14 In June 1983 Fr Moore was appointed curate in Bayside parish. It was while he was there that he committed a number of very serious sexual assaults, including buggery, on a young teenager. Complaints in relation to these assaults were not received by the Archdiocese until 1999. The Archdiocese was, however, aware of his escalating alcohol problem while in Bayside. In 1985 he had become unmanageable because of his alcoholism and the parish priest had asked for him to be removed. He was then appointed to Francis Street but relapsed again.
- 26.15 Despite the 1982 complaint from Glasthule and his prior history, Fr Moore was appointed chaplain to a secondary school for boys in October 1986. He also had an appointment in Cabinteely parish. He complained in 1992 about the lack of an official appointment to the secondary school. It was

noted in September 1993 that he was angry, upset and annoyed at having to attend a psychologist for assessment. It was noted by the psychologist, Dr Patrick Walsh, that "*he is relieved to have given up his position as chaplain to the school but that he is happy to continue his work of giving school retreats*". In a submission to the Commission, Fr Moore said that he did not give school retreats but gave parish retreats.

Adverse reports. 1993 and 1995

26.16 In 1993 and again in 1995 there were adverse reports about Fr Moore's behaviour with young adults. There was an allegation of sexual assault. He was allegedly supplying young people with alcohol and hash and allowing them to watch blue movies in his home. There were also complaints of a very unsuitable phrase used in a school homily. The person who made the majority of those complaints stated in 2002 that she felt alienated by diocesan officials who did not "*listen or didn't hear how serious [it] was*". There was confusion as to whether the 1993 complaint was formally noted at the time.

26.17 In December 1994, Monsignor Dolan conducted a preliminary review of Fr Moore's file in order to assess his suitability for an appointment. He noted that the file contained no reference to the fact that Fr Moore had been chaplain at Artane Industrial School from 1960 to 1967. Monsignor Dolan concluded in his report that "*the period 1983 - 89 remains tricky if there was no investigation of the allegation and H. M. had an open-ended unmonitored appointment. This should be reviewed immediately*". The allegation referred to is the Glashule allegation.

26.18 In January 1995 Archbishop Connell, finding that circumstances satisfying the requisite "*semblance of truth*" requirement existed, started a canon law penal process. He appointed Monsignor Alex Stenson as delegate to investigate "*both the allegation and the priest's imputability*". It is unclear from the documents what allegation was being investigated at the time. Subsequently, it transpired that this process was not proceeded with.

26.19 In January 1995 Fr Moore's situation was discussed by Bishop Murray and the Archbishop. Bishop Murray noted that Fr Moore was looking for a parish and that "*we need to give thought to his future*". In March 1995, Dr

Patrick Walsh was approached for a further assessment of Fr Moore, after he had been reported to have made inappropriate remarks to parents at a school function.

26.20 Dr Walsh informed Monsignor Stenson that Fr Moore *“shows every sign of gravitating towards young people, especially males, as objects of affection”*. He also warned the authorities to be vigilant in their supervision of him and stated *“unless he was prepared to engage over a long period of time with a therapeutic programme and with a system of supervision and regular reviews, I believe there are considerable risks of a return to alcohol abuse or to inappropriate behaviour, particularly towards young people”*.

26.21 In May 1995, at a meeting in Archbishop’s House attended by the auxiliary bishops, the conclusion was reached that the only alternatives left to the Archbishop were:

- a) the complete removal of Fr Moore from ministry for life;
- b) that the Archbishop receive a report that would enable him to give Fr Moore an appointment.

26.22 In the end, Archbishop Connell terminated Fr Moore’s tenure in Cabinteely and released him from all priestly duties. Fr Moore was still attending Dr Walsh at this stage and was recorded as making progress.

26.23 In October 1995, Dr Walsh wrote to Archbishop Connell stating that the medical professionals were more optimistic of a meaningful recovery. He said: *“as long as he remains sober, he will not, I believe, act out”* and added that Fr Moore was adamant that *“he has never sexually abused children or adolescents”*. In light of his known history, Fr Moore’s assertion should have been troubling to the Archdiocese.

26.24 Fr Moore expressed worry about the newly stated policy of the bishops of reporting all cases of child sexual abuse whether current or past. In November 1995, the Archdiocese did report the Glasthule incident to the Gardaí. When contacted by the Gardaí, the complainant did not want to make a formal complaint at that particular time but the matter was left open. Somewhat late in the day, in 2002, the suspicions that arose in 1993 and 1995 were notified to the Gardaí.

26.25 Fr Moore was very annoyed about the reporting to the Gardaí and claimed that his recovery had been sabotaged and retarded by the disclosure. Monsignor Curtin, who had spoken to Fr Moore at the time of the Glasthule complaint and again in May 1995 about the 1995 adverse reports, was also annoyed about the matter, condemning what he saw as “*a grave violation of justice and charity*”. In February 1996, there was some discussion about whether Fr Moore might have some sort of informal chaplaincy with the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group, with which he was already involved.

The advisory panel

26.26 In April 1996, the file was passed to the recently established advisory panel who noted that the file is “*light on certain important facts, particularly the ages of the young people involved*”. The panel expressed reservations on the proposed appointment of Fr Moore as chaplain to the AA until there was a comprehensive assessment and treatment programme establishing whether there existed “*significant danger of inappropriate behaviour occurring other than in an alcohol related situation*”.

26.27 Fr Moore decided not to be further assessed and to retire on health grounds. He retained his clerical faculties. He was allowed to say mass and hear confessions whenever there was a need, for example, if a priest was sick or on holidays. In April 1997, he signed the following document but it was noted that he expressed “*unhappiness in relation to the need for signing the document*” and “*unhappiness about the manner of the process*”. The document reads as follows:

“DUBLIN DIOCESAN CURIA

I, Father Harry Moore, a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin, now retiring on grounds of health from holding any priestly office in the said Archdiocese, hereby declare in reference to my diocesan faculties which I continue to enjoy:

1. I will confine the exercise of my sacramental ministry within Churches and Oratories;

2. I will not be available for any ministry outside of the above except for the administration of the sacraments of penance and the anointing of sick in situations of grave need.

I further declare:

1. I will attend for review meetings with Doctor Walsh on a basis to be agreed with him;

2. I will maintain contact on a regular basis with Monsignor Jerome Curtin and [another named priest]

3. I will maintain my regular involvement with A.A.;

4. To avoid even the suspicion of any possible impropriety, I shall avoid being alone with any person under 18 years of age.”

This document is signed by Monsignor John Dolan as a witness and Fr Moore, and is dated 29 April 1997.

1998

26.28 In 1998, following a visit to Medjugorje, Fr Moore attempted to book a catholic youth hall for a weekend retreat for a number of adults and young persons whom he had met on that trip. The diocese instructed the youth organisation not to give him the hall. It was pointed out to Fr Moore that this activity was in breach of his contract with the diocese.

Bayside complaint, 1999

26.29 In February 1999, a man complained to the Gardaí that, while he was a teenager, he had been sexually abused by Fr Moore while Fr Moore was attached to Bayside parish between 1983 and 1985. The complainant had also complained to a bishop in the UK about this abuse. The UK bishop contacted Archbishop Connell. The complainant travelled to Dublin in March 1999 to make a formal statement to the Gardaí. He told how he and a group of his friends used to drink with Fr Moore. On one occasion he poured out his soul to the priest because he had problems at school and at home. The priest brought him to his own house and plied him with several kinds of drink. He woke from a semi-conscious state to find Fr Moore performing oral sex on him. He alleged that there was anal and oral sex frequently at Fr Moore's house during 1983 and 1984.

26.30 When interviewed by the Gardaí, Fr Moore admitted that they had oral and anal sex but said that it was consensual and that it had occurred on only two occasions.

26.31 In September 1999, the 1997 declaration (see above) was amended and he agreed not to “*exercise any public sacramental ministry within churches and oratories*”.

Criminal charges, 2000

26.32 In 2000, Fr Moore was charged with 18 counts of sexual assault including buggery in respect of the Bayside victim. He sought a judicial review on the grounds of delay and was unsuccessful.

26.33 The charges were reduced to four and in July 2004, Fr Moore pleaded guilty to two charges of indecent assault and two charges of buggery while a curate in Bayside. Sentencing eventually took place in May 2005 and on that date he was sentenced to seven years in respect of each of the buggery charges and three years in respect of each of the sexual assault charges. These sentences were suspended for a period of ten years and he was put under the supervision of the probation services. He was also ordered to abide by the provisions of the Sex Offenders Act 2001. This is generally described as ‘being placed on the sex offenders’ register’ – see Appendix 2.

26.34 While awaiting trial it was reported to Bishop Murray (who was no longer an auxiliary bishop of Dublin) in 2002 that Fr Moore had resumed giving school retreats. Fr Moore told the Commission that this was untrue. Bishop Murray informed the Archdiocese of this report.

26.35 In 2004, the Archdiocese notified the health board about the complaints. Social workers from the area where Fr Moore lived met him to discuss the advisability of refraining from contact with children. This information was not produced in the initial HSE discovery (see Chapter 6) and was brought to the Commission’s attention only after the HSE received the draft of this chapter.

The Commission's assessment

Church authorities

26.36 The reaction of Archbishop Ryan to the 1982 complaint was totally inadequate. The Archbishop had a comprehensive psychiatric report detailing Fr Moore's problems with alcohol and with his sexuality. Given that the Archbishop had already ignored the advice of the psychiatrist (in 1977) about not locating Fr Moore in a parish setting, the Archbishop's response to the 1982 complaint was inexcusable.

26.37 Here was a priest whom he knew, from the 1977 psychiatric report, had many problems. There was a complete failure on his part to comprehensively investigate a complaint of actual sexual abuse and possible other incidents of sexual abuse as reported in the letter. His excuse, that there was little he could do since the letter was marked private and confidential, is deemed by the Commission to be unacceptable. Had he acted appropriately in relation to this complaint, it might have prevented the very serious assaults that took place some years later on a teenager for which Fr Moore was convicted.

26.38 The Archbishop did not forward the 1977 psychiatrist's report to the UK therapeutic facility in May 1982, when he sent Fr Moore for treatment there. He did however tell that facility that there had been sexual indiscretions during Fr Moore's drinking bouts. He also gave permission to that facility, subject to Fr Moore's consent, to contact St John of God Hospital directly.

26.39 One of the features of the handling of this case was the number of different doctors to whom Fr Moore was sent. There was a failure to coordinate their efforts, diagnoses and recommendations until very late in the day.

26.40 The Commission's view is that it was unacceptable for the Archdiocese to leave Fr Moore unmonitored for a period of six years in the 1980s.

26.41 There was good communication between the UK bishop (to whose diocese the Bayside complaint was initially made) and the Archdiocese. The

English bishop notified the Archdiocese. Archbishop Connell replied promptly that he was nominating Monsignor Dolan to deal with it. The UK bishop met the complainant and told him this. He also notified the Archdiocese that he had done so and told them that the complainant had gone to the police in the UK with his complaint.

Gardaí

26.42 The Gardaí handled the case appropriately and their efforts resulted in a successful prosecution.