

Introduction

- 47.1 In August 2001, a priest in the Portmarnock area received a letter from a man who claimed that in 1972, when he was 14 years old, he was abused by Fr Blaise. The abuse allegedly occurred when this priest was a parish priest. The complainant was inquiring about Fr Blaise's whereabouts in 2001 but stated that he did not want to take the matter further for fear it would cause stress to his mother.
- 47.2 The man also complained to the Gardaí in August 2001. The Gardaí made inquiries about Fr Blaise and they established that he had been the parish priest in the relevant area in 1972. However, he had died in 1987. A criminal investigation would not be conducted because he was dead. Nevertheless, the Gardaí told the complainant how to contact the chancellor, Monsignor Dolan, at Archbishop's House.
- 47.3 The matter was referred to the clerical abuse inquiry at the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation (NBCI) in Harcourt Square— see Chapter 5. The complainant at this stage was serving a prison sentence in the UK. The NBCI wrote to the complainant and provided him with a telephone number and an email address. They also informed him that they were currently involved in an investigation of clerical child sex abuse, and had received correspondence in relation to his complaint from the Garda station where he had made the complaint.
- 47.4 In May 2002, legal proceedings were issued on behalf of the complainant against the Archdiocese. The solicitor who issued the proceedings on behalf of the complainant had considerable difficulty in advancing the case because the complainant was in prison. He was moved to different prisons on a number of occasions during the course of his imprisonment. Eventually, on the application of the Archdiocese, the case was dismissed for want of prosecution. The Gardaí were unable to pursue the matter because the alleged victim did not make a formal statement. The Gardaí informed the church authorities that, to their knowledge, there was no other complaint about Fr Blaise.

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This is a pseudonym.

The Commission's assessment

47.5 Once the complainant had launched legal proceedings, the Archdiocese responded properly at all stages. It was clear that the solicitors for the complainant were having difficulties in getting instructions and eventually the case was dropped. No attempt was made to contact the complainant or to arrange to take a statement from him. The archdiocesan view was that it was his prerogative to make direct contact with the Archdiocese or to go through his solicitor; he chose the latter.

47.6 It must also be said that the internal investigation undertaken by the Archdiocese following the issuing of civil proceedings uncovered no suspicion of child sexual abuse on the part of Fr Blaise other than this allegation. All of his fellow priests who were interviewed said they found the allegation unbelievable.

47.7 There is another priest of the same name against whom serious allegations of child sexual abuse have been made in another diocese. This other priest is not of the Archdiocese of Dublin but did supply work in the Archdiocese. The possibility that the offender was in fact that other priest was not explored by any party.

47.8 Even though Fr Blaise had died, the Gardaí did what they could to assist the complainant.