

4.1.11 UNIDENTIFIED COMPLAINANTS

Three unidentified complainants alleged the following:

The Inquiry has been made aware of three recent complaints made to Bishop Walsh in relation to instances of sexual abuse by Fr Collins while they were students at St Peter's College during the 1970s. The three complainants did not wish to make formal complaints or have the matter pursued with a Church or Garda investigation. One of these complaints has now been settled by the Diocese.

4.1.12 GEORGE

George alleged the following:

In early January 2004, the Diocese of Ferns received a letter from a firm of solicitors engaged by George which cited instances of sexual abuse by Fr Collins against George in the late 1980s and early 1990s when he was a student at St Peter's College. This is the only complaint identified by the Inquiry that concerns sexual abuse by Fr Collins after his appointment as Principal of the college. The letter also refers to instances of physical abuse by another priest at the college. George has instituted proceedings against the Diocese in respect of sexual abuse by Fr Collins.

4.2 FR JAMES DOYLE

4.2.1 MATTHEW

Matthew alleged the following:

The Inquiry has been told by a priest who served on the teaching staff of St Peter's Seminary from 1969, that some time in 1972-1973, whilst James Doyle was a student and still a junior member of the seminary, he returned to the College drunk and attempted to molest a student called Matthew. This staff member reported the matter to the Dean (now deceased), who was dismissive of the complaint. He then reported the matter to the President of the College now also deceased. On 5 February 1973, the President of the College wrote to James Doyle advising him that his ordination was being postponed. James Doyle was, however, approved for ordination one year later in 1974 by the newly appointed President of St Peter's College. One clerical witness to the Inquiry has stated that it was his belief that Bishop Donal Herlihy directly intervened to have James Doyle's ordination proceeded with although the Inquiry has seen no documentary evidence of such intervention. This ex-President of the college has told the Inquiry that he had no information about James Doyle at the time of his ordination that would have caused him to reconsider his decision to recommend it.

4.2.2 UNIDENTIFIABLE COMPLAINANTS

- (i) A priest of the Diocese informed the Inquiry that the sergeant of Gorey Garda station contacted him in December, 1979 and told him that Fr James Doyle had given a lift to a young soldier who was hitchhiking and propositioned him. The young man jumped out of the car and reported the incident to An Garda Síochána who pursued Fr Doyle to Wicklow, stopped him and questioned him. The sergeant (now deceased) told this diocesan priest the following day that he did not propose to pursue the matter any further or charge Fr Doyle but that he did want to reinforce the warning that the Gardai had given him the day before. He sought an assurance from the diocesan priest to whom he spoke that there would be no further incidents. Fr Doyle's agreement to receive medical treatment in Belfast satisfied the Gardai at the time.
- (ii) A second priest of the Diocese said to the Inquiry that he was told by a Garda Superintendent in or about 1980 that Fr Doyle had been on his way to Belfast when he picked up a hitchhiker near Gorey and attempted to abuse him sexually. The Superintendent told the Inquiry that he reported this matter as well as his knowledge of general rumour surrounding Fr Doyle to Bishop Herlihy at this time.
- (iii) Shortly after an incident involving Fr Doyle and a hitchhiker (1979/1980), the diocesan priest referred to at (ii) above, was approached by a local parishioner who told him that an altar boy had been sexually abused by Fr Doyle. This priest recalls seeing graffiti near the sacristan's home on the path to the church saying "James Doyle is bent". He questioned Fr Doyle and Fr Doyle's reply was that he was a little bit foolish but made no further comment. Although he interpreted this comment as an admission, the priest in question has stated to the Inquiry that he still does not know what Fr Doyle is alleged to have done. He reported both matters to Bishop Herlihy and recalled that Bishop Herlihy sent Fr Doyle to Dublin for treatment with a psychologist or psychiatrist.

4.2.3 ADAM

Adam alleged the following:

In the early 1990s, Fr Doyle sexually assaulted Adam who was 12 years of age at the time, during a visit to the boy's home. The incident arose when Fr Doyle went to the bathroom in the course of the evening. Adam's father heard his son scream "stop". He immediately went to the landing and saw Fr Doyle standing over Adam. The boy was crouched in the corner with his back to the wall and Fr Doyle had one hand on his crotch and the other on his buttocks. Adam explained to the Gardai how the priest pushed him into the corner and grabbed his private parts. The family contacted Fr Doyle's parish priest. Two months later the boy's father discussed the assault with Bishop Comiskey. The matter was reported to the Garda Síochána and Fr Doyle was charged and convicted of indecent assault.

Notwithstanding Bishop Comiskey's expeditious removal of Fr Doyle and his subsequent dealings with him following this complaint, as more particularly set out in Chapter Five of this Report, the Diocese did not meet or attempt to meet with this victim or his family in relation to this complaint. The consequences of this case were very serious for the family concerned.

4.2.4 BARRY

Barry alleged the following:

Barry complained of abuse by Fr James Doyle in 1981 when he was approximately 11 years of age. He told the Inquiry that he had found a watch at a local Wexford GAA pitch which he gave to Fr Doyle so that the owner could be found. While he was handing over the watch, Fr Doyle undid his own and Barry's clothing and whilst he did not remove any clothing, he did expose both Barry and himself. Fr Doyle touched Barry and told Barry to touch him. Fr Doyle promised Barry that if the owner of the watch was not found, he would see that the watch was given to Barry. Barry did not tell anybody in his family what had happened because he felt he would not be believed. He returned, with some misgivings, to collect the unclaimed watch and Fr Doyle tried again to impose himself on Barry although no actual physical assault took place. Barry only recently disclosed his abuse to a local doctor. He reported the abuse to An Garda Síochána in January 2003.

4.2.5. BARRY'S BROTHER

Barry also alleged the following in relation to his younger brother:

Barry believes that his younger brother, who did not contact the Inquiry, was also abused by Fr Doyle as an altar boy and that such abuse would have occurred for a longer period than Barry's abuse.

4.2.6 JEREMY

Jeremy alleged as follows:

Jeremy was a student in St Peter's boarding school whilst James Doyle was a senior pupil there and during his first few years as a seminarian. Jeremy was about four years James Doyle's junior. He recalled lying in his bed one evening when James Doyle came into his cubicle and started to fondle him. He was deeply disturbed by this but felt he could tell no-one. He said he had admired and respected James Doyle until then but this episode had destroyed that. He stated that James Doyle was not drunk at the time of the alleged incident.