

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LZW

Support person present: No

1. My name is LZW My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. My mum and dad lived in in East Dunbartonshire and we then moved to a place called Renfrewshire, where they bought a farm. My younger days were spent on the farm and I found being brought up there interesting. It was exciting, hard, tough and eye opening.
3. My parents were and Although we lived on a working farm, my father wasn't a farmer, he had an business in Glasgow. My mum was a housewife and looked after the workers at the farm. I had two older brothers, who was ten years older than me and who was two years older than me. I had a younger brother, who was six years younger than me.
4. To start with at I went to Hamilton Park School in Glasgow. I had a first class experience in Hamilton Park, they were nice people and there was nothing untoward to report there.
5. Very quickly the education situation changed and I was taken to the school in Largs as a day boy before I later became a boarder. That was when the horrors began.

### **St Columba's College, Largs**

6. I went to St Columba's College in Largs when I was six, almost seven. I didn't know why I was moved from Hamilton Park to St Columba's but I heard later in life that I went to St Columba's early so that I could go at the same time as my brother [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was of an age to go and I wasn't but my parents thought that it would be a good thing for us to go together.
7. At first I was a day boy, taking the bus from the farm every day and then, when I was old enough, I became a boarder. I was on the bus on my own so [REDACTED] must have been boarding at that point. It took fifty minutes to get to St Columba's on the local authority bus. I don't know how long I was a day boy for but I think I had to wait until I was seven to board.
8. I can't remember if I visited St Columba's before I started but I would imagine so. I don't know why my parents selected that school but we were Catholic and I can only imagine that my father had heard good things about the school.
9. I'm not sure exactly how long I was there for but I can work it out from dates that stick in my mind. Kennedy was shot whilst I was at St Columba's and my younger brother died whilst I was there. Kennedy was shot in November 1963 and my brother died in [REDACTED] 1965 so I know I was at St Columba's during that period.
10. There were about 30 boys in total at St Columba's and less of them were boarders, some would be Largs boys or Dunoon boys travelling daily.

### **Routine at St. Columba's**

#### *First day*

11. I don't remember my first day at St. Columba's at all as I was so wiped out and in a daze.

12. I remember that there was a fir tree lined, semi circled garden and that cars used to go up one way and down the other. There was a glass door in the school and I used to stare through the clear bit at the driveway and I knew the next car was coming for me, that someone was going to come but they weren't.

*Mornings and bedtime*

13. The boys slept in dormitories, one floor up, and each one had three or four little iron frame beds each with a towel hanging over the end and three bars at the top. Brother Germanus slept on the same landing but in a room a couple of steps up from the landing. He's the only person that I can place there.
14. In 2015 I asked the Marists who Brother Germanus was and Ronnie McEwan told during me that Germanus was too dim to be a teacher so they made him a dormitory Brother and his role was to look after the dormitories.

*Mealtimes/Food*

15. I honestly can't remember meals or where we ate. It's as if I wasn't there.

*Washing/bathing*

16. There were both showers and baths in different rooms and I think we got on with washing and bathing by ourselves. It was an old fashioned house so it was a deep, basin style, stand in tub. I think I would remember if the arrangement was communal showering so I think not but there were no locks on doors or anything like that.

*Clothing/uniform*

17. The children wore a uniform of short trousers, white shirt, tie and a blazer or a jumper if you weren't wearing the blazer. You had shorts and tracksuit bottoms for sports or for going across to the beach but in the school you dressed as a school boy.

*Leisure time*

18. I remember that we had a playing ground across the road, over on the side of the beach. I played cricket once that I can remember. There was time set aside for going down to the beach and walking along there and along the rocks. That was good, that was freedom and that was out and about. That is my only good memory of St Columba's.

*Trips and holidays*

19. I stayed there during term time so I went home in holiday time. I went back to the farm and it was brilliant. I had a pony and a bike. I would get up in the morning and eat breakfast and my mother might not see me again until six o'clock at night because that was the way farming was but you were alright. Much later I learned from my brother that Germanus used to come up on the bus to the farm to see me during the holidays but I don't remember that happening. I learned that four years ago and it shocked me.

*School*

20. Education wise I didn't get any benefit of being there and the fact is, and I'm ashamed to say it, that I can't tell you about a single lesson there. As far as learning was concerned, there was none.

*Healthcare*

21. My brother [REDACTED] has told me that there was a nurse who lived in a cottage on the playing grounds. I don't remember that there was a cottage on the playing ground and I didn't know that there was a nurse there or remember attending the nurse.

*Religious instruction*

22. I think that there were prayers at assembly and the Brothers wore black with big brass crosses and collars but they weren't drumming religion into you. You went along to the



Largs chapel every Sunday and on holidays of obligation when there would be a special mass and a half day or something. There wasn't a chapel in the school to my knowledge. You went to confession at the same place in Largs, perhaps the evening before mass but I'm not sure.

#### *Visits/inspections*

23. On a Sunday we were allowed out of St Columba's. My mum or dad would visit and we would go along the promenade and get ice cream. My parents will have taken me and [REDACTED] out at the same time but for some reason, I don't remember him there. It was available to do most Sundays and if no one came for you then another family might take you out.
24. I know my brother [REDACTED] was at St Columba's at the same time as me but for some reason, I can't picture him there. I don't know why that is. [REDACTED] was older than me and he probably moved to Dumfries when I was still in Largs and there was a period of time when I was at St Columba's on my own.
25. I'm not aware of their having been any inspections.

#### *Running away*

26. In 1965, I made my escape one day as terrible things were happening to me. I knew where the bus depot was because I used to be a day boy so I went from the school to the bus depot and went upstairs on the first bus I saw. I hid under the front seat but the bus staff saw me do it and they saw the blazer so they phoned the school and a Brother called [REDACTED] MJD came to get me. He arrived with the cook who had a van and they brought me back.
27. I subsequently asked my older brother did they ever know that I had ran away but he didn't know anything about it. That was one occasion that I always think why were alarm bells not ringing then? I don't recall anyone else running away.

*Discipline*

28. There were rules about talking and running and thinks of that nature and there was a sternness so you didn't do anything wrong but I never saw any corporal punishment there.

**Abuse at St Columba's**

29. When I became a boarder at seven that's when I was first introduced to Brother Germanus and almost immediately, in my mind, there was an occurrence with Germanus. The first time it happened I think I had only been in the school for two or three nights as a boarder.
30. He came and got me from my bed, gently enough, and took me to what I think is a landing or a hallway, where he got me to stand up on a table and reach for something from a box or a hatch higher up. I had to open the hatch, lift out a bag and put it down on the table. Germanus then lifted me down off the table.
31. I was wearing pyjamas and he told me to go into the bathroom and take my pyjamas off. He went off with the bag somewhere and didn't come into the bathroom straight away. I went into the bathroom and I stood there and when Germanus returned he again told me to take my pyjamas off because, he said, they were dirty. I then replied that they weren't dirty and that was the moment that my life changed.
32. He gave me a slap around the head and took the pyjamas off me. I was frozen with fear, I was all the things that you would imagine that a seven year old would be. I was in a room with a man that I didn't know and I didn't know what was going to happen next.
33. Germanus took me back out into the hallway, still naked, and told me to stand on the table again and to put the bag back in the hatch. When I was on the table Germanus was fondling and fingering me. Tears were blinding me. I didn't know what was going

on. Then Germanus told me to get back down from the table and to go into the bathroom again.

34. In the bathroom he took a dry towel and was supposedly cleaning my back because it was dirty. It wasn't dirty. I then put my pyjamas back on and went back through to my bed. Nothing else happened that time. I can honestly tell you that I was just frozen
35. After the first night, the bag lifting happened a few times but then the hatch got dispensed with and it was straight into his room. He would just come to my bed and take me away into his room or into the bathroom where I would take my pyjamas off because I didn't want a clatter to the head. He was always checking if my neck was dirty. He would appear barefooted, wearing only a white vest and he would stand me in the bath and masturbate against my back. I didn't know what that was then but I know now.
36. I would wipe myself down, put my pyjamas back on and then go away back to bed like a little puppy. That was the scene for a long number of years. That happened two to three dozen times in the months I was there.
37. Germanus did whatever he wanted to do with me. He did vile things either in his room or in that bathroom or a few times in the hallway. He would finger me in the hallway and he would finger me and masturbate against my back in the bathrooms. He always had me out of my pyjamas and he was masturbating.
38. On one occasion, the whole school was at a church service at the front at Largs and Germanus was sitting beside me as usual. He was touching me inappropriately on the upper, inner leg, but nothing bad, it was an open situation, and I soiled myself. I had to be taken back to the school by older boys and I live with that every day of my life. The touch of him was enough to make me soil myself and I had to be taken back to the school much to my eternal shame but nobody asked "what is wrong with

LZW

39. On one occasion I was in the bathroom with Germanus, I was naked and he had done his business on my back when a man came in. He was a young tall Marist but not with the garb on. He was wearing a black jacket and shirt but no collar so I think he was a Marist. He asked Germanus what was going on and Germanus told him that my nose was bleeding so he was cleaning me up but the man knew and he told Germanus to go and that he would clean me up instead. The man finished off cleaning me up with the towels, he got my pyjamas from the stool and took me back to my room. That man knew that there was a situation that he'd walked in on and it was nothing to do with the bleeding nose. I never saw that man again.
40. When Germanus was abusing me I was crying. He would hit me because I was crying and I was crying because he was hitting me. My nose was permanently bleeding. That was a problem for him. I was 35 years old before I went and got my nosebleeds sorted and it started in St. Columba's. I've always blamed Germanus for the nosebleeds but no other physical injury.
41. I don't know what went through my mind because I didn't know what it was that he was doing to me and I wondered if everybody was getting this kind of treatment. I remember I cried and people used to ask me are you ok? I seemed to have tears in my eyes all the time. If it hadn't just happened, or it had happened a while ago, then I was waiting on the next incident.
42. My mother used to say that Germanus looked after me and that he took a shine to me. I was a wee young blonde haired boy. He was always attending to me, always touching me, always dragging me. Germanus was always playing your friend, a comforting friend. When I think back now, everyone thought that he was a lovely, soft man. He was a vicious, man.
43. In the [REDACTED] of 1965 Germanus came to get me and brought me into a piano room where he sat me down and told me that my brother was in heaven. I asked who and he told me that my younger brother, [REDACTED] was in heaven but he didn't say the word "dead". He told me that he was going to take me to pack up my stuff and that there was a car coming for me.

44. He then told me if I ever told anybody about our little secret then I would never see my baby brother again. The threat worked and I carried those words for fifty years. My younger brother was 5 and a half when he died. He had been sick in the night, choked on his vomit and died in the bed. I had a special bond with him, even though he was only five, he was a smashing little boy.
45. After [REDACTED] died I went back to Largs but I was like a different person. I was getting a wee bit stronger and I was telling myself not to go near Germanus.
46. Up until [REDACTED] died, I hadn't spoken a word about the abuse anyway because Germanus was always making gestures such as putting a finger to his lips or putting his hand over his mouth.

#### **St Joseph's College, Dumfries**

47. St Columba's was a feeder school for St Josephs and Fort Augustus but there was a break at home before I was sent to St Joseph's in Dumfries.
48. I think we did go down for an introduction day or perhaps it was an interview and at that point my older brother, [REDACTED] was at St Josephs and I was going down to start there.
49. St Joseph's was an all-boys secondary school, most of whom boarded but there was a small proportion of day boys, maybe a couple of dozen. There were four to five hundred pupils and the break down was probably less young ones than older ones. There were maybe forty to sixty young ones and then a hundred in each year. There were class captains and their role was to keep some semblance of order in the class and do a role call but it wasn't a strenuous or meaningful thing. It was more of a badge of honour. They were picked by the kids. There were houses and they were called St Andrews, St Georges, St Ninians and St. Patricks. I was in St Andrews. The houses competed against each other in sports.

50. Unlike St Columba's, I could nearly draw you an architect's picture of St Joseph's. It was a massive, three floored, sandstone building with a substantial hallway and wide corridors. It was state of the art in its day and the old building joined onto a brand new wing where there was a theatre, science labs and things like that. The ground floor had all the facilities and upstairs there were dormitories to the left and right.
51. The dormitories were big open rooms with about forty to sixty iron frame beds. There wasn't any privacy but you got a locker at the side of your bed for your bits and pieces. Dormitories were divided by age with younger boys on the lower floor and as you went up to the third floor there would be older boys and some people who were privileged like class captains. Some boys had a sectioned off curtained area.
52. There were beautiful grounds outside with two other buildings One building was for older Brothers to live in and one for the younger kids to stay in. The dormitory for the younger boys may have been there and the schooling was in the main building.
53. When I think about it now, I was already getting stronger when I arrived at St Joseph's. What happened to me at St Columba's wasn't going to be happening to me again. I was stronger in myself although obviously I wasn't speaking about it and I thought I never would. I grew in confidence a bit within myself but it didn't stop me wanting to get away.
54. I remember that there were lots of lay teachers as well as Marist Brothers. I remember Brother <sup>MZH</sup>, the <sup>SNR</sup> Brother John-Paul or Paul, he became <sup>SNR</sup> Brother David, the finance man and Brother <sup>AKW</sup> who was a stern man.
55. If you said one wrong word to Brother <sup>AKW</sup> then your hands were out and he would pull the belt out. He wore a belt for hitting you and kept it wrapped, like a bra strap, under his clothes. I never got the belt from him but many did and I saw that happen. He was ruthless and would use the belt if boys were running or swearing but I think he just liked using it. Brother <sup>AKW</sup> was a mischievous person who should never

have been a Brother but not in a bad way. If you brought him a bottle of Curries Lemonade then you were his friend for a week.

56. In the school there was a kind of robustness with the kids, you could be a wimp or you could be one of the guys. As you got older, you got to know a guy or two and you'd be friendly with them and you'd be wiser of the Marists so they wouldn't be posing a threat to you and you'd be getting a bit cheekier.

### **Routine at St Joseph's**

57. There was a bell in the morning and then you made your own way down for breakfast. I think we had to get up, prior to eight, for breakfast at eight o'clock. There was assembly every morning and then it was onto your classes and you kept a timetable card in your top pocket. At morning break there was a tuckshop that you could go and buy a cake or a coke with money sent from home and then you went back to lessons until lunch.
58. After dinnertime, at about six, you passed the time till half nine or ten, when lights went out, as best you could. There were periods where people might put a play on but I don't remember any clubs.
59. We had television and maybe a film on. There were televisions dotted about different rooms with certain people who would go to each one by age group. There was a den that the older boys had done up. They would go there and play music and things of that nature. You were allowed out in the grounds. In the evening, we could have a shower. They were unsupervised.

### *First day*

60. I had been on the farm at [REDACTED] over the holidays and when it got nearer term time a trunk was brought out for everything that you would require that year like plimsolls, shorts and t-shirts. There was a list given to the parents and everything on that list

would be going into the case and packing it would begin a number of days before I was due to leave.

61. I remember saying that I wouldn't go to St Joseph's. I remember thinking that there had only been three or four Marists in St Columba's and I was now going to a place where there were thirty, forty or even fifty Marists and it was too much for me.
62. I was told later in life that it was like a pantomime getting a hold of me. I would be away hiding and they would find me, get me dressed and sit on me at the front of the house on a couple of sun benches until the car was brought round to take me to central station.
63. All the boys would meet up in Central Station in Glasgow and there would be a train special from Glasgow. I was ten when I was taken to central station and put on a train. Going to another Marist school was my nightmare. I went down there in tears and I stayed down there in tears.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

64. At bedtime you just counted down the hours until lights out at ten. Lights out was later as you got older. If you had a problem during the night like being unwell then there was an infirmary wing.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

65. Meals were eaten in the conservatory on the ground floor. There were big long tables and there would be some head boys or Marists around. Once you got a seat it became yours early in the term and you would sit in the same seat with the same people. Breakfast was cereal and there would be scrambled egg or something of that nature. We were always complaining about the food but it was always good enough. There were no options with the food and if you didn't like something then I wasn't aware of there being any alternatives.



*Washing/bathing*

66. Showers and things were mostly in the evenings between 7.30 and 9.00 after which the shower room would be locked. It was a big marbled room with ten to twelve cubicles with no doors on them. There were wash hand basins down the wall where there weren't showers.

*Clothing/uniform*

67. The uniform was a royal blue jacket with a badge on the pocket, a blue and gold tie, a blue and gold braided jumper, slacks and black shoes. The uniform was for mass or some sort of occasion such as a prize giving. Throughout the day you didn't wear the uniform and, within reason, you were smart casual.

*Leisure time*

68. On Wednesday afternoon and Saturday there were sports. There was swimming, rowing and cricket but I wasn't into going to places where you had to take your clothes off with other boys so I avoided things like that at all costs. I discovered that if you wanted to go fishing then you could do that so I got a fishing rod and I would take it on a Wednesday afternoon and a Saturday and I would walk the streets of Dumfries. The fishing rod never saw the water but I was getting away to avoid sports.
69. Once you were a certain age then you could go to the pictures or go down into the town as long as you were back by the curfew. I can't remember what time the curfew was set at but it would have been a sensible time like half eight or nine. There wasn't a sign out system as long as you were over, I think, thirteen and I have no memory of anyone being disciplined for being out past the curfew.

*Trips and holidays*

70. I don't remember any school organised overnight trips and I went home in between term times. I got the train back to Glasgow and it was great to be back on the farm

until next time. I was restrained before returning to school every time for the first few years. I would get very upset at the sight of the trunk coming out. No one asked why I was reluctant to go back and I think they just thought I was being a little brat.

71. As time went by I shed the fear of going back and there were a couple of good friends that you had a laugh with. Academically nothing was happening but I didn't have the same fear in the last few years that I had had earlier on.

#### *School*

72. I enjoyed [REDACTED] but I was lost in other subjects like maths. There wasn't additional tuition and no one would spot that you were falling behind. There wasn't a system of encouragement or help if you were not very good but I was putting my time into getting out and my very early days at St Josephs were the same blur as in Largs. I didn't want to be there. There was a teacher called Rinaldi who was good with history and he was quite interesting. It was probably because he wasn't a Marist that I seemed to be better at learning things from him.
73. You needed to get to fourteen or fifteen and do the exams before you could legally leave school and my ambition was to do that. Schooling wise, I'd say there were many like me who were putting the time in or maybe the teachers had already decided you were going nowhere. I wonder what qualifications the Marists had to be teaching?
74. Homework was not set but you could go back into the classes at any time if you had something to write up.

#### *Healthcare*

75. The school had an infirmary which was a big room with a nurse and with four partitioned off beds in it. I don't remember being in there or doctors ever being called out.

#### *Religious instruction*

76. Mass was every morning before breakfast but you didn't have to go every morning, you only had to go on a Sunday.

*Work*

77. You had a laundry bag at the end of your bed that was picked up and taken away. You were to keep your bed and your locker spotless. Brother <sup>AKW</sup> supervised the dormitory but I never saw anyone punished for failing to keep their bed and locker spotless.

*Visits/Inspections*

78. I was visited periodically by family when I was at St. Joseph's but nothing was set in stone so I might have got two visits in a week and then nothing for a month. When they did come we would go somewhere in the car like a hotel to get something to eat or we would go for a run in the country.
79. I don't remember there being any inspections.

*Sibling*

80. The school was much larger than St Columba's so my recollection of my brother is even less at St Joseph's. He was two years older than me and there was a definite divide between his age group and my age group. I can't remember anything about him. I can't even remember sharing a packet of crisps with him.

*Family contact*

81. There was a phone box in the school, on a landing where the old and new buildings joined. I cried in that phone box for a year when I phoned home. I had to phone the operator and ask for an exchange call to and then they would put me through free of charge.

82. My older brother, [REDACTED] phoned the telephone exchange and had that service blocked so that I couldn't phone home. I had been on the phone trying to let them know that I couldn't be there because there were bad people. [REDACTED] was home and always answered the phone. At this stage I must have been nine, almost ten, in Dumfries.
83. When I was upset and crying there was no guidance or help from the Brothers but there was an older boy, who was maybe the top prefect, whose parents were friends with my parents. His name was [REDACTED] and he used to take an interest in me which was good, I felt a bit of security from that. Some younger boys were homesick and when I was a year or two older I would do my best to speak to them.
84. In the early stages of St Joseph's I was afraid and I wanted to phone and tell them that I couldn't be there. I don't know if I would have told them why I felt like that but at St Joseph's there was nothing bad going on to tell them about.
85. If I had cash I could phone home. I got cash for sweets and would put it in the phone but I wouldn't say contact by phone was encouraged by the school.

*Personal possessions*

86. You had your own bits and pieces, like books, and boys would swap things. I don't remember a library but if there was one then I didn't visit it.
87. My mother was very good to me and would send me an envelope with some nice words in it and a few pounds and I enjoyed that. She wrote a couple of times a month but we weren't encouraged to write letters back and I didn't do so.

*Running away*

88. I never ran away from St Josephs and I don't recall anyone else running away. You wouldn't really have had to run away because you could go in the morning and you probably wouldn't be missed until night time.

*Discipline*

89. My friends were [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they were about my age. There was also a boy call [REDACTED] from Motherwell, a boy called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I got on well with my peer group. Some of the day boys tried to be bullying types but I never had any problems and I avoided confrontation. There was a no nonsense teacher called [REDACTED] who was a bit of an enforcer and I heard that if you were to mention that kind of problem to him then he would sort it out but he didn't have to do that for me.
90. All the standard rules were in place about behaviour. There was plenty of strap, as it was called, given out. Sometimes boys were caught smoking so you got the strap for things of that nature but I didn't smoke.
91. I got the strap on one occasion. I wouldn't be able to say what I got it for but I got it along with others. I think we were in a building we shouldn't have been in and I don't think the strap was the right punishment but we got it anyway. It was administered by Brother MYZ who was renowned for it. I wouldn't have been involved in anything that deserved the strap but we were in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was struck on the flat of the hand twice in front of the others who got it at the same time. It was done there and then and I would doubt that there was a record kept of that. There would have been report cards sent home.
92. Whilst corporal punishment happened at St Joseph's, it certainly wasn't a big feature considering the number of pupils. There was the odd person that couldn't stay out of trouble and they would get the strap another two or four times.
93. At about the age of thirteen we started rebelling a bit and we used to go down into the town with two local boys who knew where to go. We would have pints in a place called

the Beverley Hotel and that went on for a long time. I was sometimes wearing my school blazer when we went there. I don't think I was ever visibly under the influence of alcohol when I got back to school and I never got into trouble. I don't think they ever knew.

### **Abuse at St Joseph's College**

94. The other kids were nice and there was a culture that older boys would mark the younger boys' cards. The older boys would say to you, don't find yourself up a corridor with him about Brothers and you avoided one on ones with any Marists that you were warned about. One of the older boys who I recall saying that to me was [REDACTED] but there were others.
95. Brother [REDACTED] MFI is the one of the Brothers that springs to mind as being one that I was warned about. I was warned never to be caught alone with him but I never saw anything untoward. I was warned about Brother [REDACTED] MFI by [REDACTED] and other boys but it was an open secret that Brother [REDACTED] MFI was a dangerous predator.
96. Some of the boys had curtained off areas within the dormitory and he lived in there. He had a room with a closing door and it was known that he would find his way down to the communal showers and hang about there. There was no official supervision of the showers but he made it his role because he wanted to be standing there. I have a memory of seeing him at the showers in full garb.
97. Brother [REDACTED] MFI was putting in his time and, given what I had heard from other boys, he was dangerous for kids. It was an open secret that Brother [REDACTED] MFI had a drink problem.
98. There were lovely Marist Brothers and they seemed kind and friendly to me but my experience there was that I was putting in my time and I needed to get out.

### **Leaving St Joseph's College**

99. When I was fifteen I left Dumfries and went home for two weeks until accommodation was arranged in Glasgow and then I left and never went home again.
100. I left St Josephs after the first set of exams. I was given no preparation for leaving and there was no support after I left. I remember that I was finished and I was not going back so it was a chapter that I could draw to a close. I didn't have any contact with staff after I left and although I believe there were reunions, I didn't go to one.

### **Life after boarding school**

101. After St Josephs I went to Glasgow to live and I was working in various jobs. I was drinking heavily and getting it all wrong. I was limited in what I could do because I had no C.V. and no exam results to speak of so I did various jobs until I could drive. I became a driver and sales person for an engineering supplies company and worked my way up in there. I worked all over Scotland on oil and gas rigs and then moved onto jobs which required experience in safety.
102. I married at twenty one and had three daughters. I found my way as best I could and I was a good provider. I was offered a job in Northern Ireland which I did for a number of years and then I was offered a job elsewhere due to being able to do that job well. I moved to the Republic of Ireland and worked for Shell but as a self-employed person because I didn't have the C.V. to be employed directly. I generally fought my way through life.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

103. In 2013, I was at a family wedding in Ayr when an older lady approached me and asked me if I was LZW [REDACTED] and if I one of [REDACTED] family name [REDACTED] from [REDACTED]. I said that I was and she went on to ask if I went to the school in Largs. When I said that I had



she told me that her husband had been there and she went on to tell me and others about the school in Largs. She said that she had met the Brothers and that her husband used to entertain the Brothers, after his time at school, back in his house in Paisley. There was a picture of marvelousness being drawn and then she mentioned Brother Germanus. I said to her that I was glad that her husband had a good experience at Largs but that it wasn't the same for everybody. She asked me what I meant and I told her that I wouldn't discuss it with her at a wedding or possibly ever but she continued to press me repeatedly asking me what had happened to me. I told her that that she had mentioned Germanus and that I didn't agree that he was a lovely person but that we were enjoying ourselves and we should leave it at that.

104. My wife was there and asked me what the conversation had been about so at first I told her it was nothing but the next day she pressed me so I stopped the car and I told her what had happened to me. She said that answered a lot of questions for her and that she wanted me to get in touch with the Marist Brothers and tell them what had happened so that I could get it off my chest.

#### **Reporting of abuse to the Marist Brothers**

105. I thought about it for a long time and finally, in 2014, I phoned the Marist organisation. I ended up speaking to a man in Holland called Brother Brendan Geary and I then wrote him a letter. He came back to me and said that someone would be in touch with me shortly and that they would have a meeting with me in Glasgow. I was happy with that so I said thank you very much and agreed to that but then they were on the phone again and they were asking me to go to a Marist place but I refused to go to any Marist place and I arranged for a meeting room in One Devonshire Garden in Glasgow.

#### *First Meeting with Ronnie McEwan*

106. I first met Ronnie McEwan in 2014. He came along in civilian clothing and I started to tell him my story from St Columba's. I had only been speaking for a few minutes when I said to Ronnie that I was going to stop talking because it was clear from his face that



he knew all about this. He agreed and told me that they knew all about Germanus. I asked if he knew about me and he said no but that they knew about others and particularly one other. I asked if what I described as my abuse was similar to the abuse on the other person and he said yes. I asked if that meant that it was sexual violence and he said yes.

107. I was dumbfounded because this was a secret I had kept for fifty years. I had been told it had been our little secret and that I would never see my little brother again and this Ronnie McEwan, who was now sitting across the table from me, knew that Germanus was well able to deliver that message. I was taken aback and I said that I would like to speak with the other gentleman and he said that he would contact his agent and ask if he wanted to see me.
108. During the meeting I asked Ronnie McEwan who he was and in response he asked whether I liked football. When I said that I did he then told me that the Marists had founded Celtic. I asked him what that had to do with Largs and he said that he was just trying to explain to me what they did as a religious order and one of the things that they had done was to found Celtic. I wanted to know who Ronnie McEwan was individually but he never mentioned that he was to do with safe guarding.
109. He told me about another man who was involved. I wanted to slap the tables and leave but then he said to me that he would take it from there on in and that I didn't need to do a thing. He said to me that I should not contact the police because they would phone the police. He said that they had a system in place for contacting the police in Dumfries in Galloway. I agreed to this but I did wonder why they needed a system in place for me and this other guy.
110. It was just Ronnie McEwan at that meeting. He also told me that there was a trust in place to compensate people for what had happened at Largs and told me that he wanted me to get in touch with Professor Leo Martin. He told me to get a lawyer to write to him to start the ball rolling. I said that that was not the purpose of my visit and that I had come to tell them something that they already knew about.

111. Ronnie McEwan was very open with me at the first meeting and when discussing Largs he told me that there were two buildings next to each other at St Columba's and he said that one of the buildings in Largs had been a holiday home for Marists and that someone had the idea to get some boys in to teach. Ronnie McEwan rolled his eyes as if to express astonishment up when he told me this as if to say that was the last thing on their mind.
112. I was warned about Brother <sup>MFI</sup> when I was at St Joseph's and when Ronnie McEwan moved on to talk about Dumfries he told me a story about having to go and get a brother <sup>MFI</sup> back from Ireland because <sup>MFI</sup> was facing serious accusations of abuse at Dumfries. He told me that Brother <sup>MFI</sup> had agreed to come back but he died before he could face the allegations.

*Second meeting with Ronnie McEwan*

113. Some time went by and nothing was happening and I hadn't heard from the police so I phoned Ronnie McEwan and he invited me to come and see him. I went to see him in the Kinharvie Institute in Partick and he started trying to counsel me on how to get over everything.. He started acting like the counsellor saying that he was going to help me but I told him that what I wanted was to speak to the other boy. At that point he told me that the other boy did not want to speak to me. I asked what the other boys name was and Ronnie told me that they couldn't give me the name and that he didn't want to speak to me. I thought that was strange and when I told Ronnie McEwan that I would have thought the boy would want to compare notes with me if he was in touch with the Marists. He confirmed that the boy was in touch with them regularly.
114. I didn't want the meeting to become a counselling session and I told Ronnie that I didn't want to talk like that. Ronnie had started speaking about when he was a boy and he had his first erection and during that conversation he gestured towards his own penis. So I was sitting in a room with a man in Partick talking about erections and I just didn't want to be there. I was having flashbacks to the abuse by Germanus

115. I told Ronnie that I hadn't heard from the police yet and he said he would chase that up. He again encouraged me to write to Professor Leo Martin. We left it there and he came out to meet my wife in the car and at that point he was crying and she was crying. He was hugging us and telling us that everything would be alright.

Contact with MGT [REDACTED]

116. In between the second meeting with Ronnie McEwan and seeing him for a third time, my wife told me that my nephew MGT [REDACTED] had gone to St. Columba's. We are not a close family so I didn't know that. We got a number for my nephew MGT [REDACTED] and phoned him.
117. During the phone call I asked him if he had been to the school in Largs and he said that he had been and then uttered some expletives about the Marists. I told him that I needed to speak to him so he came to see me before my next meeting with Ronnie McEwan.
118. He told me his story from Largs, he didn't tell me everything but he told me things had happened to him seventeen or eighteen years after me and Germanus was the name featuring all the time. Then he told me that he was there the day that they killed Aldo Moroni, the boy that died in St Columba's. He described being up on the landing when Germanus was "beating fuck out of Aldo Moroni". He was very animated about the attack and how vicious it was. He told me he didn't know why Germanus was beating Aldo but that Germanus had kept Aldo in his room. He told me that they all went to the funeral and that they were told that Aldo had had a heart attack. MGT [REDACTED] talked about regretting never having done anything about it. I said it was time to do something about it now. I told him it was outrageous.
119. I got in touch with a lawyer called David Boyce who was based at Bothwell Street in Glasgow. When I was discussing that the case had been reported to the police, the lawyer asked who had reported what had happened to me to the police and I said the Marists were doing it. The lawyer then phoned me back about 15 minutes later and said that he had spoken to Dumfries and Galloway Police and that they didn't know

anything about me. Dumfries and Galloway police told my solicitor that we should contact the police in Kilmarnock. A year had gone by at that point. My lawyer then phoned Leo Martin who said that they had been in touch with Dumfries and Galloway police and had left a message but the police didn't phone back so they didn't do anything about it. I phoned Ronnie McEwan again and I told him that I needed to see him and that I was troubled by what was going on. He said he would come and see me and he flew down and visited me at my house.

*Third meeting with Ronnie McEwan*

120. Ronnie McEwan had arranged to come and see me in 2015 and this was to be our third meeting. We had arranged for him to come and see me at my house. When I was waiting for him to come and visit, I kept thinking that if I had acted against Germanus at the time then it wouldn't have happened to Aldo. I was beside myself with anger.
121. At the third meeting I asked McEwan to tell me about a boy called Aldo Moroni and he said that he didn't know an Aldo Moroni. I told him that I knew that Aldo Moroni had had a very bad beating at the hands of Germanus and that he subsequently died within days. He said he didn't know anything about it. Ronnie leaned back in his chair and asked me how it would be if the Marists wrote a substantial cheque to a charity of my choice for child abuse. I said it wouldn't be anything and I asked him why he was saying that.
122. That conversation was a light bulb moment for me where I realised something was really wrong. The words Aldo were only out of my mouth and he was asking me how it would be if they wrote a cheque out.
123. I asked Ronnie again if he had heard of Aldo and he said that he hadn't. I asked him how that could be given he was Principal for the Marist Brothers for the whole of Europe and that was a school with thirty children in it but he maintained that he had never heard of him but that there was an offer on the table of money for a children's charity.

*Police*

124. I contacted the police in Kilmarnock in early 2015 and by this time they had heard about me. I went to Glasgow to see them in a police station near Parkhead and I sat with them for three hours and told them everything.
125. The police told me that Germanus was dead and there was nothing that I could do. Ronnie McEwan had told me that Germanus had died in 1998.
126. There were emails back and forwards with the police which have the names of the officers. I also told them about my nephew MGT [REDACTED].
127. The police came back and said that I should leave it alone and told me that Aldo was a sickly boy and that they had spoken to the parents and Aldo's mother had said that she thought that all of this was behind her. I thought her reaction should have been different to that. I know that Aldo is not my fight but something absolutely stinks and I feel like a coward because if I had spoken up earlier and reported Germanus then Aldo Moroni would still be alive.
128. A female police officer at Kilmarnock police told me that there were five statements in relation to the beating of Aldo but that they weren't opening up the case. A policeman called Hogg told me that I should move on with my life which was easy for him to say. They changed who was dealing with the case three times.
129. A man called MGQ [REDACTED] has also been in touch with me. He has told me that he witnessed Aldo being beaten by Germanus and that Aldo was kept in a room with Germanus.

*Contact with my brothers*

130. I didn't speak to my brother [REDACTED] for fifty years. He was in a bad way and I used to do a bit to help him but he didn't know it.

131. After speaking to me, Kilmarnock police wanted to contact [REDACTED]. I explained to the police that I wasn't in contact with [REDACTED] but I knew where he was. I agreed to give them [REDACTED] address but I didn't want them to go and see him yet. I wanted to go and see him first so that I could ask him if he had anything to add about what had happened. I went to see him four or five times and he never uttered a word, he was in a bad way with drink.
132. The meetings were not pleasant because we hadn't spoken in a long time but by about meeting number six, in the latter half of 2016, it took about a year before we were able to speak, I asked him if he remembered Largs. He immediately asked me not to speak to him about Germanus. I pointed out that I hadn't mentioned Germanus and I asked him why he had mentioned him at which point he said "I never knew what was going on. Don't think I knew" I asked him what he was talking about and he told me that Germanus used to come to the farm in the holidays to see me. [REDACTED] said that he would be sent, by my mother, to meet the bus and that he would walk Germanus up to the farm. He told me that Germanus would ask where I was but that I would be away hiding. I didn't know about these visits by Germanus.
133. [REDACTED] also said that there was a nurse who lived in a cottage in the playing fields who told him to watch his little brother with Germanus. I asked him what he thought she meant and he said that he didn't know.
134. [REDACTED] broke down and told me about what had happened to him. He said that nothing had happened to him at Largs but that the Marists once took him to a football tournament in Sligo, supposedly a Glasgow Celtic tournament. He wasn't good at football but he was of the age to go at about 9 or 10 years old. At that point, he was a brave and courageous boy who was willing to try anything. He said that he met people over there who were really bad people. He had tears running down his face and he couldn't say specifically what had happened but he said that they were disgusting and that they would do anything to you.
135. [REDACTED] said that when he came back he went to Dumfries and he told a Brother called "the AKX [REDACTED]" what had happened in Sligo and the AKX [REDACTED] took his pyjamas off him



and used the buckle end of the belt to beat him until he was bleeding. Other Brothers took the AKX off of him and put [REDACTED] in the infirmary inside the College for a few days.

136. [REDACTED] told me that Brother MZH, the SNR visited him in the infirmary and told him that he must never ever let his mother know what had happened [REDACTED] told me that Brother MZH said to him that he needed to learn to keep his pyjamas on but [REDACTED] told me that he had never taken his pyjamas off. He had tears running down his face telling me that.
137. He had the courage to come back and speak up and that was how he was treated. There was little or no contact between us for fifty years, we wouldn't have been together five days in all those years but he was able to tell me about Germanus and the Sligo trip. Other people must have known.
138. I have no relationship with my brother, [REDACTED] and he refused to speak to the police in Kilmarnock. They asked if he could shed any light on my time in Largs and he refused to speak to them.
139. Sometime after I had left St Joseph's, when I was about 17 or 18 years old, [REDACTED] told some of my friends the story of how he had the phone cut and I remember that he told them that I was always on the phone from St. Joseph's crying. I was there when he did that and I reminded him of that when Kilmarnock police wanted to speak to him. I asked him to tell the police about it but he said he couldn't remember that. I said to him that he remembered it one day when he was telling my pals about it. We don't speak now.

#### *Civil Action*

140. My solicitor received a letter from Leo Martin in 2014 saying that the Marist Brothers were a charity and that there was nothing I could do to them. The Marist, Brendan Geary, got in touch with a counsellor in Cambridge so I went along to see her. They were paying her £40 a fortnight to see me for an hour but when she heard the story

she said that a guilty party had sent me in for counselling and that she didn't want their money but she did want to keep seeing me. Everything was on top of me at that point. Aldo was dead and I thought that if I had spoken then he wouldn't be dead.

141. David Boyce, who found out that they hadn't reported it to the police had taken the case so far but told me Leo Martin was not making the right noises and had no intentions of making reparation. They told me that they were the wrong company to make them do that and put me in contact with Thompsons solicitors, in 2016, who said that I was out of time and in the meantime they would help me as much as they could.
142. Thompsons told me that we could take the Marist Brothers to court and I would get to tell the court what happened to me. This took place in the summer of 2015. Apart from the counsellor in Cambridge, the only action the Marists have taken was to employ a high powered barrister to go to Edinburgh and block me from telling Lady Wolffe what happened. My barrister asked me in court to tell Lady Wolffe what had happened to me but she told me to sit down. She said that we were not there to discuss what happened to me but to discuss whether it is within time so in actual fact I was not allowed to tell Lady Wolfe anything that I have since told the Inquiry.
143. I would describe my experience in court as re-abuse and humiliating in the extreme. I was so angry. My family were sitting there and I wasn't able to tell my story. The Marists' action was to stop those words coming out. Thompsons noticed that the court had made a mistake regarding the dates and they went back and appealed it to a Lady Dorrian and she found in favour of Lady Wolffe. I said to Thompsons that there was no point in taking it any further because it was eating me and it was eating my family. Thompsons advised me that the law was changing.
144. When I was in court in Edinburgh my barrister, Andrew Hajducki, was talking about the passage of time and he told the Judge that being promised that I would never see my baby brother again if I ever spoke about what happened affected my judgement and my mind so I was never free to speak about the matter. The judge asked if my mind had been affected by that and my barrister said yes at which point



the barrister for the other side turned to me and pointed a finger at the side of his temple and drew a circle there indicating that I was mad.

MGH

145. After my civil action [REDACTED] my barrister was contacted by MGH [REDACTED] and I allowed my number to be passed on to him. MGH [REDACTED] phoned me and told me that he knew Ronnie McEwan and that he also had problems with Germanus. He told me that he was desperate to speak to me but that no-one had contacted him from the Marists to tell him about me.
146. Ronnie McEwan had told me during a phone call after our second meeting that MGH [REDACTED] was not worth speaking to as he had problems with drugs and it wouldn't be a good experience for me to meet him. Ronnie is keen to have his arms around you and to cry with you but really he is thinking how can he get out of this as fast as he can. I thought he was a scurrilous bastard. I poured my heart out to him and his only thought was to abuse me again.
147. MGH [REDACTED] told me things that made sense to me. I was abused in 1965, Aldo died in 1980 and MGH [REDACTED] was abused in the 1970s. MGH [REDACTED] wanted to meet but I said that, in case things come to a head one day, it would be better that we hadn't sat in a room together but I told him that I was happy to speak to him and if there was anything I could do for him then I would do it.

### Impact

148. When I was fifteen I left Dumfries and went home for two weeks and then left and never went home again. I didn't have a Christmas in the house again, an Easter or anything. My family didn't know what was wrong with me and I wouldn't tell them. I reckoned I was going to murder my father. I started drinking at thirteen in Dumfries and I didn't stop. It was easier not to stop.

149. The main thing that I came to realise too late is that I didn't have an education. I had a bad experience and didn't receive an education although my parents, with the best will in the world, paid for one. I was on the back foot from there on in and I needed to make my own way in the world which I did.
150. I became two people, I was the person who was abused by Germanus and I was the person who was coping with being abused by Germanus and the second person had to win every time. I had my bad times. Whenever anything came on the news about an abusive clergy and children then it would put me in a dark place for a long period of time. My wife would be able to confirm this. I started thinking about my abuse more and would then drink more. I got very angry. I was angry at myself for my own cowardice and the fear was always there about my brother [REDACTED] who I loved very much. The thought of never seeing [REDACTED] again was too much.
151. I was drinking heavily and this had an impact on my relationship with my wife. People use the term functioning alcoholic and I was like that. I knew I had to stay sharp enough to make a living but drink enough to hide the pain so I did that.
152. I saw a counsellor in Cambridge and that is the only professional support I have had. I found that very beneficial especially in relation to my mother and father who I blamed for everything. They didn't know about the abuse so I felt that I treated them shabbily when I could have treated them better. My reason for treating them wrongly was unknown to them and when I examined who my mother and father were, they were marvellous people who were duped by the Marists. The Marists took their money to educate their son but instead they abused and raped their son.
153. I try to maintain my faith as best that I can because my mother was a church-going person. I light a candle for my little brother whenever I can. My purpose was not to taint the others in my family with this and that is part of why I kept it a secret. I said nothing because people get angry. I told my daughters so that they didn't find out another way and when I did tell them I was amazed by their reaction and the strength that poured out of them and into me. Their healing poured into me and yet I hadn't the sense to let people know before. I let it choke me and eat away at me all my days. I

- did the best I could, I did alright, there was food on the table and everyone was happy. I drank too much but I was still alive. I let my mother and father down and I couldn't repair the relationship with them but my daughters poured strength into me. I had been hiding fear, shame and cowardice.
154. I get overly angry at any authority and I have a problem with uniform of any description, whether that be a collar for a priest or a policeman's helmet. I'm afraid of the dark and I have flashbacks. I've often said, because I do speak now, that I can smell Germanus even today.
155. The last few years have been a rollercoaster of thinking why did I speak and, thinking that I had to speak. Look at my daughters, they have been brilliant, but the Marists got away with it. They took me to Edinburgh and humiliated me again. A major disappointment was that I thought that I was doing the right thing but Ronnie McEwan sucked me in. I thought he was a nice man but his thoughts were elsewhere. He didn't do the right thing by me. He humiliated me again and made me look a fool. I never went to them for recompense but Ronnie McEwan told me what to do next. He told me that they had a fund with Leo Martin and that was how we do it, this is how we try and put things right. I have had no compensation at all.
156. I feel good because this day had to come for me to speak out and then I feel angry and that anger is for my mother. She was a lovely person and this happened to her and her other son. Her baby boy was taken from her. What was it all about? They chose to get me an education down there, they handed over money and they put me in a room and let Germanus do what he wanted to me. There was no education. I never passed an exam in my life. I just had to get out.
157. I don't know if I had a plan or if I was always going to speak at some stage. As a young teenager I thought I was never going to tell my mother. My mother was in the church every day and I wondered how my parents would handle it because they sent me there. I blamed them silently for all my years and they didn't know they were getting the blame for anything.

158. There's a room in your mind that you don't allow yourself to go into but you can still see through the door and you can glimpse at things. There's a room there that you dare not go in and that's how I handled it for fifty years. You don't go in the room but the room comes to meet you sometimes, lying on the pillow, and you get a shiver down your spine. Germanus was the worst type of person. The unnecessary viciousness because I was crying. I didn't know what the sex part that he was doing to me was but I certainly knew there was a guy hitting me on the head and that it was not right. It has been a cancer on my soul which persists to this day.

### **Records**

159. I don't have any paperwork but Lady Wolfe asked the Marists if they had any records and they said they had one little box with some documents in it from the past. They weren't required to keep any further records because they were a private school but in that box was notification of payments from the [family name] for [LZW].

### **Lessons to be Learned**

160. The way I see it now is that people are very aware of abuse and children now know it's wrong. In the old days, the Marist Brothers were God-like. Germanus had a big cross banging on the back of my neck and a big white collar that said I'm one of God's kids. My mind was blown but no-one was bursting the door down and stopping it so it seemed like it must be alright. It seemed to be normal. There are never any witnesses. They have got it planned and if there are witnesses then the enablers say nothing. They knew all about that man and yet he served out all his days down there. I learned from Ronnie McEwan that he changed his name from Germanus to David.
161. I hope that the truth is out there for all to see and that people are brought to book whether they were the perpetrators or the enablers. They need to own their own dirt. Imagine discrediting [MGH] to suit their own purposes and to keep him away from me? The enablers should be made to apologise and be clear about how they are putting

systems in place so it can never happen again. Is it happening tonight? I'd be surprised if it isn't. Who is monitoring that? You rape a child then you kill him. He is still alive but he is dead inside.

**Other information**

162. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

LZW

Signed.....

Dated..... 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019.