

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MLT

Support person present: No

1. My full name is MLT. My date of birth is 1949. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to St. Joseph's College, Dumfries

2. I was born in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland and our family home was in Ennis. My parents, who are both dead, are and . My sister is and she was born in 1952.
3. Interestingly, my father, his younger brother and two sisters were all put into Smyllum. I can remember them talking about it with such bitterness when I was young. I never heard any detail of what went on and, of course, they got out of that and went on to become educated and successful.
4. My father was a successful business owner and we came to London when I was about six or seven. My parents then decided to go to the United States and my sister and I stayed and went to boarding school. I don't think my mother was happy about it, but I suppose in a sense, they thought they were doing the best thing for us.
5. I went to St. Joseph's College in Dumfries at the age of nine. As a kid I read things like Billy Bunter and Derby and Jennings and they, sort of, eulogised boarding schools in a way that you thought they were fantastic places.

6. My sister went to Kildonan convent in Barhill when she was six. That was run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny. Another place that, in terms of my sisters recollections of it, should be investigated.
7. My sister was very unhappy there and wasn't there anywhere near as long as I was at St. Joseph's. She was taken out of Kildonan and went to school in the United States for a time.
8. The reason I went to St. Joseph's was because my parents were going to the United States and I had a great uncle who had been a Marist Brother. It was because of that connection that I was able to get a place. This was in 1958, but I couldn't get a boarding place immediately, because it was full up. So it was agreed that for the first term I could attend as a day boy.
9. I lived in Maxwelltown on the other side of the river in Dumfries with [REDACTED], a first cousin of my grandmothers and her adopted sister, [REDACTED]. They were very nice and very kind to me. It wasn't home but, in a sense, it felt like being at home and they were very loving.
10. I was able to go to the cinema in Dumfries and that sort of thing. It was a time when kids aged nine were allowed to do those things. I would also take the bus and visit my sister at Kildonan in Barhill, but that was not on a regular basis.
11. In a sense as a day boy, I was introduced to things but I wasn't really part of it because I was not there for the rest of the time.

St. Joseph's College, Dumfries

12. St. Josephs' College was run by the Marist Brothers. It was like so many other Scottish establishments of that period. It was built in a sort of neo-gothic style with a large building at the front which had the main entrance. To the left hand side, down

below were the dining halls and one classroom. The bursars office was also on that floor as was my first classroom.

13. Later in my time there they built an extension block adjoining that first building. Then behind that main building across the grounds was the chapel and the Brothers' house or building. There was also a second year classroom.
14. St. Michaels Mount was further up the back, there was an old hall there, a house for elderly Brothers and a Brothers' cemetery. One of the brothers buried there is the founder of Celtic Football Club. The elderly Brothers seemed to be kept separate.
15. I think there was about 360 boys there. My first cousin, [REDACTED], who was also at St. Joseph's was number [REDACTED] and I was [REDACTED]. There was definitely people with bigger numbers than [REDACTED]. I think my father persuaded his father to send [REDACTED] there and he stayed the whole time.
16. [REDACTED] was the same age as me and he started at St. Joseph's about a year after I started. I remember him arriving and teaching him how to do things. I taught him how to genuflect as he knew nothing about how to perform in the church. [REDACTED] stayed on at St. Joseph's and went on to university.
17. I don't think Brother CIPHER W, who was in charge of the younger ones dormitory, known as the 'wee rec', liked us much. I suspect he knew our great uncle, who was a Marist Brother and possibly they didn't get on, so we were not CIPHER W's favourite students by any means. [REDACTED] didn't get into trouble or anything, CIPHER W just didn't get on with us.
18. We were divided into a wee-rec, where I started, then there was the mid-rec, meaning middle recreation and the senior bit. I left before getting to the seniors.
19. The school was divided into houses, St. Ninian, St. Andrew, St. George and St. Columba, I think. I was in St. George and our colour was red.

20. The ages of the boys ranged from about eight to eighteen. I was there from age nine to age thirteen.
21. Brother Gaul was SNR [REDACTED]. I wouldn't want to say anything untoward about him, I think he was a very good man. It was mostly Brothers that taught and ran the place but there were also some lay teachers in my time.
22. We also had a chaplain, Father MML [REDACTED], known as MML [REDACTED] he had a [REDACTED]. He heard regular confessions.
23. There were two other Brothers, in particular, who I will be referring to, Brother CIPHER W [REDACTED], who I mentioned, and Brother MLS [REDACTED]. There was actually a third called Brother MLU [REDACTED], who we referred to as MLU [REDACTED], he came from the preparatory school, St. Columbas, in Largs.
24. CIPHER W [REDACTED] was Irish, he wasn't a young man perhaps in his fifties back then. He must surely be dead now. There was a rumour he had [REDACTED], but I don't know if that was true.
25. MLS [REDACTED] was much younger and fairly slim with an athletic build. His surname might have been MLS [REDACTED]. He went to school in Wolverhampton and he may have gone back there later, I think it may have been St. Chads.
26. There were others, Brother Emelius, who ran the choir, and threatened to kick our teeth down our throat if we sang badly. I was in the choir and we just took that, it was okay, it wasn't ill meant or anything. He was just trying to get the best out of us. He wasn't a bad man and didn't ever harm or punish anyone as far as I know.
27. There was Brother MZH [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] Brother Gaul. I think, looking back with an adult perception, he grabbed hold of the place and brought it under control, to be honest.

28. Brother MYZ is another Brother that I remember. He was in charge of the rowing team, he was fine. I joined the rowing club and I was cox, because I was quite small. You could walk into town to the River Nith and get out of St. Joseph's for two hours at lunch time. I used that as an escape.
29. All the Brothers wore black soutanes, with a white bib. It was a plastic type bib like a traditional French priest wore because they are a French order from their founder, Marcellin Champagnat. He was one of the Marist fathers who set up the order of Brothers.
30. They wore a cross that hung on their chests on a rope round their necks. The soutane had pockets and buttons. These were internal, you couldn't see them. They then wore a cord round their waist, like a rope really, with two tassels that hung down. They wore shoes or sandals, that you couldn't always see because of the soutane. Some of the Brothers would hit you with those tassels.

Routine at St. Joseph's

First day

31. What I can remember about my first term is the teacher I had, Brother MLS. He used to read us Biggles stories on a Friday afternoon, which I enjoyed a great deal. I was a day boy at the time and then in the of 1959 I started boarding.
32. I remember the first day I went in as a boarder, I went into a room with my mother, who was there, she'd come back for that. In a sense I must have known what was going to happen but I didn't realise it at the time. She then went out one door and I went out another and that was it. The transition was just so sudden.
33. I suppose that having been a day boy, they didn't think it necessary for me to be given a welcome or shown around or anything like that. The thing was though, that

your life really altered from being a day boy to being a boarder. They were just two totally different worlds.

Mornings and bedtime

34. I'm not too sure when we got up in the morning, but I remember you could put a towel at the end of your bed if you wanted to go to early mass, and quite a lot of us did that. Mass wasn't compulsory other than on Sunday morning. You would then be woken first thing in the morning by the Brothers clapping their hands. After mass we went for breakfast.
35. In the wee-rec we did have to wash in cold water. We did this first thing in the morning, every morning. I've actually had a horror of facecloths the whole of my life. At nine years old you don't know how to wring them out properly so the facecloths would go all glutinous and disgusting in your toilet bag.
36. Washing and baths were all supervised in the wee-rec, the washroom was at the end of the dormitory. Baths would be in the evening but I can't remember how often, not very frequent. I think we had to go down stairs, perhaps in our pyjamas and we were one to a bath, which was hot enough as I remember.
37. The toilets were appalling, I seem to remember they were on a half landing as you went up the stairs. My cousin [REDACTED]'s father was an officer in the RAF and he once came round to visit and when he saw the toilet conditions, he was appalled and complained about them. That certainly didn't make life easy for us.
38. We slept in dormitories in the wee-rec and Brother [REDACTED] CIPHER W was in charge of that dormitory. There was a row of beds in the middle of the dormitory with several rooms off that, with four or five boys in each room. We had wee lockers and presses and things and there was a statue of the Virgin Mary at the end.

39. Brother CIPHER W slept in a room at the top of the dormitory in a corner, it was closed off. In the mid-rec dormitory it was just rows of beds in the dormitory, there were no rooms. I progressed from the wee-rec to the mid-rec during my time there.
40. When I was in the wee-rec, I think we would have been in bed by eight thirty or something like that. When I was in the mid-rec we had an early version of a television that a parent had given the school. It projected a picture onto a screen and we were allowed to watch Perry Mason in the dormitory before bed. That was once a week and was the only television we saw.
41. I would say the atmosphere in the dormitories was fairly controlled. I think we were fairly well disciplined. When lights were out, lights were out and if you were caught doing anything you shouldn't have been doing you were beaten, you were strapped.
42. The discipline in the dormitories was of an arbitrary nature and really depended on the brother you were dealing with and his mood and particular feelings that day.

Food

43. The wee-rec sat on one side of the dining hall and the mid-rec sat on the other. We had all our meals together in the dining hall, sitting at tables we were assigned to and we were served our food by staff. At breakfast we certainly got a roll and you could have your own cereals.
44. Our own cereals were kept in big presses and you wrote your number on the boxes, the theory being you always got your own. We didn't get toast but we got a big metallic jug that had tea in it and the way we toasted bread was to butter the roll and put the hot jug on top of it, which would heat up the roll.
45. I wouldn't say the food was appalling, I seem to remember chips were endless and we always had fish on a Friday. I don't remember anyone being punished for not eating their food, it certainly never happened to me. I would say it was just tough, you had to eat it because it was all you were going to get.

46. There was one year during my time at the place when we had an inspection. All of a sudden china crockery we had never ever seen in the place appeared. It was emblazoned with the school crest and we had never seen that before.
47. We used to have retreats, when we would require to be silent. At nine that's pretty difficult to have that imposed discipline while you are eating. You want to be chatting with your mates. People would be reading to us as if we were in a monastery. That was a religious thing and was during the annual retreat week. If you broke the silence you would be punished by being given the strap.
48. We had a tuck shop and we were given pocket money and you could get an advance as well. I have a few letters where I talk about getting an advance on my pocket money.
49. We queued up at the bursars office and the money was handed out to you. We would then buy gobstoppers or whatever. I could also go to the shops when going to and from the rowing or when I was visiting in Maxwelltown. You could also buy ice creams at the cinema. That was it really.
50. There were feast days. On Marcellin Champagnat's feast day, whenever that is, we would get cakes and things. There seemed to be a lot of boys with appendicitis in those days and the Brothers would rush a relic of the founder over to the hospital in the hope there would be some miracle.

Clothing / uniform

51. We wore a royal blue blazer with gold braid to school every day. Then we had a grey suit for Sunday. We were taken for walks into Dumfries in our suits on Sunday. Any other time we went into town we wore our uniform and we had to wear our caps.

School

52. The classrooms were all within the school. I think we had classes until lunchtime with a mid-morning break. Lunch was a two hour period then school went on until half past four or five o'clock.
53. Then we had supper, a bit of recreation and it was back to the classes for a homework session. After that it was to the dormitories.
54. By and large it was the Brothers who did the teaching with a variety of lay teachers. I'm not entirely sure all the Brothers who taught were actually trained or qualified as teachers, and I'm not sure the parents would have known about that.
55. I enjoyed the school at first but then I grew to hate it. In fact, by the end, I'm sure they would have considered me not very good. They actually kept me back a year at one point, but I put that down to the school as my later schooling would indicate there wasn't a problem.
56. One thing that was rather strange was that our parents paid for the use of the text books in the school. It was something that appeared on the bill. I don't know the intricacies but there was a bill that showed the fees for tuition and boarding and the use of the books was there as well. You could add to that, so, for example, if you needed toothpaste, you would get it in the shop and it would be added to that bill.
57. In my view the discipline at the school was excessive. I learned my tables through the use of the strap. Brother MLS would draw a clock on the board in the morning and he would draw a number in it, 7. He then pointed his stick at a boy and said another number, 8, and you had to say 56 and if you didn't say it quickly enough he would give you the strap.
58. You got the strap on the hand and it was a single strike if you didn't get it right. I was good at my tables so didn't get the strap. There was one lad, his name was [REDACTED] who was singled out because he was slow. He was regularly strapped in the classroom for not knowing things. He would then become the victim of others through his inability to learn.

59. Brother **MLS** threw dusters, that happened all the time, dusters and chalk at all the boys, but it was just kind of accepted.
60. Brother **MNR** taught me , he had a slipped disc, and the way they treated that at that time was to put a sort of corset around you. So when he was testing us in class, on vocabulary or whatever, if you didn't get it right he would take your head and bang it against this hard corset thing. That happened to me and it hurt.

Religion

61. The whole place was religious. I was a Page of the Blessed Sacrament first then I think I graduated to Knight of the Blessed Sacrament. I was in the Legion of Mary and, the best one of all was that they had a link to the Dominic Savio Guild, which was about death rather than sin.
62. We attended Chapel every Sunday and at many other times as well. We had benediction and I was taught to serve mass. Brother **MLS** sat at the back of the church the first time you served mass and gave me marks on how I did. It was part of an religious education test. It was fine apart from handing the biretta back the wrong way. If you did that wrong **MML** would lay in to you afterwards, just verbally, not physically. He was just bad tempered, other than that he was a decent enough person.
63. Confession is a thing in the catholic faith, and you had to go to confession. **MML** **MML** was in the confessional, but you couldn't tell him what was going on, so it wasn't real in a sense. That would have been a complete waste of time.

Work / chores

64. We didn't have to clean the building or do any washing up, that was all done for you. I think somebody tried to get us to polish the benches in the church as a way of saving money but I don't think it worked, I don't think we had the skills to do it.

65. There was a farm where the Brothers grew produce. We would go there, just for a day, during the potato picking season, and we would pick potatoes. We got cakes and things in return. We were probably picking potatoes that we were serving to ourselves. Perhaps we were just being used as cheap labour.

Holidays and birthdays

66. During the holidays we weren't encouraged to stay at school. There might have been some boys who stayed on but I don't know about that. I would sometimes travel to America to see my parents and sometimes I would stay with relatives. That would be with my mother's family in Ireland.
67. My birthdays were while I was in school but I don't really remember them.

Leisure

68. Wednesday afternoon and Saturday afternoon was set aside for sport. The weather in Dumfries can be hellish so often we couldn't go out to play games so they took us to cinemas in the town. Sometimes we were always at the cinema.
69. The wee-rec was tarmac or concrete with a wall around it and they used to build slides for us with cold water that would freeze overnight. When I look back on that with an adult perception it was incredibly dangerous.
70. They had these huge long slides that people could slide down and limbs were broken, people were certainly hurt. I saw somebody break a limb or get really injured there. I can't remember who that was. There was rough and tumble on there as well, one or two Brothers couldn't see all that was going on.
71. On Sundays we used to write letters home. That was supervised, in our form room. You wrote your letter and you took it up to be read. It was either okay or it wasn't,

and if it wasn't you had to re-write it. That could be because of grammar or content. You quickly learnt to be politic with your content. Whatever happened to you, you couldn't put it in a letter.

72. Of course, everybody was writing home saying what we had been watching on the cinema and the next thing we were told that we were not to say that we had been at the cinema. Clearly parents had been writing in asking what on earth they had been paying for.
73. I received letters as well, they were given out in the dining hall. I don't think the Brothers interfered with the letters that came in from our parents.
74. We also had a fruit parcel. I had a standard order with a fruiterer in Dumfries and I would get my own supply of fruit brought in. That would be apples, oranges, pears, but I would probably have called it seconds as they weren't the freshest. That was something you could opt into and your parents set that up.
75. We did go on Sunday walks, but we also walked to the playing fields for sports as they were some distance from the school. There was a shooting range near there as well and at some point after I left, a boy got shot by a stray bullet, on one of those Sunday walks. I think he was killed.
76. There was another tragedy I can recall with two brothers. I forget their name, but they were local and were day boys at St. Joseph's. Their father was a local dentist. They both drowned when they fell through the ice on the River Nith one winter when I was still at St. Joseph's.
77. I took part in rowing, as I mentioned, and there were sports like rugby, football and cricket. We had a sports day, the slides and things in the playgrounds. I remember celebrating Guy Fawkes and throwing bangers around.
78. There were two cinemas in Dumfries so we were taken, as a whole school, to the cinema. We would occupy an entire section of the cinema.

79. I loved singing in the choir. We sang at masses, we received good training and we did Gilbert and Sullivan mini operettas, which were wonderful fun. We did The Pirates of Penzance, Trial By Jury, The Gondoliers and The Mikado. We were women in these things so we were dressed up with wigs and had soprano voices.

Visits / Inspections

80. I was allowed to go out and visit aunt [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] because they were in Dumfries. When my cousin [REDACTED] arrived we would both go and visit them. Not every Sunday but we certainly got out to see them.
81. The Brothers had to know and give you permission, they had to know where you were going. Maybe aunt [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had sorted that out. We would walk down onto the main street, across the river and into Maxwelltown, that was great.
82. There were definitely inspectors that came in to the school. The whole place was spruced up and I remember everyone remarking on the china we had never seen before. It had the college crest on it.
83. I have no idea who it was that carried out the inspections. We were all seen and not heard and those inspections had nothing practically whatsoever to do with the children.
84. There were dormitory inspections to see the beds were made properly and all the rest of it. We had shoe and clothes inspections as well. If you were consistently bad at those things you would get the strap. I don't remember that to the same degree in the mid-rec, so that would have been with CIPHER W in the wee-rec.
85. You have to remember we had blazers and suits and you couldn't keep those in your bedside lockers. It was very difficult, there were big presses, like wardrobes, at the end of the dormitory. Just imagine boys of our age, things were utterly chaotic.

86. Reports did go home from St. Joseph's. There were Brothers who encouraged you to work.

Healthcare

87. The Dumfries Royal Infirmary was directly across the road from the college. We did have a sick bay with a matron, who I can only describe now as a cow. She was not maternal in any way, in fact she was a far from being motherly or maternal as you could possibly get.
88. There was no feminine influence or presence at all. The feeling was that the matron was very unsympathetic.
89. We used to do all sorts of things to try and get sent to the sick bay. I've seen people drinking salt water or put thermometers in hot steam and so on just to get out the college for a while, it would be a release.
90. Sometimes I had tonsillitis and I would be at the sick bay and there was a period when there was some form of gastroenteritis and everybody was falling ill, except me. In cases like that a doctor would be called.
91. I don't ever remember seeing a doctor during my time at St. Joseph's. We did have a dentist, Mr Risk, visits to him were a gruesome experience. We walked to the town and back when we had to go there. It was just the old cogwheel drill and the joke was, if you go to Mr Risk, you were taking a risk.

Running away

92. I never ran away at all, I wouldn't have had the wherewithal to do that and where would I have run to. I would just have been found and brought back. Everybody was homesick, you just got on with it. The chances are you'd have got beaten when you got back anyway. The strap was the form of punishment.

Bedwetting

93. I might have wet the bed, I don't know. Certainly people did, especially in the wee-rec, and that was not good.
94. There was shaming that went on, certainly from Brother CIPHER W. If you wet the bed, you had to strip it and admit it and that would be in front of other people all around you.
95. I saw boys wet the bed and they would then have to tell the Brother and that would be enough. They would get the strap and there would be bullying from other boys as well.

Abuse at St. Joseph's College

96. I've already mentioned some of the excessive punishments in the classroom, and such beatings were not infrequent, for just disobedience.
97. At age nine we had to do our own laundry, and I'll never forget this carry on until the day I die. We all had to do individual laundry lists with how many pairs of underpants, how many pairs of socks, how many vests, whatever. We had a laundry book with our number in it and all our clothes were numbered and our shoes had our numbers punched into them with brass nails.
98. Whatever night was laundry night you made your list and the laundry went out to the Shortridge Laundry in Dumfries. I seem to remember it came back on a Friday evening, in bags with our numbers thereon.
99. When the laundry came back Brother CIPHER W would line us all up in the dormitory. He had a list of all the people the Shortridge Laundry had told him had made mistakes with their laundry. You could have said you sent in two vests instead of one and that was considered a major sin.

100. CIPHER W would then beat any boys who had made mistakes with his strap. On one occasion one boy, I forget who it was, who was wearing just pyjama bottoms refused to take the strap. CIPHER W followed that boy down the dormitory beating him around the back with the strap, on his bare skin.
101. That beating, for making a laundry mistake, has stayed with me all my life. I don't know what happened to the boy, why did his parents not know about it? His back was red from the tawse marks on the strap.
102. I was often strapped for making a mistake with my laundry but I never refused to take any punishment. You saw what would happen if you did. CIPHER W ran a dormitory for children in a most brutal way.
103. People were beaten for running away. If boys ran off from the school they were brought back and beaten. Again, by beaten, I mean strapped by brothers, on your backside and everything else, but why would they punish them like that? I can't say which brothers that would be.
104. I once told Brother MLU, the one we called MLU, that he needed a pair of glasses during a football match. I was brought in to one of the study rooms downstairs, bent over a table, my trousers were pulled down and I was strapped six times over my bare backside. Why did he need to pull my trousers down?
105. Towards the end of my time there, [REDACTED], my cousin, and I, were brought down to eat with all the other boys, it was the last evening before we all dispersed for holidays. I remember this vividly as well.
106. We were all together walking down the main staircase. Whoever the Brother was that was with us had told us not to talk, but [REDACTED] and I did talk. We were about to go our separate ways for the holidays, and wouldn't see one another.

107. That Brother brought us both, in front of everybody on the staircase, [MLT] and [REDACTED] and beat us, for talking. He gave us the strap on our hands in front of everybody.
108. I wasn't always referred to as [MLT] but sometimes I was, and I hated that. In fact I didn't celebrate my 40th birthday. I celebrated my [REDACTED] because I'd finally become my school number.
109. Some of the Brothers had a reputation for beating boys, but what I don't want to say here is that every single person in the place was vile. They weren't, some were decent men, who cared about us, but some didn't.
110. There was this sense of injustice, generally, about the way we were treated but you just accepted it and got on with it. People who rebelled, well, I've told you what happened to the boy in the dormitory.
111. Brother [MLS] was my teacher in both control one and control two. They were the wee-rec classes before going into the secondary phase. He taught everything and was my first teacher. I really quite liked him because he was kind and nice to me.
112. My first classes with him were in the main building then we moved the next year to where the Brothers lived. It was on the other side of the chapel at the back and I believe it was the only classroom that was up there. The classroom was up a metal staircase, right at the end of the corridor.
113. Brother [MLS] wrote to me during the holidays and I remember my father asking me why he was writing to me. It was just innocuous things like what was I doing and was I enjoying myself. Not much other than that. I thought nothing of it in a way.
114. The thing with [MLS] is that one day, sometime between 1959 and 1960, when I was in control two, he told me to come and see him. I went up and he took me into a room near to where our classroom was in that back building, where he stayed. I

remember the room was very bright, which suggests it could have been September time, I'm not sure.

115. He took me into this room and told me my parents had asked him to speak to me. Then he started to tell me about the facts of life and he put his hand up my trousers leg. I was wearing short trousers, as you had to at that age. That would certainly have been when I was in control two. He felt around but, looking back, I don't think I had the reaction he was looking for. I wasn't sexually mature enough to respond in the way he wanted.
116. He then told me I had to touch him, so that I could see what it was like, which I did, and he told me I would need these testicle things when I was married. I don't know whether he ejaculated or what he did, I simply can't remember that. I don't know if that was any kind of grooming, I just don't know. I didn't understand what he was doing at the time.
117. He didn't do anything else to me, that was the end of it. He sent me off but he did say never to tell anybody about it. He never came near me again, on a one to one basis. I was never on my own with him again. He did continue to teach me and I would encounter him in class and at the operettas but there was no physical contact.
118. Why he picked me, I don't know. I never did say a word to anybody for years. I didn't tell my cousin, I told no one. I don't know why he did it, I suppose in a way I feel sorry for him now.
119. There was a thing that was said whenever Brother **MLS** was about, 'put some Nivea on it', what that was about, I'm not sure, a lot of the older boys would say that, and it was always a big joke to everybody.
120. There was a lot of talk in the school about sexual problems like that. Brother **MLU** was another Brother that was spoken about and the Brother who kept the boiler going. He seemed to always be down in the boiler room. He was a general dogs

body and was supposed to have all sorts of Nazi memorabilia, but I can't speak to any of that.

121. What happened was that you just got your head down and got on with it. When things of a sexual nature happened you just put it away somewhere and got on with things. It was a fairly seedy place, I think that's important to say.
122. We used to say that if you got on the wrong side of one Brother there were others who were friends of his and that could be problematic. You rarely saw the Brothers together as a community other than in the chapel and you didn't altogether know what their own relationships were because the majority of them lived separately from us.
123. Our main contact with the Brothers was through class, supervision at break times, in the dormitories, on the walks or whoever was assigned to do things with us. They ate separately from us, it was only ever the one Brother who ate with us, up on the raised platform.

Reporting of abuse at St. Joseph's College

124. You didn't complain to your parents at the time because they would say you probably deserved it. I certainly didn't ever think about mentioning the incident with Brother MLS at home. I don't think I told anybody about it until I was in my thirties.
125. I have never spoken about any of the abuse, physical or sexual, with my parents. I haven't spoken about any abuse with my sister, she isn't aware that I am giving evidence to the Inquiry, and I haven't really talked about it with my cousin [REDACTED] either.
126. My mother didn't really want me to be there, I don't think. If I was to tell her that I had been deeply unhappy how would that make her feel? It would only serve to make her feel worse.

127. I haven't made any formal reports to the police, to the school or the Marist Brothers about what happened to me in St. Joseph's.

Leaving St. Joseph's College

128. I moved from the wee-rec to the mid-rec, that would have been in my third year at St. Joseph's. I can't remember who was in charge of that at all, but it was relatively okay. I seemed to cope better there. I was more used to the place but I was also older and we did things like listening to the radio under our covers.
129. That was also where we watched the television once a week as well. We still had bed inspections and older pupils monitored things like that and shoe inspections and the like.
130. I left after the mid-rec and I was relieved to go. My mother and sister came back from the United States. My mother and my father separated for a while, so she came back.
131. I came out of St. Joseph's at some point early in 1963, but I can't be specific. It was certainly before Kennedy was shot. I stayed with my mother in Giffnock in Glasgow. I went to Holyrood Secondary School which was a wonderful school, in complete contrast to everything at St. Joseph's.

Life after being at St. Joseph's College

132. After school I went to university in Manchester and completed a degree in history. I then became a teacher. I had three headships and ended up as the principal of a sixth form college in London.

133. The odd thing is that my second to last headship was at the Marist Fathers comprehensive school in [REDACTED]. The school was in special measures and I came in to put it right. I did meet the dioceses and advisor at the time, who was a Marist Brother. I said I was at Dumfries but I never raised any issues.
134. I virtually lived in London all the rest of my life. I retired when I was just over sixty and then moved to France.
135. I am gay and have a partner. I didn't know that when I was nine but it has made me wonder if Brother [REDACTED] perhaps knew something about me, that I didn't know myself. I have wondered about that and my sexuality.
136. It's difficult enough growing up, but in that madhouse of Catholicism, things are doubly difficult. I would say it certainly didn't help.

Impact

137. I think going to a boarding school affects everybody's personal relationships. We all grow up much too quickly and early. You learn to be independent at the age of nine or six or whatever, that's not easy.
138. You live a community life and when you narrow things down to personal relationships that's much more closed in, so, that can be difficult. In a large communal group like that are you ever really yourself? I don't know.
139. I used to get terribly angry about [REDACTED] and what he did when I was younger. I put a lot of blame on him. As you get older, it just becomes part of life's tapestry. Getting older is coming to a happy balance with the world, I think.
140. It made me a teacher of a different sort. I would never be anything like any of those people at St. Joseph's. It made me feel there were other ways to treat young people other than the brutality that I saw.

141. All that fantasy belief from the catholic religion has gone out of my head but the gospel values are still important. As a religious order, the Marist Brothers were of their time and it was a strange time to be a catholic child. The experience did not sustain faith it rather killed it. It was the culture of the times though and it was just mad.
142. It's like Philip Larkins poem, you have to remember that their parents wore funny coats and hats too. I think the same thing could be said of some of those Brothers in that they were brought up in a fairly brutal environment themselves. Maybe that is why they were the way they were.

Records

143. I've never asked for any records from the school. I only have some letters that I wrote to my mother and some old photographs. That's about all I have.
144. There was an annual report on the school that they produced and I did have copies of some of them but I don't know what's happened to them.
145. I would be interested in seeing any records that still existed, but the Marists don't appear to have any such records.

Lessons to be learned

146. Why I want to give my account of my time at St. Joseph's to the Inquiry is because I do think the Marist Brothers need to be made aware of what some of the members of their community did, to whole generations of young people. I think it's very important that the church comes face to face with what it did, or what people did in its name.

147. It must be about the way the church undertook the formation of those people. The order was founded to teach the poor, then stopped doing that and brought their talents to bear on those that could afford to pay the fees.
148. I can look at my time there now with an adult perception. Where was the supervision of the staff? It just didn't exist in that school. I think safeguarding has come a long way, it was just unknown then.
149. There were Brothers who were alone with people. You would advise a teacher now never to be in a situation where they are in a one to one in anything that could be problematic or construed as problematic.
150. I think the biggest failings with teachers, in my experience, is that they forget what it is to be like a child. They often confuse an adult perception of something with a child's perception of something. Unless you can actually see how a child see's something you can't fully comprehend what's going on.
151. I think life in boarding schools has now been completely transformed. If I had ever had children I would never have sent them to a boarding school as I wouldn't want them going through, what I went through.
152. There should be a warning about any school that emphasises that sort of rigorous theology, at a point of anything else, about the development of a young person.
153. It seems the church is bedevilled by these problems and it's a bit unfair on the existing Marists, many of whom I am sure are very fine people, who do a lot of good work. It's the sins of their predecessors being visited on them which is a bit unfair I suppose.
154. I mentioned Brother MZH taking over SNR after I left and there being a definite change. Equally, from what I have since seen online, that didn't resolve the problems and he was known as six foot of discipline and was [REDACTED]. When

I refer to online I mean that when you carry out a search on 'St. Joseph's College
Dumfries' it is predominantly hits on articles on child abuse.

Other information

155. 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.

Signed.... 
Dated..... 14/02/2019