

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Francis Moloney MORRISON

Support person present:

1. My name is Francis Morrison although I prefer being called Frank. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1942. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born out of wedlock in Aberdeen. My father was an Argentinian soldier but was killed before I was born. My mother's name was [REDACTED] I was the second sibling of three. I have a brother called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is nine years older than me. He was brought up by my grandparents. I also have a younger sister, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is three years younger than me. We all have a different father.
3. My mother couldn't afford to keep me so she put me into care at Nazareth House in Aberdeen. When my sister was born my mother looked after her.

Life in care - Scotland

Nazareth House, Aberdeen

General

4. Nazareth House was run by the nuns. I never had any problems with them. There was also lay staff who worked at the home. They lived in the home as well.

5. My friends at the home were Christopher Booth, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We stuck together and were great mates. We were all abused at Nazareth House.

Routine at Nazareth House

Mealtimes

6. The food wasn't too bad. We all went to the big dining room and the food was dished up on your plate.

Bedtime

7. Bedtime was around 8:30 pm each night. I slept in a big dormitory. It was all boys. There were about eighty beds in the dormitory. The nuns had young blokes who were employed as lay staff. They looked after us at night and supervised us during the day.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

8. There was a great big room with showers in it where we washed. The lay staff would supervise. We were all naked and they would stand, watch and study us. It was shocking.

Clothing

9. I had a couple of shirts and some shorts along with my shoes. These were given to me by the home.

Trips and holidays

10. I was never taken on any trips or had any holidays.

Schooling

11. My earliest memory of Nazareth House was going to school. We had to walk to there. At that time I had a bad stutter so I had to go to a special school

Healthcare

12. I never went to the doctor or dentist. I didn't even have a tooth brush to clean my teeth. My teeth were so bad because of this I had to get them all out when I was 25.

Religious instruction

13. At the home it was all about the church. I had to go there every day.

Christmas and Birthdays

14. I never knew what a birthday was. It was the same with Christmas. Neither of these things were ever celebrated.

Visitors

15. I had no visits from any official people such as the church or social work.

Family

16. My mother came to visit me twice when I was in the home. The first time I was about eight or nine years old. There was a young girl with my mother. I was told that this was my sister, [REDACTED] That was when I first knew that I had a sister.
17. The second time my mother came she took me out for the day to the cinema. That was the last time that I saw her.

Bed wetting

18. I used to wet the bed. If you had wet the bed then you had to put your sheets and mattress over the veranda. You then had to wash your own sheets.

Abuse at Nazareth House

19. At night I dreaded going to sleep. The boys who were looking after us would come into the dormitory with little torches. The same ones would come to my bed every night. They would interfere sexually with me. I also had to do things to them that were inappropriate. This happened from when I was about six or seven until I was ten. It happened to all the other boys as well. We would talk about it in the morning. We knew it was wrong but really didn't know anything different. I don't remember the names of any of the blokes who came to my bed. I think that they will all be dead by now.
20. About eleven every night the guys who looked after us would take you to the toilet if you were a bed wetter. Once you had been they would take you back to bed then sexually abuse you.

Migration*Selection/information*

21. One day the Sisters came into the big auditorium at Nazareth House. They asked who wanted to go to Australia. Everyone put their hands up. We were told you would go to school on a horse and the pavements were lined with silver and gold. They told us it was a big country and the weather was beautiful.
22. There were eight boys from Nazareth House picked to go. Me and some of my friends were part of the eight. The boys picked along with me were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

23. When I was older I found out from my sister that my mother had known I was going to Australia.

Medical

24. Before leaving for Australia I was given a medical and various inoculation jags.

Migration papers

25. I now know that the parents of all the children who went to Australia had to sign a piece of paper to allow them to go. My mother must have done this as well.

Leaving Scotland

26. I left for Australia in May 1952. The ship was the SS Ormonde. It sailed from Aberdeen. I don't remember travelling on a train or a bus so it must have sailed from Aberdeen. I was given brand new shirts, trousers, shoes and a tie when I was on the ship.

Journey on SS Ormonde

27. The lay staff who looked after us at Nazareth House also went on the ship with us. The abuse I had suffered continued in the same way on the ship. I never told anyone about this. If we had told the Christian Brothers on the ship we would have been called liars and been given a slap on the face.
28. The journey was okay. We visited a lot of places on the way to Australia. I remember we stopped at Port Said
29. There was about eighty boys altogether on the ship. The other kids were from different homes in England and Wales.

Arrival in Australia

30. The ship arrived in Fremantle. We all got off the ship here. There were twelve of us going to Tasmania. I don't know where the rest of the children went to.
31. After this the twelve of us sailed to Tasmania on the 'Spirit of Tasmania'. I was still with my friends from Nazareth House.

Life in care – Australia**St John Bosco Boys School, Hobart, Tasmania***General*

32. When we arrived in Tasmania we were taken to St John Bosco Boys School at Hobart. Tasmania was like Scotland. It was all green. There were about 300 kids at the home. It was all orphans. There were eight Salesian priests in charge and four lay brothers who assisted. In the main we were treated reasonably well by the brothers. Father LHE was the rector and in overall charge of the home.
33. I made friends with some of the boys who were already there. This was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The six of us from Scotland and these three were to stick together through thick and thin.

Routine at John Bosco Boys School*Bedtime*

34. I slept in a dormitory. I was still with my friends. We were all in the same dormitory.

Schooling

35. The school was within the grounds of the home. I never learned much at school. My grades suffered a lot at St John Bosco's.

Religious instruction

36. We went to church every day.

Bed wetting

37. I was still wetting the bed. Father [LHE] was very intolerant of bed-wetters. I found this very humiliating. You would be punished for wetting the bed.

Discipline

38. If you did something wrong then you were given the strap on the back side. This happened to me. The brother's would put a hacksaw blade inside the belt so that it was firmer. Punishments were normally for things like talking in class.

Leaving St John Bosco

39. I was at Tom Bosco's for three years when I was moved. Some of us had stolen eggs from the coup. All of a sudden we were seen as rat bags and had to leave. We were told that we were going to Western Australia to a large farm.
40. There was eight of us in total. This include my friends from Nazareth House. Father [LHE] took us to the airport. We flew with Father [LHE] from Tasmania to Melbourne. After this we went on our own from Melbourne to Perth. It was then a 230 kilometre bus journey to Tardun. We were still in our suits that we had been given at Tom Bosco. By this time I had forgotten about the abuse at Nazareth House. It was still in the back of my mind but I thought it was in the past now after everything had been okay at Tom Bosco.

41. I arrived in Tardun on [REDACTED] 1955. I remember this as it was six days before my birthday. Tardun was to be the most dangerous place of my life. My life was condemned to the daily physical and sexual assaults of the evil Christian Brothers.

St Marys, Tardun, Western Australia

General

42. It is hard to imagine a more desolate place than St Marys. It was in the middle of nowhere. There were 24 Christian Brothers at Tardun. They all had their own rooms in the home. Some of the brothers worked on the farm. The others looked after the boys. You had to call the Christian Brothers 'Sir'. The brothers had total control over you. One of the brothers who looked after the boys was Brother ^{AOC} [REDACTED]. The other brothers whose names I remember were Brothers ^{AOE} [REDACTED] Brother ^{AOF} [REDACTED] and Brother ^{AOJ} [REDACTED] Brother ^{AOC} [REDACTED] and ^{AOJ} [REDACTED] I would find out were the main sexual predators.

Routine at St Mary's

Mealtimes

43. The food wasn't very good. You were never fed properly.

Bedtime

44. We were put into dormitories. I slept in the same dormitory as my friends.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

45. When the boys were washing in the communal showers the brothers would all gather. They would stand and watch you whilst you were naked. It was very degrading. They would comment on the size of your penis.

Schooling

46. The Catholic Church had failed me in my education. By the time I arrived at Tardun I could barely read. Brother AOC was a teacher at the school although I doubt that he was qualified. On the pretext of helping me with my reading he would take me to the front of the class and tell me to stand next to him at his desk. Brother AOC had built plywood around his desk so that no one could see under it. He would shamelessly molest me at the desk. He would play with himself whilst fondling my genitals.
47. The other boys thought that I was AOC pet. As if to dispel this notion he would punish me by giving me the belt. He would raise the belt above his head and bring it down on my body without mercy.
48. There was never any effort made with me in the class. They gave up on me and by the time I was fifteen I was put out to work in the bakery.

Religious instruction

49. Every hour you had to stop and say a specific prayer. This stayed with me even after I left and started working. I would stop to say a prayer and my work mates would ask what I was doing.
50. One of the biggest hypocrisies was when the Brothers were doing their Catholic teaching to you. They would warn you about sinning and the consequences of doing so. We would be shown images of wicked sinners burning in hell. All the time these paedophiles were picking us off one by one.

Work

51. The home had its own bakery. I left school when I was fifteen and I went to work there. I was given £4.10 wages. I had to pay the Christian Brothers £4 a week for board.
52. At the bakery I made bread for the school. I liked working there.
53. As we weren't being fed properly we would steal eggs and bread from the bakery. This was until a brother walked in and caught us. Before we knew it there were four brothers on us. They all leathered us with their belts as a punishment.

Abuse at St Mary's

Brother AOC

54. Brother AOC was about thirty or forty years old when I was at Tardun. He was very strong and very violent.
55. Not long after I arrived it was my birthday. Brother AOC invited me to his room. He gave me a bag of sweets. He started to cuddle me. This was the beginning of the abuse. He then made me have oral sex with him. I wasn't the only one that he did this to. This would happen every couple of nights. He also raped me a number of times.
56. Brother AOC would come to my dormitory three or four times a week. He would shine his torch in my face and motion for me to follow him. In his room he would offer me sweets and treats. He would then carry out sexual acts on me. He would also force me to do sexual acts on him.
57. Brother AOC took what he wanted from me whenever he wanted to.
58. When I was around fifteen or sixteen Brother AOC called me to his room. I couldn't take it anymore. I told him that I was going to report him to the Principal. He grabbed me by the throat and threatened to kill me. He said to me that there were three boys

buried in the cemetery. If I didn't want to be the fourth I would keep my mouth shut. I held his eye and he let me go. After this he didn't come near me again.

Brother **AOJ**

59. Brother **AOJ** was a less frequent abuser than **AOC**. He was also violent. It was terrifying when he lost his temper. When I was around thirteen or fourteen he would come into my dormitory. He would take me to his room where he would masturbate me. He never raped me. I think he knew I was Brother **AOC** pet. I would just try to imagine that I wasn't there.

Perth Christian Brothers

60. The Christian Brothers from Perth would come to Tardun for a week for their retreat. There would be about fifty of them. We had to give up our beds for them and sleep on the floor. Even then the abuse would continue. The Brothers from Perth who I remember sexually abusing me were Brother **MHZ** Brother **MDI** Brother **AQA** and Brother **AQB**. This abuse happened every year from when I was thirteen.

Life after St Marys, Tardun

61. When I was seventeen I left the home. I was given a suitcase full of clothes. The brothers got me a job at a bakery in Geraldton. I didn't like it. It was too claustrophobic. I only lasted two weeks before I was given the sack. At the same time I started playing with a local pipe band. I knew when I lost my job I would be sent back to the orphanage. When I went to band practice the guy in charge could see I was upset. I told him it was because I was to go back to Tardun. He told me not to worry and made a phone call. When he came off the phone he said that he had managed to get me a job at another bakery. It was to be a five year apprenticeship. When the boss at the other bakery saw what I could do he decided I could start as a third year apprentice. This was because I had the experience from the bakery at the home.

62. One day Brother AQC came to the bakery. He told me to come to the door. All the boys working at the bakery were looking at him. He asked me why I had stopped going to church then slapped me hard across the face. One of my work mates who I was friends with went over to the brother and warned him off. My boss then came and told the brother to leave.
63. The whole thing was very embarrassing for me but I felt good because my friends had stood by me. After this I was finished with the Catholic Church. I had still been paying twenty shillings a week to the church. When I stopped paying this the church sent me a bill a few weeks later. I never paid it.
64. I worked in the same bakery for forty five years.
65. In 1964 I met my wife, [REDACTED] at the dancing. When I first met my wife I took her to the pictures. She held my hand but I didn't like it. I didn't know what to do. I had to ask my workmates at the bakery. I had never been shown any affection whilst I was in care. I didn't know what it was. I married [REDACTED] six months later. We had three children. Two boys and one girl.
66. I got on really well with [REDACTED] mother. She was like the mum that I never had.
67. [REDACTED] died three years ago after suffering from cancer. I never told her what had happened to me when I was in care.
68. I told my family what had happened to me after [REDACTED] passed away. We were having dinner at my house. There was something on the television about child abuse. My daughter asked me if I had something to tell them. I became very upset and started to cry. After this I told them the whole story. They wished I had told them before as they would have helped me. It was all very difficult for me. The thing was I never knew if anyone would believe me when I told them what had happened.

Other action taken

69. One of my friends, [REDACTED] found out where Brother AOC [REDACTED] was staying in Adelaide. We thought about going to see him but didn't. I know that AOC [REDACTED] is now dead.
70. [REDACTED] took the Christian Brothers to court in Tasmania. I was contacted by the court and asked to be a witness. I think that the two brothers on trial were sent to prison.
71. After the court case two Christian Brothers came to see us. I told them I was there to support my mate. After we spoke with the brothers they offered [REDACTED] \$58,000 Australian dollars in compensation, which he accepted.

Child Migrant Trust

72. The Child Migrant Trust in Australia found me. They contacted me and told me about the redress process. The first time the Trust paid for me to go to back to Scotland was 1991. My wife came with me. I have had four trips paid for by the Trust. I have been told that I can do one more trip but I won't be going.
73. I receive a monthly newsletter from the Child Migrant Trust. This keeps me up to date with what is going on.

Treatment/support

74. I recently tried to commit suicide. My son found me in time. I went to see my doctor. I think this made me realise that I had a lot to live for with the family that I have. I was referred to a psychiatrist by my doctor. After the first session I didn't want to go back. I was then made an appointment with a psychologist. I told him everything. The first five sessions were very hard and I felt bad after the session. It has helped me. I'm a lot better now.

Records and family tracing

75. In 1978 I got in touch with the Child Migrant Trust to try and find out about my family in Scotland. They gave me the address for my Auntie [REDACTED] I wrote to her and she was able to give me an address for my mother. I sent a letter to her with a photo. My mother replied back to me. She never explained anything about my time in care. It was a bland response. Eventually my mother stopped writing back to me.
76. A few years later my sister [REDACTED] saw the photo at my mums. She asked my mother who it was. My mother told her it was just the son of a friend. She didn't tell my sister that it was her brother.
77. My Auntie [REDACTED] told my sister about me and my brother [REDACTED] Until then [REDACTED] thought [REDACTED] was her uncle. [REDACTED] went to Scotland to see [REDACTED] and they decided to try and trace me. They knew I was in Australia, that was all. [REDACTED] found my telephone number by going through all the Morrisons in the Australian phone directory.
78. For years I was a nobody until the day in 1986 when I received a call from [REDACTED] I knew about her from when she had visited me at the orphanage in Aberdeen with my mother but I had no contact since then. When I heard her voice it was such a positive experience for me.
79. [REDACTED] me told me that I also had a brother, [REDACTED]. I didn't believe her at first. She gave me his phone number to call him. I saved up for three years so that I could visit my extended family in Scotland.
80. In 1989 I went back to Scotland. I went with my wife, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to visit Nazareth House in Aberdeen. I spoke with one of the sisters and told her who I was. We were invited in. The sister was pleased to see me and showed me a large photograph album. I was in some of the photos with my friends. I really enjoyed being back there.

81. When I was visiting my family we were out walking and passed a cemetery. [REDACTED] told me that my mother was buried there. She said that it was just a plot with no headstone and asked if I wanted to see it. I said no. I didn't know my mother. Why would I want to see her grave? It could have been anyone.
82. Two years later [REDACTED] contacted me. She asked if I wanted to contribute towards a tombstone for my mother's grave. Again I said no.
83. In 1992 I went back to Scotland. My sister paid for me and [REDACTED] to go away for a few days to try and reconnect. I asked him why he had been brought up by my grandparents. He wouldn't talk about it.
84. I knew now that the whole time I had been in Australia I had been a secret. All my aunties and uncles knew I'd gone there.
85. I contacted the Christian Brothers in Australia and was able to obtain my birth certificate. They also had a record of when I left Aberdeen and arrived in Australia.
86. [REDACTED] went to Nazareth House in Aberdeen on my behalf. She was able to get my records from them. The nuns were very good. There weren't any issues. I think they had been quite taken when I had visited with my family.
87. From my records I have found out that I left Scotland on [REDACTED] 1952 and arrived in Fremantle, Australia on [REDACTED] 1952.

Other matters for relating to migration

Nationality

88. I have always felt Scottish although I am now an Australian national and have an Australian passport. I have never considered getting a British passport. It's not something that has bothered me.

Reunions

89. In 2012 I went to Tasmania for a school reunion. This was paid for by the government. We were flown there and looked after when we arrived.
90. I did go back to Tardun for an old boy's reunion. There was a statue and my name was still there where I had carved it into the wood. I was with my wife and kids. I stayed for a couple of hours but I really couldn't get away quick enough. There were too many bad memories.
91. When I first moved to Albany I used to see some of the brothers from Tardun when they were there for a holiday. Brother **AKR**, Brother **LHG** and Brother Achary. These were the good brothers. I would go for lunch with them.

Impact

92. I always think about my time in care. In my head I know that what happened to me was not my fault but I cannot get rid of the overwhelming feeling of shame. I have nightmares every night. What happened to me at Tardun I kept to myself for 65 years. I was so ashamed. I never told my wife about it. My wife used to say to me that I had no love in me. I used to think how can I have love after what has happened to me.
93. The last sixty years I have had the demons from my childhood. I don't sleep well. I wake up through the night and have visions of the brothers being there and in my face. One of my sons still stays with me. He hears me through the night when I wake up screaming. I just tell him it's a bad dream.
94. Although I wouldn't say the care provided by the nuns in Scotland was bad it did lead to me being sent to Australia. The Sisters of Nazareth stripped me of my identity and family by doing this. Losing the chance to know my mother, having no family identity and being alone was every bit as damaging as the sexual abuse I suffered at the hands of the Christian Brothers.

Final thoughts

95. I don't think what happened to me as a child could happen again. Everything was swept under the carpet then. It would be difficult to do that now.
96. I think that because the Christian Brothers were celibate it led to problems. They had to do something and they took it out on us boys.
97. The Catholic Church are realising now that they have to compensate people for what happened to them as children. For a lot of people it is too late. It is right they should provide compensation but it doesn't make things better.
98. 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.....

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5/12/19