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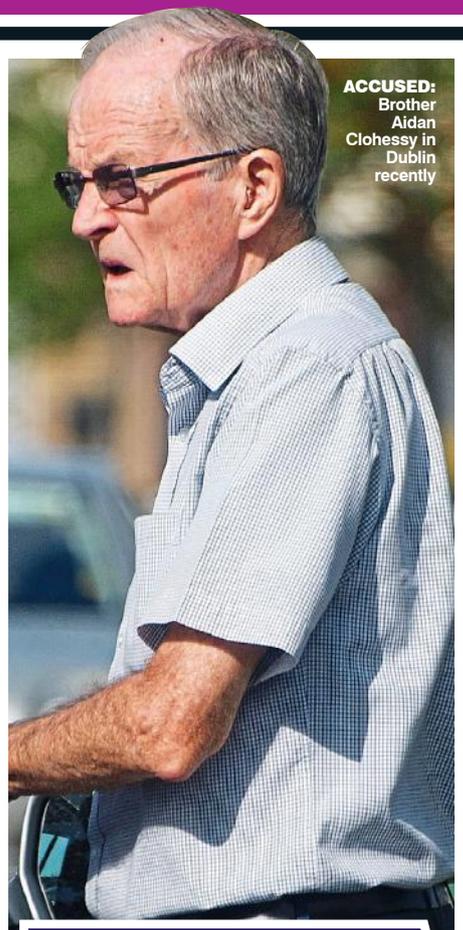
# BROTHER ACCUSED OF ABUSE WAS LEFT IN AFRICA

St John of God allowed missionary to continue working with children as allegations mounted

By **Michael O'Farrell**  
INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

THE St John of God order covered up 20 child abuse allegations against a school principal and allowed him to work and live with vulnerable children in Africa for decades – even as payouts were made to his Irish accusers.  
Brother Aidan Clohessy was principal of St Augustine's in Blackrock in south Dublin – a school

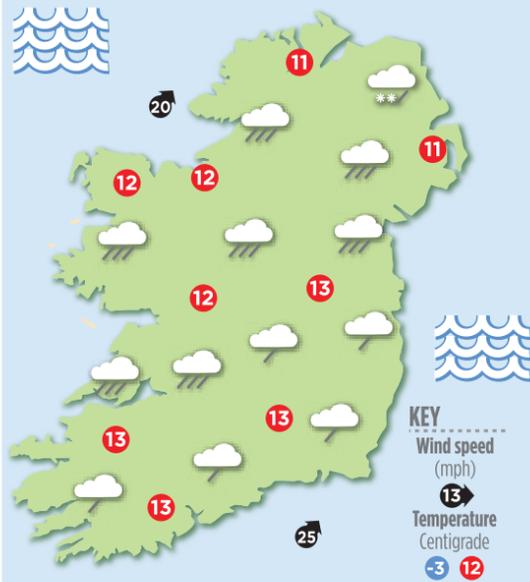
Turn to Page 2 >>



**ACCUSED:** Brother Aidan Clohessy in Dublin recently

The **IRISH Mail**  
ON SUNDAY  
**SPECIAL INVESTIGATION**  
**PAGES 2,6,7,8,9**

## Weather



## FORECAST

## GENERAL FORECAST

A wet day for all parts, although the rain may become lighter and patchier in the evening. The rain is likely to be heavy during the morning, especially in the north. Becoming much milder. Brisk southwesterly winds.

## REGIONAL FORECASTS

**Leinster:** It is expected to be wet throughout, with some heavy rain in the morning. Brisk southwesterly winds. Tonight, Mostly cloudy. Max temp 14C (57F). Min temp 6C (43F).

**Dublin:** There will be rain throughout the day, which may become patchy in the evening. Breezy from the southwest. Tonight, Mostly cloudy. Max temp 13C (55F). Min temp 7C (45F).

**Ulster:** There will be heavy rain early, although the rain will turn lighter later. Brisk southwesterly winds. Tonight, Largely overcast. Max temp 12C (54F). Min temp 6C (43F).

**Connacht:** There will be rain throughout the day, although becoming light and patchy later. Brisk southwesterly winds. Tonight, Cloudy throughout. Max temp 12C (54F). Min temp 6C (43F).

**Munster:** A wet day, especially in the morning. It may become dry in the evening. Brisk southwesterly winds. Tonight, Mostly cloudy. Max temp 13C (55F). Min temp 7C (45F).

## WEEK AHEAD

On Monday it will be dry. Sunny in southern and eastern areas, but northern and western areas will see more cloud. Moderate southwesterly winds. Tuesday will be mostly cloudy with showery rain in western areas. Eastern areas may see sunshine. Brisk southwesterly winds. On Wednesday and Thursday there will be showers in the west, drier in the east. Brisk westerly winds. Friday will be cloudy with rain. Light westerly winds.

## SIX-DAY FORECAST

|          | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| DUBLIN   | 9   | 12  | 9   | 7   | 8   | 11  |
| CORK     | 10  | 12  | 9   | 8   | 9   | 11  |
| BELFAST  | 9   | 11  | 9   | 8   | 8   | 11  |
| GALWAY   | 9   | 10  | 8   | 8   | 8   | 10  |
| LIMERICK | 11  | 12  | 9   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| DERRY    | 9   | 11  | 8   | 8   | 7   | 13  |
| KILKENNY | 10  | 12  | 9   | 8   | 8   | 11  |

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## LOTTO NUMBERS

17 19 29 BONUS 34  
 31 37 41

The estimated jackpot in last night's Lotto draw was €2.5 million

## LOTTO PLUS DRAW

4 5 8 11 36 37 21

## LOTTO PLUS2 DRAW

5 24 25 36 45 46 37

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# No contest... Coronation of Mary Lou marks generational shift for Sinn Féin

By Kevin Duggan

MARY Lou McDonald will be the new leader of Sinn Féin, succeeding Gerry Adams who led the party for over 34 years.

Ms McDonald was confirmed as the sole nominee for the position at the party's Ard Comhairle meeting at its Belfast offices yesterday.

Nominations for the role closed on Friday at 5pm and Ms McDonald's leadership will be officially ratified at a special Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Dublin on February 10.

The Sinn Féin deputy leader has been a TD for Dublin Central since 2011 and was



GOALS: Mary Lou McDonald

widely tipped to take over from Mr Adams when he announced his retirement back in November.

Ms McDonald spoke of a new chapter of confidence for the republican party and its goal to achieve a united Ireland.

'I won't fill Gerry's shoes, but the news is that I brought my own,' Ms McDonald said.

'I will fill my shoes, I will walk in my shoes. And we together, over the coming years will walk a journey that is full of opportunities, full of challenges, but I believe which marks a defining chapter of our achievement of a united Ireland and the ending of partition,' she said.

Ms McDonald grew up in Rathgar in south Dublin and studied English literature at

Trinity College. She joined Fianna Fáil in the late 1990s in Dublin West but moved to Sinn Féin shortly afterwards.

She ran for the constituency in her new party in 2002 but failed to win a seat in the Dáil.

Prior to her most recent position in the Dáil, she was elected for the Dublin constituency as an MEP in 2004, becoming Sinn Féin's first MEP in the Republic.

The election of Ms McDonald as party president and the appointment of Michelle O'Neill as leader in the North, both women in their 40s, marks a generational shift for the party.

## From Page One

for special needs boys – from 1970 until 1993 when he was relocated to a city in Malawi.

The first serious child abuse allegation was made against Brother Aidan in 1985 and claims continue to emerge. As recently as this week, two new sets of allegations of sex abuse against Brother Aidan – unearthed by the Irish Mail on Sunday – have been referred to gardai and child and family agency Tusla for investigation.

The MoS has also confirmed that a number of alleged victims in Ireland received compensation through the Redress Board – even as Brother Aidan remained working and liv-

## Two new sets of abuse allegations

ing with children in Malawi. Despite this the order appear to have ignored the danger Brother Aidan may have posed to children in the city of Mzuzu in Malawi – where many children were housed at the brother's home – and its own child-protection guidelines.

As a result of one allegation in Ireland, the order says it instructed Brother Aidan 'not to work with children' in 1997.

In 1998, amid further claims, the order informed the then Eastern Health Board that Brother Aidan 'was no longer involved in services to children'. But a 10-month investigation by the MoS in Africa and Ireland has found that, despite mounting allegations back home, Brother Aidan's contact with children appears to have remained unaffected.

SJOG staff in Malawi say they were not told of any allegations against Brother Aidan. Harrison Chilale, SJOG clinical director in Malawi, said, 'There was not even a single rumour.' This apparent cover-up

# 'There wasn't even a single rumour about Brother Aidan'

allowed Brother Aidan, who was in charge of all SJOG operations in Malawi, to remain living and working with children for almost two decades.

The MoS has learned that Brother Aidan converted a garage at his home where boys, collected from the streets, were housed.

Tracked down by the MoS, some of these boys – now adults – said Brother Aidan frequently supervised as they took showers.

By 2003, Brother Aidan was the subject of 10 child sex allegations in Ireland relating to his time at St Augustine's, some of which had been forwarded to gardai. That year, the order wrote to Brother Aidan, directing him 'not to have direct contact responsibility for programmes attended by children'.

But the mounting allegations against him appear to have been kept secret from the authorities in Africa. By 2010

his work in Mzuzu was the subject of a promotional drive by his order, and journalists were flown to Malawi to see the services he had set up.

In 2011, allegations against Brother Aidan continued to mount in Dublin. After the 14th abuse claim, the order conducted a risk assessment. It recommended he receive 'therapeutic input' and concluded that he presented a 'low

## 'Claims were reported to gardai and Tusla'

risk' of abuse 'given that he is not in a position of authority over children'.

Our inquiries in Malawi appear to show that during this period Brother Aidan was in a position of authority over children. In 2012 – as a Garda investigation commenced into

allegations received in 1998 – Brother Aidan was withdrawn from public ministry and returned to Ireland.

In Dublin, a set of rules, known as a Covenant of Care, was implemented to control his access to children.

In 2013 and 2014, further allegations were received against Brother Aidan, bringing the number of those alleging abuse to 20. All of these allegations relate to his tenure as principal of St Augustine's.

This week, when asked for a comment, the order said: 'All of the allegations reviewed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland have been reported to An Garda Síochána and Tusla. In accordance with its own procedures, the SJOG has sent the allegations in your email to An Garda Síochána and to Tusla. The Saint John of God Order will co-operate fully with their investigations.'

[michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org](mailto:michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org)

NOW READ THE FULL STORY Pages 6,7,8,9

## CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

THE Irish Mail on Sunday strives for complete accuracy in every article but it is inevitable when working against deadlines that mistakes are sometimes made and misunderstandings arise. We have always been ready to publish corrections and we do our utmost to ensure this happens quickly and prominently. If you feel that any of our coverage is incorrect or incomplete, please email: [corrections@mailonsunday.ie](mailto:corrections@mailonsunday.ie) Letters for publication should still be sent to: [letters@mailonsunday.ie](mailto:letters@mailonsunday.ie)



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# Street children

St John of God staff were kept in dark over abuse claims facing brother

By Michael O'Farrell

IN AFRICA

NOBODY told Charles Masulani that in the past 30 years Brother Aidan Clohessy had been accused of multiple counts of child abuse in Ireland.

As director of St John of God's (SJOG) services in Malawi, Mr Masulani might have expected to know – especially since he still consults with Brother Aidan almost on a weekly basis.

But he knew nothing.

In all, SJOG in Dublin has received 20 allegations against Brother Aidan relating to a

**'They are so secretive. They act like the mafia'**

period before he relocated to Malawi in 1993.

But no one in Malawi, it seems, ever knew that there may have been cause to worry about Brother Aidan's contact with children.

On Tuesday morning – after the Irish Mail on Sunday informed the SJOG Order in Dublin about today's story – a panicked Mr Masulani arrived into the offices of Collins Mtika, the director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism in Malawi.

In October the centre had helped the MoS as we tracked Brother Aidan's activities in Malawi and spoke to children with whom he had come into contact.

Now Mr Masulani was astonished at what he was beginning to hear from Dublin.

'You know these people are so secretive. They act like a mafia,' he exclaimed, adding that he spoke to Brother Aidan frequently but had never been told anything like this.

Mr Masulani was not alone in his ignorance.

Harrison Chilale was clinical director for St John of God's services in Malawi from the very beginning in 1993 until he retired in 2015. He too knew nothing of the mount-

ing allegations against Brother Aidan in Ireland. Had he known he might have questioned the manner in which Brother Aidan began to house street children at his home.

'I knew he kept children – I think up to 10 sometimes under one roof,' he recalled.

'There were a group of children he was keeping there.

'They would stay at the Brother's house. I think Brother Aidan had some space where they would eat, wash and clean themselves up.'

That space according to Maxwell Chirwa – Brother Aidan's long-standing personal cook – was a converted garage next to Brother Aidan's house.

'There was a place where Brother Aidan was keeping them,' he said.

**CLAIMS:** Brother Aidan Clohessy housed up to 10 street children in his home



## STREET CHILDREN PICKED UP



## BOYS BROUGHT TO COMPOUND



'Built at the back where the garage was. He put some rooms inside. They put the beds there. Some of

**'Made sure we cleaned ourselves thoroughly'**

them had no father, no mother so he kept them there.'

The MoS tracked down half a

dozen former street children who either lived in this accommodation or frequented Brother Aidan's home.

The MoS has decided to protect the identities of the former street children by not naming the people who spoke. They explained that Brother Aidan used to supervise their shower routine.

'Brother Aidan used to come and collect about 15 of us and bring us to his house. He had a pickup with a

canopy. He forced us to take a bath,' one former street child alleged.

In contrast to these allegations some of the boys spoke in positive terms about Brother Aidan, although they all spoke about taking baths at Brother Aidan's home.

'He took us from the street when I was 12,' said one.

'He took us to his house where he was staying near the Bishop. He was a very good man because he was like a father to us. We grew up with him for maybe 12 years. We

## Order told gardaí of complaint 27 years after the event

THE St John of God order told a statutory inquiry into child abuse that it had received no complaints of abuse until 1996 – although a complaint against Brother Aidan Clohessy had been received a decade earlier.

The order received its first complaint against Brother Aidan in 1985 and sent him to Africa in 1993. The order did not inform

gardaí of this complaint until 2012, the year Br Aidan was withdrawn from public service in Malawi.

Testifying before the Ryan Commission into clerical child abuse in 2004, then head of the order – the late Brother Fintan Whitmore – said no complaints had been received against anyone until 1996. At the time of this sworn testimony, Brother Aidan

had spent 11 years in Malawi and was facing 10 sets of abuse claims. In 1997 he had been instructed by Brother Whitmore to have no contact with children.

St John of God has previously, and again this week, refused to explain why or how the Ryan Commission was misled in this fashion. Brother Whitmore also told the commission that he could

find no evidence on file to suggest any abuse had taken place within the order's services.

He also said that despite no evidence of abuse the order had agreed to pay €1m to the Redress Board since the indemnity received in return was 'an attractive proposition'.

Since then it has emerged that members of the St John of God

order's Western European Province have been the subject of 97 abuse claims involving 24 brothers.

Five of these brothers are still alive, of whom Brother Aidan is the subject of the most complaints. Despite Garda investigations, no arrests have been made and no prosecutions have been initiated in these cases.

# Stayed at home

## BATHROOM WHERE THEY SHOWERED



## BOSSSES MADE REGULAR TRIPS

ST JOHN of God's mission in Malawi was regularly visited by Irish SJOG officials. In 2010 Irish Provincial Brother Donatus Forkan, pictured far left, joined Br Aidan, centre, when an extension to a college of health sciences was opened. Br Aidan was quietly withdrawn from Malawi in 2012 but returned for a 2013 conference with Br Donatus, and then CEO John Pepper.

used to go there and spend our time in his house... He used to teach us so many things. It was a good house.'

All of the former street children the MoS met spoke of a familiar washing routine which Br Aidan allegedly supervised.

'He took us to his house and then we had a shower and then he gave us some food... that's how I met Brother Aidan,' said one former street child.

This person was a client of a St John of God drop-in centre for street children called the Umoza Children's Project where washing facilities were provided.

However, he alleges that Brother Aidan would collect boys from the centre during his lunch break and bring them to his home to wash.

'Each and every time when he wants us then he was finding us

there [in the Umoza centre]. Especially during the lunch hour, he was taking us to his house and doing the same thing. He was giving us new clothes. He was doing this maybe three times a week.'

Suddenly in 2012 Br Aidan disappeared almost overnight without

**'He was a very good man, like a father to us'**

explanation for his departure. There were no goodbyes or farewell parties despite the fact that Brother Aidan had almost single-handedly built everything from scratch in Malawi and was widely known as the face of his order.

And even now, neither Brother Aidan's name nor photograph is featured anywhere on the order's website, even though he founded its mission in Malawi.

'We had a culture of organising parties for people who are going to go and Aidan used to do that. Why can't we do a party for him?' asked former clinical director Harrison Chilale.

The answer appears to be that Brother Aidan had been withdrawn from public ministry because of child protection concerns and is now the subject of a canonical inquiry.

But no one in Malawi appears to have been told this.

■ *The Centre for Investigative Journalism in Malawi* - <http://investigative-malawi.com> - assisted the MoS during our inquiries in Africa.

## Five decades of service – up to 22 abuse claims

**1970** Brother Aidan Clohessy becomes principal of St Augustine's.

**1985** The St John of God (SJOG) Order receives the first complaint of abuse against Brother Aidan. It is dismissed internally. The order does not inform gardai.

**1988** The 1988 Childcare Bill is published, prompting SJOG to establish a committee to draft procedures for managing allegations of sexual abuse. Then HR director John Pepper heads up this committee.

**1991** The committee publishes guidelines stating that children must be protected from abuse and that anyone accused of abuse must be removed from children.

**1993** Brother Aidan is sent on a new mission to Mzuzu, a remote city in northern Malawi, where he houses street children at his home.

**1997** A second abuse allegation is received about Brother Aidan in Ireland – this time via a statement by an alleged victim to gardai. He is instructed not to work with children, but continues to do so.

**1988** As a third abuse allegation is received in Ireland, SJOG inform the then Eastern Health Board that Brother Aidan is 'no longer involved in services to children'. He continues living and working with children.

**1999** Three further sets of allegations are received against Brother Aidan in Ireland. SJOG publishes revised guidelines which refer to the particularly vulnerable position of those in the order's care.

**2002** The Redress Board is established and SJOG contributes €1m, securing indemnity from any cases settled through the board. Brother Aidan continues living and working with children in Africa even as payouts are made to his Irish accusers.

**2003** Allegations against Brother Aidan now number 10. His order writes to him to tell him 'not to have direct contact responsibility for programmes attended by children'. He continues living and working with children.



**MISSION:** Brother Aidan Clohessy was sent to Malawi in 1993

**2004** SJOG misinform the Ryan Commission into clerical child abuse saying their first abuse case appeared in 1996 after Brother Aidan left for Africa. In fact a complaint had been made against Brother Aidan in 1985 – before he went to Malawi.

**2011** As the number of allegations against Brother Aidan reaches 14, his order conducts a risk assessment which recommends 'therapeutic input' for Brother Aidan. The review concludes he is of low risk of sexual abuse given that 'he is not in a position of authority over children'. But Brother Aidan remains unsupervised in Malawi.

**2012** Amid a new Garda investigation Brother Aidan is withdrawn from public ministry and returns to Ireland. It appears no one in Malawi is told why he has suddenly left and no effort appears to have been made to establish whether any children may have been put in danger during his time in Africa. SJOG inform gardai of the original 1985 allegation against Brother Aidan – 27 years late.

**2013** The order receives three further sets of allegations and a canonical inquiry into Brother Aidan is commenced.

**2014** Three more sets of allegations are received, bringing to 20 the number of alleged victims who claim to have been abused by Brother Aidan.

**2017** An investigation by the Irish Mail on Sunday finds two former pupils who allege they were abused by Brother Aidan at St Augustine's, bringing to 22 the number of potential victims of abuse. SJOG send the allegations to gardai when presented with them by this newspaper this week.



# The men who live with the legacy of abuse... and Born with polio and condemned to a life of abuse

By Michael O'Farrell

CON CARROLL knows about injustice. That's why you'll find him to the fore of any given protest march in support of the oppressed as it snakes past the GPO.

Con, with his distinctive half body limp and determined stutter, is a familiar sight in Dublin's city centre.

Like the drug users and homeless addicts who salute him on a first-name basis as he shuffles down Henry Street to his favourite café for a slice of cream cake, Con has had it tough.

But he's not a victim. 'I hate the word "victim", he says. 'I'm a survivor, not a victim.'

Against odds that would have floored most, Con had things stacked against him from the moment he was born into care with polio, on March 23, 1964, at Seán Ross Abbey Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.

The condition left half his body drooped to one side, almost as if he were created specially to shoulder sideways into the onslaught of cruelty and challenges he would face. Because he was an orphan, Con was sent to St Augustine's in Blackrock in south Dublin – a school for intellectually disabled boys run by the St John of God order – at the age of 12 in the summer of 1975.

With his stutter and limp, it was assumed Con was stupid. He was written off from the start. No one told him he had a sister.

But there was nothing wrong with Con mentally or intellectually. Nothing wrong, that is, until he began to be neglected and abused first by nuns in a midlands institution and then – allegedly – at St Augustine's.

It was in St Augustine's that Con met Brother Aidan Clohessy. There is no dispute about that.

But after that there are two versions of this story. Brother Aidan's version is simple. He has always denied abusing any of the pupils at his school. That's another way of

saying Con is lying when he recalls an ill-tempered man who would 'put down' and 'mimic' the boys in his care.

But Con swears it's the truth – just as he swears he was sexually abused by Brother Aidan. 'I was regularly sent to Brother Aidan's office for punishment and he sexu-

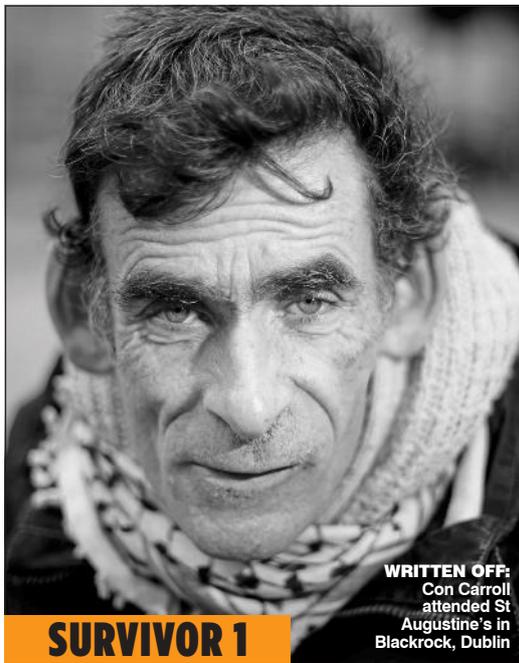
ally abused me there... Sometimes he touched my penis and testicles and rubbed me.'

That's what Con told the gardai when he complained in 2001. 'Brother Aidan would come into the boys' shower room and stand watching and ridiculing us... sometimes he physically abused the boys,

especially those who wet the bed.' Con took to alcohol and drugs while at St Augustine's.

'I would take these things to get out of my head and to get my mind away from the things that were going on around me,' he says

In the end, it was Con's word against Brother Aidan's and the



**WRITTEN OFF:**  
Con Carroll  
attended St  
Augustine's in  
Blackrock, Dublin

**SURVIVOR 1**

'My life was ruined by attending that school'

## SURVIVOR 2

**AGE:** 63. Sent to St Augustine's aged eight.

**HIS STORY:** Brother Aidan allegedly took his trousers down to beat him violently. He was later sent to another St John of God institution as punishment and because of this missed out on an education.

**HE SAYS:** 'I should have been in school but they wouldn't teach me. I just worked in the workshop. My biggest regret is that I didn't get an education.'

## SURVIVOR 3

**AGE:** 57. Sent to St Augustine's aged 11 with his younger brother (Survivor 4).

**HIS STORY:** Was allegedly sexually abused by Brother Aidan in the early 1970s in the principal's office and in the priory at St Augustine's. Was also abused by others at the school.

**HE SAYS:** 'My life was ruined by St Augustine's. I am a heavy drinker and do not have anywhere to live. I sleep on a relative's couch. Like my brother, I have tried to kill myself. The way I control it is drink... I don't think I could ever give up. It keeps you together.'

## SURVIVOR 4

**AGE:** 56. Sent to St Augustine's aged 10 with his older brother (Survivor 3).

**HIS STORY:** 'Brother Aidan did things to me that I can't talk about.' Was also abused by others.

**HE SAYS:** 'My marriage broke down. I have never told my wife or children about what happened to me in St Augustine's. 'What happened to me ruined my life. I became suicidal. I tried three times. I have the scars from that on my wrists. Once I jumped off Bray Bridge.'

DPP decided that the alleged events had happened too long ago to prosecute. Nevertheless, Con went before the Redress Board and his case was heard. But the law prevents Con or anyone else from disclosing the outcome.

Aged 18, Con was sent to work in a St John of God nursing home in Bray. But it wasn't long before he sank to the very bottom. Homeless and a heroin addict, he did what he had to do to score a fix. He lives with the lasting health consequences of that today. And at night-time he still has nightmares that bring him back to St Augustine's.

But he survived, sobered up and today is heavily involved in helping others in the community. He's even travelled the world – exploring Brazil and other exotic locations on his own, making up for lost time.

Just last year, Con discovered he had a sister living in New York. Having lived his entire life as an orphan, he spent this Christmas in the US with a family that he never knew about.

One injustice righted. But many more remain.

## How order ignored its own guidelines on abuse

CONFIDENTIAL files obtained by the Irish Mail on Sunday reveal how the St John of God order responded internally to a growing awareness of the issue of child abuse from the 1980s onwards.

When the first complaint about Brother Aidan Clohessy was received in 1985, the order, like many religious groups, had no formal child protection policy.

But after that complaint – and in the wake of the 1988 Childcare Bill being formulated – the order set up an internal committee to

draft procedures for the investigation and management of abuse claims.

The MoS has seen minutes from the committee's meetings showing that 'the situation' at St Augustine's was discussed and that Brother Aidan contributed. The legal implications for the order were 'of paramount importance', the minutes noted.

In 1991 the committee, under the chairmanship of then HR director (later CEO) John Pepper, drew up the order's first

guidelines. Section 4.4 of the code stated that an alleged abuser should be suspended or assigned duties that 'remove him from other children or clients' pending an investigation.

These guidelines were reviewed in 1993 – the year Brother Aidan was sent to Malawi – and new guidelines were introduced in 1995. They did not deviate substantially from the initial rules.

Meanwhile, in an apparent breach of the guidelines, Brother Aidan was in Malawi with no

apparent restrictions on his access to children.

By 1999, as further claims mounted about Brother Aidan, Mr Pepper's group published a new set of guidelines, noting that 'those in the order's services are in a particularly vulnerable position and are dependent on order personnel to provide the highest quality care'.

■ *Towards Healing provides free therapeutic services for victims of clerical abuse. Tel: 1800 303 416.*

# the man who denies inflicting a lifetime of pain



**ACCUSED:** Brother Aidan Clohessy in Dublin recently

## ‘Nobody is guilty until they’re proved guilty’

THE Irish Mail on Sunday confronted Brother Aidan Clohessy before Christmas to confirm he was the individual referred to as Brother D in an audit of child abuse cases at St John of God.

Brother D was by far the most prolific alleged abuser of all St John of God order members in Ireland.

The MoS knew from painstaking research that Brother D was Brother Aidan, but for legal and ethical reasons we offered him an opportunity to respond.

‘You are Brother D. I don’t need to beat about the bush when I say that. You know who I mean by Brother D,’ this reporter told him.

There was a brief pause – and then he answered.

‘Yes, yes, I know, yeah.’

But Brother Aidan didn’t really want to talk about the 20 allegations of child sexual abuse he has faced in the past three decades.

Asked about the allegations against him, Brother Aidan said: ‘As I denied it all in the past, I’ll deny it again. It’s not... It didn’t happen. All of those have been fully investigated by the police and there’s no charges of any kind. I don’t think anybody is guilty until they’re proved guilty... Innocent until proven guilty.’

Brother Aidan also denied collecting street children

and bringing them to his home in Malawi as the MoS had been told repeatedly when staff travelled to Africa to investigate his activities there. ‘I didn’t pick anybody off the streets in Malawi. We have a programme to provide for people who needed help,’ he said.

Some of those who made allegations against Brother Aidan in Ireland got financial settlements from the Redress Board but he declined to comment about this when asked. ‘I don’t know,’ he replied. ‘I wouldn’t know about the settlements.’

In fairness, he may not have: they happened when he was in Malawi.

## How MoS put a face to alleged prolific abuser

THE key to unlocking the truth about this scandal came in the form of a 2015 audit compiled by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The audit reviewed how the St John of God order had handled child abuse claims – and chronicled all allegations against the five still-living members of the order.

The identity of these accused clergy was protected but one alleged abuser – referred to as Brother D – stood out because of the sheer number of allegations against him over a 30-year period.

The audit stated that the first allegation against Brother D was made in 1985 – but had not been reported to gardai until 2012.

Why the delay? Why did the order misinform the 2004 Ryan Commission into child abuse that it had not received any complaints until 1996? What might the order be trying to hide?

**1** OF the five living members of the St John of God order who have been subject to child sexual abuse claims one particular member has been named by a significant number of complainants over a number of years.

At the time of the audit there were only 19 living members of the order left alive in Ireland. Brother D had to be one of these.

**2** ALL allegations received refer to a time period before 1993.

All of these men had embarked on frequent and sometimes lengthy missions abroad, so tracing their

**1** Of the five living members who have been subject to child sexual abuse allegations one particular member has been named by a significant number of complainants over a number of years.

**2** All allegations received refer to a time period before 1993.

**3** Brother D is now out of public ministry since 2012, and is complying with a Covenant of Support and the canonical investigation is in process.

**4** The reviewers note that while the Provincial in 1997 advised that Brother D should have no contact with children, he remained in a prominent role with responsibility over a service that included children’s services.

**STEP BY STEP:** A 2015 audit contained clues on identity of Brother D

careers and matching details with clues in the audit was a tough task. But slowly one candidate emerged, Brother Aidan Clohessy, the one-time principal of special needs school St Augustine’s who had left Ireland for Malawi in 1993. That date was telling: according to the audit, all 20 allegations against Brother D related to a period before 1993.

**3** BROTHER D has been out of public ministry since 2012, and is complying with a Covenant of Support and the canonical investigation is in process.

There is another crucial date in the audit: 2012, the year Brother D was withdrawn from public ministry. That too matched with the sudden and unexplained departure of Brother Aidan from Malawi. Added to this when the details of the four other living brothers were examined, the lack of multiple historical allegations against them stood out. According to the audit, Brother D was the only living brother who faced more than one allegation of abuse. We began the lengthy task of tracing former pupils of St Augustine’s who had been there during Brother Aidan’s

time as principal. Beyond that, we needed to narrow these down to any who may have actually made complaints against Brother Aidan. In the end we found six former pupils who had made allegations of abuse against Brother Aidan. Three agreed to have their story told anonymously – though their details were provided to the order – and one agreed to be named in our coverage. Brother D was Brother Aidan for sure – as he would confirm months later when we finally confronted him in person.

**4** while the Provincial advised in 1997 that Brother D should have no contact with children, he remained in a prominent role with responsibility over a service that included children’s services. The audit points out that the 1997 suggestion that Brother D did not have contact with children did not tally with the reality. This is crucial, because Brother Aidan stayed in this same role until 2012 as head of SJOG in Malawi.

It meant that any and all suggestions by the order that he did not have authority over children as the allegations mounted were wrong.

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## MEET THE JUDGES IN THE CRAZIEST SHOW ON EARTH

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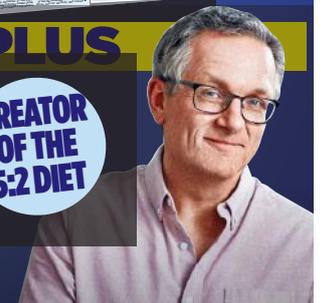
# BREAKING 35-YEAR SILENCE ON ABUSE

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MOSLEY IN  
MAGAZINE**



FIGHTING BACK: Joe Devine

After seeing our John of God story husband reveals to his wife that he was also a victim

### The **IRISH** Mail ON SUNDAY **INVESTIGATION**

By Michael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

A HUSBAND, who can't read or write, told his wife for the first time of alleged abuse he suffered, after seeing Brother Aidan Clohessy pictured in the Irish Mail on Sunday last week.

In his heartbreaking revelation to his wife Sally, Joe Devine explained that he

Turn to Page 6



Joe Devine's heart-wrenching account of why he broke 35 years of angry silence

# Why didn't you tell me? The shame. You might not have married me

By Michael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

IT'S BEEN 35 years since Joe Devine has seen Brother Aidan Clohessy. That is also how long he has bottled up the shame he felt about what he alleges happened to him at St Augustine's special needs school when he was a child.

Until this week Joe – now 54 – had never told these things to anyone. Not even his wife Sally, though she always knew something was amiss. She could tell by the rage within him.

Joe was 'educated' in St Augustine's from the age of nine years old.

He was sent there when his mother left her nine children to a father who did not cope. Joe arrived just after his First Communion and left, unable to read or write, at the age of 19.

But Joe didn't need to read to understand what was on the front page of the Irish Mail on Sunday last week, when Sally brought the paper home.

There before him, on the front page, was Br Aidan's face – a face he can never forget.

'That's Br Aidan,' he told Sally as memories, long suppressed, rushed back to the surface.

She'd asked him before but now she tried again. 'Did he do those things to you?' Sally asked.

'Yes,' said Joe.

The floodgates opened and Joe began the first steps of unburdening himself of a load long shouldered. 'Why didn't you tell me?' Sally asked.

**'You were a child. The shame is not yours. You did nothing wrong'**

It was the shame, Joe explained. 'You might not have married me.'

Sally took a deep breath, relieved after all this time that the source of her husband's anger – an anger that had nearly torn them apart – was becoming clear.

Beyond the relief there was a stronger feeling. She felt so sorry for the child that Joe had been, the childhood he'd been robbed of.

'Do you remember our shed was burgled?' she asked him. 'They robbed our shed. That's a crime that someone committed – it's no one's fault but the thief's.'

'You were a child,' she told her husband. 'The shame is not yours. You did nothing wrong.'

Joe understood. Now he wants the world to know what Br Aidan did to him.

A statement containing Joe's alleged experience at St Augustine's has now been prepared for the gardai. It's one of several new sets of allegations unearthed by this newspaper's investigation into St John of God.

Br Aidan, meanwhile, has not elaborated further on his denials and his comment that he is 'innocent until proved guilty'. But someone is lying. In the end, perhaps the courts will decide. Joe would welcome that and he knows what he would tell the court.

He'd tell them how, on his first night at St Augustine's his older brother warned him that bed wetters would be punished. When it happened to him he alleges this punishment was handed down by Br Aidan.

'He took me into the bathroom and

he pulled down my pyjamas and he walloped me across the a\*\*e and then touched my testicles.

'He said: "You've got a nice fine pair." They were his words. He said: "You don't have to tell anyone about this".'

'Then I copped myself on at night-time and I didn't take anything to drink after a certain time, if it was going to affect me wetting the bed.'

But learning to keep his sheets dry was not enough to escape.

Joe remembers being punished

every few weeks. 'If I didn't do something properly, like making the beds properly, Br Aidan would punish me by slapping me. He would tell me to pull my trousers and underpants down.'

'Once in the gym he put me lying down in the store room where the mats were. He put me lying across the mats with my trousers and underpants down and then he beat my backside.'

'When I was lying facing away from him he said: "Don't move, keep your head front ways. Do not

turn your head – keep it straight".'

'He gave me four slaps across the a\*\*e with the strap. He took a long

**'In the gym, he put me lying across the mats'**

time with the fifth one and then he came up and put his hands in around me, then I started screaming. That's when he touched my behind all

together. I got up and I wriggled out and pulled up my pants. He said: "Now, I don't want to see you in here anymore".'

At the age of 19 Joe left – and went as far away as he could – moving to England to work on building sites.

While there he met Sally and they married in 1992. Tragically their first born – a beautiful son – was born early and died after nine weeks. A daughter – now 24 years old and engaged to be married – followed. Two years later they had triplets – three special needs girls

## John of God may face legal challenge from survivors

» From Page One

had kept his painful secret for 35 years because he was afraid she would not have married him.

Mr Devine's allegations of abuse he suffered at St Augustine's special needs school in Blackrock, south Dublin, are the latest of more than 20 against Br Aidan.

The MoS revealed last week that while allegations mounted against the brother – who was principal of St Augustine's from 1970 until 1993 – he was allowed to stay in a position of authority over children while founding a St John of God's mission in Malawi.

Mr Devine's bravery comes as a senior St John of God psychiatrist breaks ranks to warn of a dangerous culture of omerta at the heart of the organisation he works for.

Dr Paul Moran – a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist with the St John of God Cluain Mhuire Service – said he was 'speaking for many colleagues who are deeply shocked and saddened by the thoughts of what may have been done to these children'.

Now, a new clerical abuse survivors' group founded last year, Reclaiming Self, is seeking legal advice on whether the St John of God order could be held to account for allowing Brother Aidan have continued access to chil-

dren as allegations mounted against him.

Under the Criminal Justice Act 2006 a person can be prosecuted for recklessly endangering a child by 'causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse.'

Abuse survivor Colm O'Gorman said an independent examination of all issues regarding Br Aidan's transfer to Malawi, how complaints against him in Ireland were dealt with by the order and the manner in which any other abuse claims against other priests were handled needs to be established.

That investigation should be resourced and

paid for by the order, but not led by it, said the Amnesty Ireland boss, speaking in a personal capacity.

Responding to queries about what they had done to investigate the potential of abuse in Malawi, St John of God, through a spokesman said: 'With regards to Malawi, the order wishes to state clearly that anyone with any information concerning any alleged abuse has both a duty of care and responsibility to inform the authorities.'

'The order has policies and procedures across all of its provinces for safeguarding and urges any person with a concern to contact the authorities.'



**STANDING UP FOR HIS OWN CHILDREN:** Joe Devine earlier this week with his wife Sally who helped him speak out

now aged 22 – that Joe dotes on. Back in Ireland Joe did what he could to provide for his family. For years that meant working from the back of a bin lorry in Kildare. Today, things have changed and Sally is the main breadwinner, working locally as an accounts executive while Joe tends to the home and minds his family, cutting grass part-time for some extra cash. ‘I cannot read or write properly. That’s one of my big regrets,’ he says. ‘No one taught me how to read and write. I ring Sally to

explain cooking instructions and things like that when I can’t read them. For my wedding I was not able to read my wedding vows.’ But he doesn’t need to read to tell the world what he went through. It’s now something he has to do. ‘It’s like a weight off my back to talk about,’ he says. But there’s another reason too. Three reasons in fact. As a father of three special needs girls, Joe knows how vulnerable they are. He wants them to live in a world where safeguarding responsibili-

ties are taken seriously. Only then can he be sure that his children won’t have to feel the way he has felt for so long. ■ If you have been affected by any issues dealt with in this investigation, the following helpline is available: Connect Counselling Freephone 1800 477 477. Connect Counselling is open 20 hours a week, out of hours, Wednesday through to Sunday, from 6pm to 10pm. Additional opening hours tomorrow 6pm to 10pm. [michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org](mailto:michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org)

# Coughlan: I’m sickened over abuse claims

## MALAWI

By Anne Sheridan

SINGER Mary Coughlan said she ‘nearly passed out’ when she read about the child abuse allegations against Br Aidan Clohessy on the front page of the Irish Mail on Sunday last weekend.

Speaking to the MoS this week, the singer said she has been left ‘really sickened’ and ‘quite upset and saddened’ to learn of the mounting allegations against the member of the St John of God Order, whom she has met on numerous occasions over the past decade.

The singer was one of a number of Irish celebrities who not only travelled to Malawi – where Fr Clohessy was stationed for years to oversee children’s projects – but also actively campaigned for funding for children with disabilities and orphans who lost parents to HIV and Aids who were housed in Br Clohessy’s com-



**SADDENED:** Singer Mary Coughlan

she said she remains ‘dumbfounded’ and ‘gobsmacked’ by the claims.

‘I nearly passed out when I saw the paper. I was living in the compound and had met Aidan... I had no idea [about the allegations]. It’s a good facility and a lot of really good people work there, mostly from Malawi. An awful lot of Irish people have travelled out to raise money for the children’s school, and famous people donated musical instruments to them over the years. I went out to set up an AA facility for very young alcoholics and drug addicts.

‘The worst part of it is, I went to see him when he came back to Dublin because I heard he wasn’t well, and went in to John of God’s to see him. He was on a retreat and was mostly praying at the time.

‘I am just sickened. I met a lot of people out there, kids from Ireland, doing summer holiday work there. It had a great name and was very well established. He [Br Clohessy] was very, very quiet. I have spoken to a few people about him [since last Sunday] and we are all very, very shocked.’

Ms Coughlan recorded a song, Believe in Me with the children to raise funds for the centre.

Sharon Shannon and her Big Band held a number of fundraising gigs for the centre under their Umoza Challenge.

Umoza, meaning ‘together’, is the name of a school for street children under the auspices of St John of God, Mzuzu in northern Malawi, which was run by Br Clohessy.

### He had ‘an elevated status of a saint’

pound, where children showered under his supervision.

In Malawi, she said the perception of Br Clohessy was of ‘an elevated status of a saint’.

To compound her anguish, Ms Coughlan said she had been so touched by her interaction with teenagers and young adults – as they attempted to build a better life – that she visited Br Clohessy upon his return to Dublin six years ago.

She and her manager John Dunsford travelled to Mzuzu, northern Malawi, after holding meetings with Br Clohessy and the order in advance of their trip.

Documentaries highlighted the ‘extraordinary’ work by the order in Malawi later aired on both TG4 and RTE in 2012.

Ms Coughlan, who previously attended the St John of God treatment centre for alcohol addiction, praised the Malawi centre they ran during the RTE programme, Into Africa, as an ‘oasis from the hard reality of all outside the gates’. But

**The Irish Mail** on Sunday Special on Dublin

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**BROTHER ACCUSED OF ABUSE WAS LEFT IN AFRICA**

St John of God allowed missionary to oversee work with children

**SPECIAL INTERVIEW**

**OUR STORY LAST WEEK: WE REVEAL HOW A MISSIONARY ACCUSED OF ABUSE WAS LEFT TO WORK WITH STREET KIDS IN AFRICA**

## ‘HOLD THEM TO ACCOUNT’ – O’GORMAN

### POLITICS

CLERICAL abuse survivor Colm O’Gorman said the transfer of Br Aidan Clohessy by the St John of God Order to Africa, after he had been accused of committing child abuse in Ireland, was ‘unspeakably wrong’ and ‘unforgivable’.

Speaking to the Irish Mail on Sunday in a personal capacity, rather than as head of Amnesty Ireland, Mr O’Gorman said he was left ‘speechless’ by the revelations, which were first brought to public attention by this newspaper.

In 2004, St John of God misinformed the Ryan Commission into clerical child abuse that no abuse cases had been notified to the order before 1996 –

despite a complaint having been made against Br Aidan in 1985.

‘If one was generous, you could say John of God misled the commission,’ said Mr O’Gorman, ‘but it’s difficult to see how it could be anything other than deceit and they need to clarify on what basis they didn’t provide that information in the fullest possible way.’

‘They are certainly open to a charge of wilful negligence. It is beyond inexcusable. It’s unforgivable.’

‘Whoever is in a position of authority (in SJOG) needs to be held accountable.’

Meanwhile, the Minister for Children, Katherine Zappone, said: ‘All parents have been shocked by revelations of recent weeks. As a government minister, it would be wrong for me to speak about an individual case or a set of allegations. However, I do want people to know that my mission, and that of my department, is to protect each and every child.’

Minister of State for Disabilities Finian McGrath, also told the MoS: ‘Any allegations of child abuse must be investigated as a matter of urgency.’



# Whistleblower psychiatrist at St John of God Dangerous cult



**DEEP CONCERNS:** Dr Paul Moran

By Michael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

A SENIOR St John of God (SJOG) psychiatrist has broken ranks to warn of a dangerous culture of omerta (silence) at the heart of the organisation for which he works.

Dr Paul Moran, a consultant liaison psychiatrist with the St John of God Cluain Mhuire Service, came forward in the wake of last week's Irish Mail on Sunday revelation that the SJOG order had covered up mounting child abuse allegations, allowing Brother Aidan Clohessy to remain working with vulnerable children in Malawi for decades.

In coming forward, Dr Moran said that he was 'speaking for many colleagues who are deeply shocked and saddened by the thoughts of what may have been done to these children'.

He continued: 'There is also a great sense of shame about how our organisation fails to act responsibly and enables more and more children to be put at risk.'

Because his role includes treating and counselling survivors of child abuse, Dr Moran is acutely familiar

**'Concerns are dismissed as gossip and negativity'**

with the life-long impact that abuse has on those affected.

And he is appalled that an organisation such as St John of God - which ran the Granada treatment centre for clerical paedophiles for years - would risk endangering vulnerable children in its care.

Dr Moran said: 'There is a culture of omerta, which has been promoted and maintained by the senior management of the organisation over many years.'

(A Sicilian term, omerta is the code of silence by which the mafia controlled its underlings through intimidation).

'Any questions or discussion by professionals about their concerns in relation to organisational wrongdoing are dismissed as gossip and negativity,' Dr Moran explained.

'Senior management strongly discourage any communication by professionals with bodies outside the organisation, going as far as to link compliance with omerta and enhanced promotion prospects.'



**MARKING 50 YEARS IN THE ORDER:** Br Donatus and Br Aidan

## ORDER HEAD WHO OFTEN VISITED HIM IN MALAWI

IT WAS a simple ceremony but one of immense consequence.

Gathered in the hospital chapel at their HQ in Stillorgan, a small group of Brothers watched as Provincial Donatus Forkan presented a small bronze statue of St John of God to Brother Aidan Clohessy. The date was October 22, 1993, the official start of his new mission to Malawi.

It was fitting perhaps that Br Donatus would be the one to oversee Br Aidan's departure to Africa. The pair had been professed as Brothers together in 1960.

There was one problem though.

Brother Aidan had been accused of child abuse years earlier in 1985. In years to come those allegations would mount substantially. Yet, it appears, that for decades no one acted to see if children in Malawi needed

### THE LEADER

to be protected. Since Brother Aidan's departure to Africa, Brother Donatus's career rose steadily. In 1994, he was elected general councillor, making him one of the five most senior members of the St John of God order globally.

In 2000 he was re-elected - this time as First General Councillor - making him the second most powerful member of the order, and in 2006 he became Prior General, making the farmer's son from Swinford, Co. Mayo, the worldwide leader.

Moving into his new Rome office, he placed some ageing sweets, given to him by an impoverished street girl in

Mexico, on his desk beside his computer. He said they reminded him that because of poverty and exclusion she had been 'deprived of the dignity that every human being is entitled to'.

In 2006, the allegations against Br Aidan had exceeded a dozen, yet he remained living and working with children in Malawi. As Prior General, Br Donatus was responsible for the response to child abuse claims. Whatever he knew about developments in Ireland, he was aware of concerns in Australia. We know that because from 2007 bishops and SJOG experts there were warning him of abuse on a massive scale.

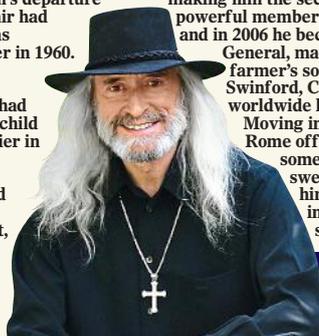
In the end - with the backing of Rome - the order in Australia paid millions in compensation and legal fees to protect accused brothers who would later be jailed.

Why then was Br Aidan left in Malawi, living and working with children? We've asked Br Donatus

this in person and in writing - to no avail so far. In 2010 he and Br Aidan celebrated their Golden Jubilee together, and Brother Donatus went on one of his frequent trips to Malawi, staying in Br Aidan's home. Children who stayed there at the time remember the visits.

In 2011, Br Donatus was back in Malawi again to watch Br Aidan surrender the statue Br Donatus had given him in 1993, to newly professed African brothers.

In 2012, as Br Donatus left Rome to become Provincial in Ireland again, Br Aidan was quietly withdrawn from Malawi. It appears no effort has been made to establish what impact he may have had there. Today, Br Aidan and Br Donatus live in the St John of God community house in Stillorgan, just beside the order's hospital. When the weather suits Br Aidan strolls the grounds and nearby neighbourhood alone.



**CHARLIE LANDSBOROUGH** Brother Donatus likes to listen to music and his favourite song, from British country singer Charlie Landsborough, is called A Million Ways To Fall. 'There are no angels after all,' the lyric goes. 'Only people, only people - and a million ways to fall.'

The result, he explained, is a 'culture that does not help safeguarding or best practice'.

Dr Moran continued: 'Even since the latest shocking revelations, there is complete silence within the organisation on this subject. I feel I must speak out on behalf of fellow workers who are afraid to do so.'

He also expressed concern about instructions given to SJOG doctors in 2015, which he felt were in breach of Medical Council guidelines.

The instruction came in the form of a circular from then CEO, John Pepper, that ordered all doctors and psychiatrists within the SJOG service to refrain from providing patient

files to solicitors representing victims of alleged abuse.

It read: 'As you are probably aware, the Residential Institutions Redress Board is no longer dealing with historic claims of abuse, which has resulted in these matters being taken up by solicitors on behalf of the complainant.'

'Please ensure that nobody within your service responds to any such legal representations, but refer all correspondence of this nature to myself as Chairman of the Safeguarding Advisory Group for the Order and Ministries.'

After checking the law with the Medical Council, Dr Moran wrote

## ABUSE SURVIVORS CALL FOR INVESTIGATION OF RE

CLERICAL abuse survivor campaigners last night called for an inquiry into how alleged abusers, whose victims were compensated by the Redress Board, could have continued access to children.

'It is unconscionable to think a named alleged child abuser was allowed to continue to have contact with children,' said Annmarie

### REACTION

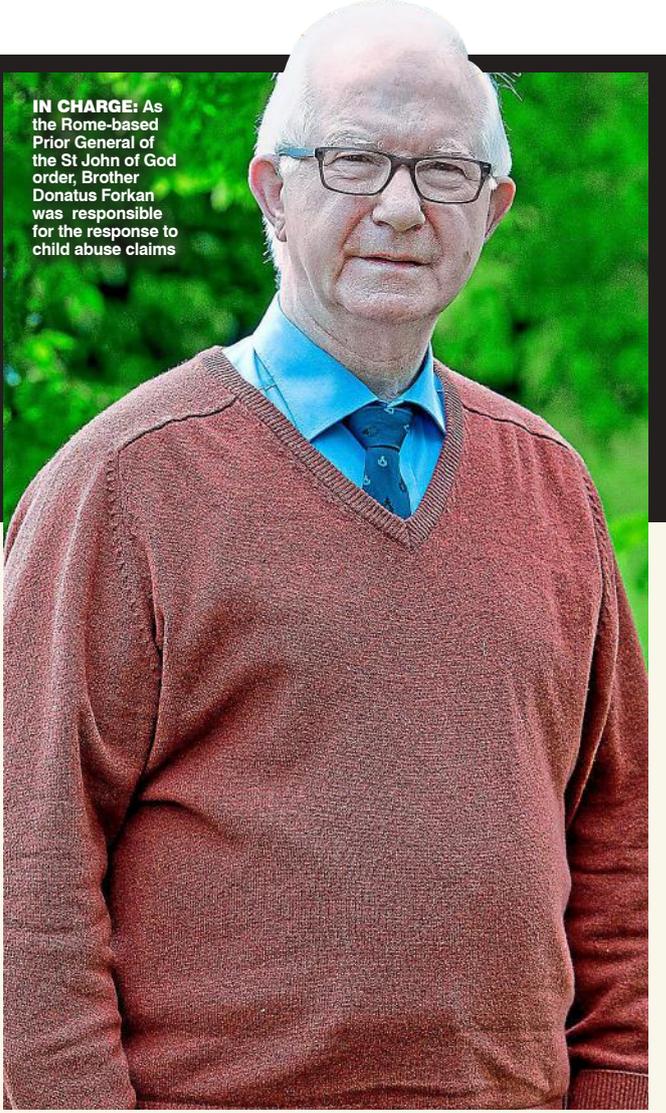
Kennedy of the Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support (formerly Aislinn Centre). 'How many other Brother D's are out there?' she said. Ms Kennedy said it was 'hard to believe' the Redress Board 'had heard personal stories

and allegations of abuse and were not legally obliged to report these to the gardai.'

'Now, in light of revelations by the MoS, surely the State has a moral obligation to ensure a legal process is put in place to allow all such disclosures be investigated.' Reclaiming Self (RS) - a new survivors' group founded last year - said

an 'examination of the work of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and the Redress Board is very overdue'. Last year RS reported the State's 'failure to put in place mechanisms for investigating abuses disclosed to the Commission and the Redress Board,' to the UN Committee Against Torture. The group is seeking legal

# says its code of silence endangers children culture of omerta



**IN CHARGE:** As the Rome-based Prior General of the St John of God order, Brother Donatus Forkan was responsible for the response to child abuse claims

3. My impression is that there is a culture of collusion inside the Province which is deeply engrained, and which makes it almost impossible for the truth about these matters to be dealt with.

## Whistleblower raised collusion fear 10 years ago

### AUSTRALIA

By Micael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

CLAIMS of omerta at the heart of the St John of God order are not new.

Ten years ago in Australia Dr Michelle Mulvihill – a psychologist and former Sister of Mercy nun – voiced the same concerns Dr Paul Moran is expressing about the order in Ireland today.

Though a decade apart, these whistleblowers have one thing in common – they both answer to Brother Donatus Forkan.

Originally hired to help St John of God in Australia and New Zealand as a flood of abuse cases were unearthed, Dr Mulvihill ended up resigning in disgust. As she did so, she wrote to Brother Donatus, then head of the St John of God order in Rome.

The Irish Mail on Sunday has obtained her letter and Brother Donatus's response.

'In spite of the best efforts of the Professional Standards Committee it was not possible to bring the province to an awareness of the gravity of the situation in relation to the long history of misconduct and in particular the culture of sexual abuse in the province,' her letter reads.

'My impression is that there is a culture of collusion inside the province which is deeply engrained and which makes it almost impossible for the truth about these matters to be dealt with,' the letter continued. She said when she tried to raise these matters she was met with 'rejection' and personal 'vilification'.

In response, Brother Donatus wrote: 'It pains me to hear that there continues to be a belief that "there is a culture of collusion inside the prov-



**RESIGNED:** Dr Michelle Mulvihill also raised her concerns with Brother Donatus

ince which is deeply engrained and which and which makes it almost impossible for the truth about these matters to be dealt with'. Were anything like that proven to be the case I would be the first to insist on the most radical action.'

He said the order would establish an 'independent and external audit to examine all

### Faced 'rejection and personal vilification'

aspects of the abuse issue in the province'.

Despite his assurances that those conducting the audit would speak to Dr Mulvihill, she was not contacted.

But her concerns have since been vindicated. Last year it was found that 40% of the SJOG brothers in the province had allegations of child sexual abuse against them – a far higher percentage than any other Church body. It is now known that hundreds of chil-

dren were abused by St John of God brothers at schools for the intellectually disabled in Australia and New Zealand.

And as Brother Donatus headed up and sat on the ruling body of the order in Rome, it paid millions in compensation to victims – and spent millions more defending accused brothers before they were jailed for abuse.

'Testifying at the Australian commission last year Dr Mulvihill said: 'It's all about power, isn't it? All roads lead to Rome. It's all about who's in charge.'

Dr Mulvihill was not alone in raising concerns. The MoS has obtained a 2007 letter to Brother Donatus from Australian Bishop Michael Maloney where he writes of 'a widespread culture of sexual abuse amongst the members of the Australian province'.

He was concerned that the Australian province of St John of God had elected a new leader and council, some of whom had been the subject of abuse complaints.

'I understand that you were present for the chapter and election. If the matters reported to me... are true, as I believe they are, then the entire order in Australia needs to be seriously assessed.'

In response, Brother Donatus issued a statement, through a spokesman.

He said: 'As this was an independent external audit, Brother Donatus had no involvement in how the audit was conducted. The recommendations of this audit were implemented by the province.'

'At all times the actions and responses of Brother Donatus were conducted appropriately and in accordance with safeguarding policies, best practice and with the input of external consultation and guidance. Any statement, inference or assertion to the contrary is not correct.'

back to Mr Pepper to point out that the instruction appeared at odds with both ethical guidelines and the law.

He wrote: 'It appears that your suggested refusal to provide medical reports at the request of patients is not compatible with current legal requirements.'

Mr Pepper then wrote back to Dr Moran to say his instruction had not been

intended to prevent consultants providing patient records or reporting abuse concerns to the authorities.

However, this clarification was issued to Dr Moran only and appears not to have been circulated to all those who received the original instruction. Because of this, Dr Moran fears that colleagues may still be acting on the original instruction.

St John of God, through a spokesman, said: 'The Saint John of God Order places tremendous value on the work and acknowledges the invaluable contribution made by its staff members, which is very much appreciated.'

'There are a number of stated policies and procedures through which employees can air grievances or concerns should they have any.'

'In accordance with HR best practice, it is not appropriate to respond to a staff member through the media. However, the order urges any personnel with concerns to come forward to it and/or alternatively to contact the authorities.'

michaelofarrell@newsscops.org

## DRESS BOARD

advice on whether or not the St John of God order could be held to account for allowing Brother Aidan have continued access to children as allegations mounted against him. In a statement, RS said it believed State policies 'offered protection to alleged abusers and their affiliated orders rather than the protection of children in vulnerable circumstances'.

# Taxpayers' funding to St John of God mission in Africa is suspended

By Michael O'Farrell

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

THE provision of Irish taxpayer funds to the St John of God order in Malawi has been suspended in the wake of the cover-up of child abuse allegations, exposed by the Irish Mail on Sunday.

The order's Malawi operations are supported by Misesan Cara – a missionary charity that distributes a €16m block grant from the taxpayer-funded Irish Aid each year.

Misesan Cara's accounts show the St John of God order got more than €2.3m in public funds since 2009 – an unknown proportion of which went to Malawi.

In order to receive the funds for Malawi the order – currently led by Brother Donatus Forkan – signed contracts that included statements that child safeguarding poli-

## Signed contracts to say child safeguards were used

cies are being implemented.

Failure to make a declaration of compliance would have disqualified St John of God (SJOG) from eligibility for funding.

However, while signing these assurances the order was simultaneously covering up 20 child abuse allegations against Brother Aidan Clohessy, principal of St Augustine's school for special needs children from 1970 to 1993.

Even as payouts were made to his Irish accusers, Brother Aidan was allowed live and work with vulnerable children in Malawi for nearly 20 years – while SJOG told Irish authorities he had no contact with children.

Misesan Cara told the MoS last night it has suspended funding of St John of God's services in Malawi.

'In entering into funding and contractual arrangements, SJOG gave an undertaking to Misesan Cara that it has in place a safeguarding policy and that this policy is fully implemented in respect of this project. As a result, any funding we have pro-



**NO RESPONSE:** Brother Donatus Forkan, head of St John of God's

vided to SJOG in respect of this project has now been suspended,' it said in a statement.

'We will be carrying out an audit of compliance by St John of God with their contractual undertaking to Misesan Cara regarding child safeguarding.'

The charity said it was 'extremely concerned about the issues raised' and 'requested a number of clarifications from St John of God'.

The manner in which the order signed the com-

## ...AND STILL NEW ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE CONTINUE TO EMERGE

THE St John of God order this week reported further new allegations of child abuse against Brother Aidan Clohessy to gardai and child protection agency Tusla.

The latest allegation – by former pupil Patsy Carville – brings to 25 the number of students who say he abused them at St Augustine's special school in south Dublin.

Five of these cases have been unearthed in recent weeks by a continuing Irish Mail on Sunday investigation and will now be the focus of a Garda investigation.

In a statement, Mr Carville – who was nine years old when he was sent to the Blackrock school – alleges that he was beaten and forced to strip by Brother Aidan.

Like other alleged victims in Africa, he claims that Brother Aidan habitually ordered boys to strip and shower in his presence. He also details an incident when he was alone with Brother Aidan: 'He told



**SPEAKING OUT:** Joe Devine with his wife Sally last week

me to take down my underpants. Then he told me to turn around and not to look at him. He was not hitting me during this time – just standing behind me. Then after a few minutes he beat the a\*\* off me with his bare hand.'

The experience appears remarkably similar to that of Joe Devine, another former pupil who broke years of

silence to speak to the MoS last week.

In a statement last night, a spokesperson for St John of God said it had 'reported all allegations it has been made aware of to the authorities and will co-operate fully with any investigation'.

It reiterated 'its unreserved apology to any individual who suffered any form of abuse while in its care'.

pliance statements about child protection appears to echo the manner in which the order lied to the HSE when declaring compliance with pay rules even as bosses were secretly topping up their wages by millions.

## Extremely concerned about issues raised

The top up scandal – exposed by the MoS in 2016 – led to a damning HSE audit that recommended repayment of the funds to the Exchequer.

Sarah Blakemore, of Keeping Children Safe, a global child protection alliance, said last night: 'These shocking allegations underline the responsibility all organisations have to safeguard children.'

'Tragically, abusers often target society's most vulnerable children... The extreme imbalance of power between adult workers, on the one hand, and the children in their care, on the other, makes it essential that robust systems are in place to ensure the work of these organisations is beyond reproach.'

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Irish abuse survivors group Reclaiming Self called for alleged abusers to be urgently investigated.

Its statement said: 'Collusion

## BROTHER ACCUSED OF ABUSE WAS LEFT IN AFRICA

**EXPOSED:** The MoS broke the story of Brother Aidan's Malawi operation

between the State and Church continues to protect the identities of over 1,000 alleged abusers.

'Those against whom allegations of abuse were made via the [Ryan] Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and the Redress Board need to be identified and investigated.'

'There is a particular urgency for alleged abusers who are alive to be investigated, in order to assess, if any, the potential risk posed to children.'

SJOG declined to respond last night to our questions about who signed the Misesan Cara contracts and why funders of its Malawi mission were not told of concerns and allegations about Brother Aidan.

We also asked Brother Donatus to comment on whether the order's decisions in Ireland may constitute reckless endangerment of children in Africa – a criminal offence under Irish law. He did not respond.

An SJOG spokesman last night urged anyone with concerns about safeguarding at its Malawi operations to raise them 'immediately with the order and/or authorities'.

In a statement he said: 'At this time, we are seeking to establish more detail arising from the recent media reports and ensure all appropriate responses are undertaken.'

'We are endeavouring to see if there are people that need assistance. If identified, we will further endeavour to ensure they have access to the supports they require, should such supports be required.'

*michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org*

# Opposition (and rural FG rump) will scupper plan

TAOISEACH Leo Varadkar and Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe will have to undertake a series of 'humiliating U-turns' if they want to get two national planning strategies through, the Opposition warned.

Controversy is growing over the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Mr Donohoe's national spatial strategy as he and Mr Varadkar deal with an open revolt from elements of the Cabinet and Fine Gael back-benchers.

However, united opposition to the plan

By John Drennan

from Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, Labour and Independent TDs forged by Alan Kelly and Michael Fitzmaurice poses a far more existential threat to the minority Government's survival.

The Cabinet will tomorrow hold a special meeting on the NPF, but Mr Kelly told the Irish Mail on Sunday: 'The Cabinet are talking about history. That plan is dead. The

Government don't have the numbers, even amongst its own, to get it through'.

Mr Kelly also warned Mr Donohoe 'can put his spatial strategy in the bin too, that is joined at the hip to the NPF: if one goes both go'. He added: 'Our coalition will ensure neither plan will get through.'

'Paschal will have no goodies to give out, he will not have a capital plan unless he shreds the current version.'

Mr Kelly also warned: 'The rural revolt against the NPF will be worse than water

charges. Rural Ireland will revolt against a plan that bears the hallmarks of something devised by six Dublin ministers.'

'Rural Ireland is not exactly a forte of Eoghan Murphy or the rest – they have completely underestimated how serious this is.'

'Towns smaller than 10,000 might as well simply turn out the lights.'

'There will be such a flight from the country within a decade only four counties will be able to field a GAA team.'

FREE INSIDE NEXT WEEKEND'S **The IRISH Mail**

ON SUNDAY

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## Cleric signed statement saying he was never accused of child abuse

# John of God brother lied on €1m funding

By **Michael O'Farrell**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

A ST John of God Brother accused of multiple counts of child sex abuse lied to secure more than €1m in funds from a prominent German charity, the Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal.

Last month the MoS revealed that the order covered up 20 abuse allegations against Brother Aidan Clohessy, allowing him to house vulnerable children in his Malawi home for decades – as payouts were made to his Irish accusers.

Since then several new Irish accusers have come forward to

## Blatant untruths he told charity

**KNH's General Agreement of Cooperation was signed by Brother Aidan from 2007 and renewed periodically thereafter.**

**PART OF THIS CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT STATES:**

*'XXX obligates him/herself to accept the Child Safety and Protection Statements. He/She takes responsibility for making sure that all employees of the Partner Office and all employees of the projects supported by KNH who are working with children and young people, receive a copy of the Statement, and that their legal acceptance of it is confirmed by their signature. In addition, XXX obligates him/herself to appropriately correct, or when necessary, to dismiss the employee who violates the code of the Statement. In addition, XXX*

*accepts responsibility for initiating immediate disciplinary measures in case of child-molestation or abuse. Otherwise, KNH reserves the right to immediately terminate its support of the Partner/Project.'*

As the signatory of the general agreement (above) the German NGO confirmed that Brother Aidan was obliged to sign KNH's Child Safety and Protection Statement himself, and make sure that all co-workers and volunteers of SJOG Malawi also signed it.

The specific language of this KNH Child Safety and Protection Statement reads as follows: **DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT** To be signed by all workers, leaders and volunteers directly involved with children and youth.

One copy is to be kept by the worker and the other in the project files.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Declaration: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that: \_\_\_\_\_

■ I will work within the procedural guidelines as laid out in this document.

■ I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving the physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.

■ I understand that if a complaint is levelled against me while engaged in any activity involving children, the police or other legal authority will automatically be asked to investigate and recommend

suitable disciplinary action.

■ I agree that in case of clear evidence that I was involved in sexually abusing a child, whether on duty or otherwise, I will no longer be acceptable to work in a child care ministry and resign voluntarily and immediately.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This means that Brother Aidan specifically signed (dated and place stamped) a statement that he had never been accused of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children. This was first signed in 2007. By this stage more than 10 allegations had been made against Br Aidan, the first of which was made in 1985.

in our child protection policy and our worldwide child protection capacity-building programme for our partners.'

KNH confirmed that from 2007 Brother Aidan signed contracts including stipulations about compliance with child protection rules.

Throughout this period allegations against Brother Aidan, from his time at St Augustine's, mounted in Ireland. But these were covered up and no one in Africa appears to have known of any concerns about his contact with children.

The manner in which Brother Aidan secured more than €1m by way of a signed false declaration raises serious questions for him and could be considered fraudulent – though the money appears to have been used for charitable purposes.

The MoS asked the order in Dublin, which oversees the Malawi operation, what the current Provincial, Brother Donatus Forkan – also

**'We are very shocked and take it very seriously'**

a board member of SJOG Malawi – and recently departed CEO, John Pepper, along with other members of the order's child safeguarding committee, knew of Brother Aidan's actions.

An SJOG spokesman said: 'It would not be appropriate for the order to respond' to the queries.

Groups representing survivors of clerical abuse have called for an investigation into the possibility that the SJOG order may have committed an offence of reckless endangerment of children.

A Garda spokesman said he could not comment on whether this would be part of the Garda investigation. [michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org](mailto:michaelofarrell@newsscoops.org)

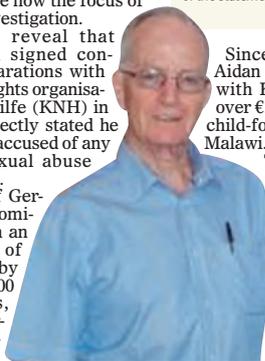
## German NGO needs to 'regain confidence'

allege abuse dating back to Brother Aidan's time as the principal of St Augustine's school for special needs children in Blackrock, Dublin, between 1970 and 1993.

These cases are now the focus of a new Garda investigation.

Now we can reveal that Brother Aidan signed contracts and declarations with German child rights organisation Kindernothilfe (KNH) in which he incorrectly stated he had never been accused of any physical or sexual abuse against children.

KNH is one of Germany's most prominent NGOs with an annual budget of €56m provided by more than 300,000 citizen donors, the EU and Germany's government.



Since 2007, when Brother Aidan first signed a contract with KNH, it has provided over €1.3m to support SJOG's child-focused programmes in Malawi.

This week KNH suspended funding of SJOG Malawi saying it needs to 'regain confidence' 'that its child protection standards are in place'.

It comes a week after Irish taxpayer

**UNTRUTHS:** Brother Aidan Clohessy

funds to SJOG Malawi – provided via the Misan Cara charity – were cancelled. Misan Cara has launched a compliance audit to examine whether SJOG complied with its child protection rules.

KNH only learned of the revelations about Brother Aidan when contacted by the MoS, it had not been notified by SJOG. Now it is preparing a fact-finding mission by local experts trained in assessing and dealing with child abuse.

In interviews conducted by the MoS in Malawi young men who stayed at Brother Aidan's home spoke of how he collected them from the street to shower them.