

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Richard John Mackenzie Kozub

Support person present: No

1. My name is Richard Kozub. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1948. My details are known to The Inquiry.

Life before St Joseph's College, Dumfries

2. I was born in Edinburgh and my parents were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both of whom have since passed away. My mother was a radiographer while my father was a butcher. My brother [REDACTED] was eight years younger than me and has also passed away. My sister [REDACTED] is four years younger than me.
3. My parents' marriage wasn't a happy marriage probably because it was an "end of war" marriage and a mismatch and there were separations and finally a divorce. Life in the fifties was probably more adventurous than today and we had more freedom. A lot of our relatives stayed locally and we visited them often and would stay with my grandmother from time to time.
4. I had at first gone to Holy Cross Academy in Leith in Edinburgh at the age of five but we moved to Grimsby when I was eight or nine and went to a local school there for three months. My mother had got a job as a radiographer in Grimsby and a house there went with the job.
5. I had a tendency to skip school, mainly because of a fascination I had with visiting museums. It is likely that my skipping school was the main reason I was subsequently sent to a boarding school though I couldn't say that with any certainty.

6. My parents stayed in Grimsby for a few years then moved back to Edinburgh and St Joseph's College in Dumfries was quite close to there. That, and the fact that two of my great-uncles had also gone to that school, may have been the reason it was decided that I should go to St Joseph's. It was also one of the few Catholic boarding schools about.
7. The idea of going there was presented to me as being a wonderful opportunity and I was shown photographs of the place which had obviously been taken when it was looking at its best. I suppose I saw it as an adventure. I was nine years old when I went there.

St Joseph's College, Dumfries

8. I was driven to St Joseph's by one of my aunts and my mother came along. This was in September 1957. I was nine years old and I was to be in St Joseph's for 6 and a bit years until 1963. I was dressed in my school uniform and kilt and I still have a photograph of me from that day somewhere. I was to end up hating every day I spent there. I was allocated the number 193 which was the number that had to be stitched on every item of clothing I had.
9. St Joseph's was a big sand-stone building with maybe five or six floors. It was set in large grounds with other buildings. On the ground floor was the music room and dining room. The first floor contained the classrooms and you then had two floors of dormitories.
10. St Joseph's was run by The Marist Brothers and Brother Gaul was the SNR SNR for a while Brother MZH Some of the Brothers were as young as 21 or 22 years of age.
11. One of the Brothers I remember was Brother MLS whose real name might be MLS MLS though I can't be sure. He was maybe in his late twenties and ran the lower two classes for eight and nine year olds and was the class master for year six.

12. Another Brother was Brother MFR [REDACTED] who was also probably in his late twenties and was latterly my [REDACTED] teacher . I remember he had a moon-shaped face. He was just a teacher though I don't recall what he taught. He supervised a dormitory.
13. As you went up the stairs to the top floor there were six rooms to the right each of which contained five beds. It was in one of these rooms that I first slept for either one or two years. To the left of the stairs was a large open room that contained about sixty beds.
14. In this open room there were two enclosed rooms in the corners which were used by the Brothers. Brother MFR [REDACTED] was a constant in his room while the other housed a variety of Brothers one of whom I recall was Brother Sylvian who was French. I moved to this larger room after about two years and stayed there for a further two years.
15. I moved to the middle dormitories for two years and was in the senior dormitory for the last few months of my time at St Joseph's. The dormitories were not given names other than they were known as the junior, middle and senior rec.
16. The children in each dorm were roughly the same age. The youngest slept on the top floor. Brother MFR [REDACTED] was in charge of the dorm for those of about ten or eleven years of age. There were about 350 boys in the school with some, not many, coming in as day students.
17. There was also a separate house where the Brothers lived and dined by themselves. We were allocated places in groups of six at the dining tables in the dining room which was on the ground floor of the main building. This was to the left as you walked in the main door.
18. The college had three football pitches, a hand-ball court and a tennis court as well as a large external sportsground about a mile away. It was on the edge of Dumfries, just opposite Dumfries Infirmary, but to go out of the school you needed a pass to go to

the dentist or something like that. In the senior school you were allowed to go to the local shop.

Routine at Quarriers

First day

19. I don't recall anybody specifically meeting us on that first day but there were a lot of us arriving at the same time and it was a bit chaotic with trunks being moved about. I recall hearing several boys crying that night probably because they had been separated from their parents. I don't recall how I felt.

Mornings and bedtime

20. We would get up at 7:00 am and, four mornings a week, would go to mass. We would go to mass every second day and on a Sunday. It was not optional. When we got up we would get washed and dressed then go for breakfast which would be after mass if we were attending that day.
21. After breakfast we played outside until school which started at 9:00 am. We broke for lunch which was at 12:45 pm in the refectory then it was back to class which finished at 5:00 pm. After that you went for tea/dinner and you could then go back out and play for a while.
22. Homework was done between 6:00 and 7:30 pm followed by a supper of bread and jam with tea. You could then go out and play again though senior students had more studying between 8:00 and 9:00 pm. I don't recall exactly when bedtime was but it was about 8:30 pm.
23. We did the same routine six days a week though on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons we did sport activities. The sport's fields were about a mile away and we walked there. We played cricket in the Summer and we also played football and rugby.

It would be a different sport each term. Sometimes other schools would come and play against us.

24. On a Sunday we would go to mass then have breakfast followed by time for us to write letters home. I would write to my mother and father and would receive replies from them and my grandmother.
25. You had to write at least two pages and these were inspected by your form-master though I don't recall the letters ever being censored. After letter-writing we had lunch after which we could go out and play in the afternoon and evening.

Mealtimes / Food

26. The majority of the school ate in the main refectory while smaller rooms nearby were for the senior students. The food in general was not good. We got chips six days a week. Breakfast you got a roll and a large bowl of porridge. I don't think anybody liked the porridge. We also got a small bottle of milk.
27. When we got chips the chips themselves were good but they would come in bowls stacked on each other. If you got the bottom bowl the chips were squashed. When you got mashed potatoes you had to scrape the skin of the top. The rolls were made good as was the bread and they may have been made in house.
28. All the cooking was done in-house but it wasn't good. There was plenty of food and I don't think we ever went hungry but the quality could have been better. If you didn't like the food it just got taken away. There was no force feeding or anything like that.

Washing / bathing

29. The washrooms in the junior dorm were in a room at the back of the row of rooms that each held five beds. The toilets were arranged on each half-landing. There were showers on the lower floor which were used after sports. They were separate cubicles. There would normally be a Brother near the showers when they were being used but that was only to organise rather than to supervise.
30. In the dormitory for the middle section of students they had separate washbasins but used the showers on the lower floor just like those in the junior level. I don't now recall what the washing facilities were for the senior school.

Chores

31. We polished our shoes every night but that was about the only chore we did. Every fortnight you collected your washing and sent it to the laundry. Your bed was checked every day by prefects to make sure it was neatly made in a very specific manner. You would get fifty lines if it wasn't. That happened to me several times.

Clothing / uniform

32. You bought your uniform and other clothing from Binns in Edinburgh and my mother had to stitch my number on every single item of clothing. You only wore full uniform when you went out of the school. In school you wore white shirt and tie but not necessarily a blazer. We were always dressed in a similar way and even the width of your trouser bottoms were measured to make sure they were sixteen inches.

School

33. I was reasonably bright and some years I did well and others years I didn't do quite as well. When I was in 5th year at the age of fifteen I probably had more O Grades than anybody else but none of my marks were outstanding. We did have some outside teachers for the older students, especially for Maths.

34. Your form master taught you all the subjects until you moved up to the middle school at the age of eleven or twelve. After the middle school you went to the senior school. I don't recall my form master's name.

Trips / Holidays

35. I didn't go on any trips. Such things did exist but they were mainly organised for during holiday time. We did go on the odd cycling trip. If the weather made it impossible to play sports on a Wednesday or Saturday we sometimes all went out to the cinema in Dumfries.

Leisure

36. We played a lot of football. If the weather was bad you would stay in and play board games or chatted. There was table-tennis and gym equipment but they were used mainly by the older students. There was a library but the range of books was very restrictive and, for example, you couldn't read any of the James Bond novels or books by Dennis Wheatley which were both banned for us.

Birthdays and Christmas

37. We went back home for Christmas though we did have carol singing on the lead-up to Christmas. At birthdays you would maybe get a cake if your parents had sent one in

Religion

38. We were given Religious Knowledge lessons at school and you sat exams based on what you had learned. During exams you would be asked questions and were expected to give standard replies. However, I would give what I thought were more honest answers which infuriated the Brothers. I would get 0% for my answers but wasn't further punished.

39. There were various holidays of obligation for Saint's Days and there were also retreats around Easter time. The whole religious cycle was followed but it wasn't Religious Education we received, in was Religious Indoctrination as only Catholicism was taught.

Visits / Inspections / Review of Detention

40. Parents could visit you at half-term. You might get the odd visitor at the weekend. My mum visited me but my dad didn't. We would go out for the day and I recall I used to love when we went out in a boat and I would row for miles. You would have to be back for about 7:30 pm.
41. I think there were inspectors but I think it was an examination of the academic aspect of the school. I don't recall anybody inspecting the actual running of the school.

Healthcare

42. We had a matron, a bit of a harridan, who controlled whether you were sick or not. I don't recall her name. She had an office and a room with four or five beds therein. Serious things like broken legs or arms were dealt with at Dumfries Infirmary which was just across the road from the college. We went to the dentist in town when we needed to.

Running away

43. I ran away on four separate occasions. The only significant thing about it was that my parents were never told except for the occasion when I reached Edinburgh. The first time I ran away I just wandered around Dumfries then went back about 8:00 pm. I was about nine years old. I ran away because I hated the place.
44. The second time I ran away I got as far as New Cumnock in Ayrshire which happened to be the home town of one of the prefects who came and brought me back. The third time I got to near Biggar where I knocked on a farmers door and asked if I could sleep

in his barn. He just called the police. Somebody from the school came and took me back that night.

45. The fourth time I ran away I was eleven or twelve and I cycled all the way to Edinburgh which took me about ten hours. I made my way to my mum's which was the only reason she knew I had run away. I can't recall if my mum called the school but somebody took me back there.
46. There were no unpleasant repercussions for running away though I don't recall if I was ever asked as to why I had run away. I was running away because I hated the place but I doubt if I ever ran away on a snap decision. I would have thought about it and planned it.

Bedwetting

47. Those who did wet the bed were moved into the sick room where alarms were fitted to the beds which would wake any boy who wet the bed. Bedwetting was never a problem for me.

Discipline

48. I don't recall being given any specific instructions about the rules of the school, you learned them as you went along. The belt was used freely and, for example, you got the belt from one particular form master if you were simply caught with your arms unfolded. This happened to me a few times though I don't recall how often. All I recall is that his nickname was Flecker. I don't recall his real name but he was a math's teacher. You could get six on the hand or six over the backside.
49. Some of the Brothers were more prolific at giving the belt than others. If they sent you to the ^{SNR} you had to bend over the desk and got six on the backside and that was brutal. Brother ^{MZH} was the ^{SNR} when that happened to me on the once or twice it happened to me. It was done over my clothing. I don't recall what I had done to deserve that punishment.

50. There was an incident involving Brother **MLU** as we called him. I don't recall his proper name but he was the youngest Brother there and was only in his twenties. There was an announcement one day and all the boys present battered the table in approval. This infuriated him and he belted all 150 boys. I was one of the last to get the belt that day which meant he was pretty tired by the time he belted me. He stood at the exit door and belted each of us twice as we left the refectory so I saw the majority of the boys getting the belt that day.

Abuse at St Joseph's, Dumfries

51. Within the first dorm that I slept in there were rooms that led off them. Brother **MLS** was the form master for one of the younger groups. In the evening he supervised them for getting washed and dressed for bed. One evening, during this, he called me into one of these rooms and closed the door as I entered. There were three beds therein and he told me to take off my trousers and sit on one of the beds. He then started to fiddle with my private parts.
52. I was only nine years old and hadn't a clue what was going on. He was wearing a cassock and there was clearly movement going on underneath it. He then got me to bend over the bed and belted me twice over the bare backside. After this he simply sent me out of the room and it was as if nothing had happened. The belt he used was the Lochgelly Special and I actually stole it before I left the school.
53. This happened to me on three or four occasions and involved Brother **MLS** calling me into the same room. I don't know how I felt other than I knew it wasn't standard behaviour. It also happened to a friend of mine called **[REDACTED]**. I cannot say for sure that it happened to others. Myself and **[REDACTED]** discussed it and, when we went home for the holidays, we told our mums.
54. Our mums were told to leave the matter with the school by **SNR** Brother Gaul and that the school would deal with it. This was after my mother had contacted

the school. I know this only because it's what my mother told me. Nothing happened. Brother ^{MLS} was no longer my form master but he was still looking after young kids. Although he was still in the school there was no further strange interaction between us.

55. Brother ^{MFU} was vicious and once chased me with a belt and hit me three times on the back of my legs. He also gave me the belt on the hands for various misdemeanours on numerous occasions. The belt was never given in a way that didn't hurt. It was used full force and you were often left with welts. It was an accepted thing in those days and getting the belt was a normal part of the regime.
56. In some ways my interaction with Brother ^{MFR} was more sinister than with Brother ^{MLS} but there was no sexual abuse involved, it was physical and emotional.
57. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who used to spend a lot of time alone in a room with Brother ^{MFR}. I asked [REDACTED] what went on when the two of them were in the room but he just ducked the question.
58. However, Brother ^{MFR} attitude to me thereafter was as if we were rivals for [REDACTED] attention. He started what I can only call a vendetta against me and he clearly resented the friendship I had with [REDACTED]. It was as if he was [REDACTED] lover and was jealous of me.
59. Even after [REDACTED] left Brother ^{MFR} continued this vendetta. For instance he even gave me the belt for simply being in the [REDACTED] room alone despite the fact I was the only person taking art. It was like he did it out of a lover's spite. That was typical, he just hounded me throughout my time at St Joseph's.
60. On another occasion I was playing cricket and was having one of those days when I was hitting everything. Brother ^{MFR} was the umpire and was continually telling the bowlers to bowl faster and faster to get me out. That suited me as the balls were going everywhere but putting me out which made Brother ^{MFR} visibly agitated and he got angrier and angrier.

61. It would be Brother ^{MFR} decision as to who could and could not go on trips and he continually wouldn't let me go. Conversely he made me do tasks that others didn't want to do like go on five mile runs or would prevent me going on the tennis court. It just seemed that he would do anything to make my life a misery.
62. A lot of these things were trivial but, in the situation and putting all these things together, meant that Brother ^{MFR} attitude to me made my life hell in there. The whole vendetta started almost as soon as I befriended From what I could see he didn't treat anyone else like this.
63. I'm not sure when Brother ^{MFR} started giving me the belt but he would manipulate situations to make sure he could give me the belt. For example, he would suddenly inspect my shoes or check my bed had been made properly, neither of which you would normally get the belt for. But he would belt me for these things.
64. Even at the age I was I knew that Brother ^{MFR} was simply being vindictive towards me and this went on for four to five years, right up until I left the school. During this time I constantly tried to avoid him. It wasn't constant but was at every opportunity Brother ^{MFR} could and I would say he belted me on the hand at least once a month over those years.
65. Brother ^{MFR} usually gave me two strokes of the belt at a time. People getting six of the belt tended to be only from ^{SNR} Brother ^{MZH}, and was not common but it did happen to me and others. I probably got the belt off Brother ^{MZH} three times during those years. I would say it was only older students who got that level of punishment.
66. I wouldn't say I had any good memories from my time in St Joseph's. Some of the Brothers were alright, like Brother Kenelm, but I wouldn't have confided in any of them, you couldn't have that sort of relationship with them.

Reporting of abuse at St Joseph's, Dumfries

67. I discussed what happened with my pal [REDACTED] but there was no one else to discuss it with. This was while we were still at the school. I also told my mother and [REDACTED] told his mother. I don't recall how exactly it was that I told my mother or how it came to be that I told her. I don't recall being present when our mothers discussed it and it was Brother Gaul they spoke to though I don't know what was said other than she was assured it would be taken care of. I think contact was by both letter and telephone calls.
68. I think the fact that my mother was Irish Catholic, and my dad being Polish and also very Catholic, they accepted the word of a priest as was the way in those days. I know in later years my mum would have dealt with the matter very differently and I know she regretted the way in which she handled it.
69. I never did tell anybody about the problems I had with Brother [REDACTED] MFR.

Leaving St Joseph's, Dumfries

70. I went back home for Christmas in December 1963 and discovered parties and girls and simply refused to go back to St Joseph's. My parents weren't very happy about it but I was fifteen and you could leave school at that age. In fact I was just a few weeks short of my sixteenth birthday. I did go to another school for a few months but in my own mind I had already stepped out of the school system.
71. I don't know if there was any more contact between St Joseph's and my parents after I left but it always infuriated me that my parents had been paying good money basically for me to be abused.

Life after being in St Joseph's, Dumfries

72. My mother decided that, since I wasn't going to go back to school, I had to get a job so I worked as an apprentice quantity surveyor for four years until I got fired. I then became a dealer in high performance and classic cars and worked as a property developer and, latterly, an art dealer.
73. I have always worked for myself since the age of twenty and only retired eighteen months ago as a result of ill health. I was married in 1976 but divorced in 1981. I have no children though my girlfriend's son has been in my life for eight years.
74. I recall picking him up at a swimming pool in Malta when he was aged nine and I remember thinking that that was how old I was when I went to St Joseph's and it made me think how fragile he was and also how fragile I had been at that age. I felt sorry for that nine year old who went to St Joseph's, a young boy who should have been protected the way this boy was.

Impact

75. I've always felt like an outsider and I am disrespectful of institutions and people of authority. I feel my education could have been better. I'm intelligent but feel I could have done better academically. The fact that my parents paid so much money has always angered me. If I go into a church I feel hypocritical and am just not interested in religion.

Reporting of Abuse

76. I reported what happened to me at St Joseph's to the police in Dumfries in 1997. A PC and a WPC interviewed me and my mum separately. I know my mum said she regretted how she had dealt with the matter originally. I told the police about both Brother ^{MLS} and Brother ^{MFR}.

77. The police later told me that one of the Brothers had gone to Canada while the other had Alzheimer's but I don't recall which was which. They said that neither Brother were in a position to be prosecuted and that the police couldn't take the matter any further. I'm fairly sure the police did not speak to [REDACTED] though I know he moved to Canada.
78. In 2012 I also wrote to the Pope and got back what I can only describe as a non-answer which basically said "it wasn't me" and referred me to the Marist Brothers. In the letter I wrote I simply spoke of my experiences at St Joseph's. I still have the reply I received though I'm not sure where it is. I have forwarded these e-mails to The Inquiry.
79. I also emailed Archbishop Tartaglia in 2012 who replied that I should refer it to the Marists Brothers and the police. A Marist Brother did come to see me and was apologetic after I contacted someone in the Marist Organisation sometime about 2012. The Marist Brother who visited me was perfectly reasonable and offered me counselling which I declined. I still have the e-mail correspondence I had with Archbishop Tartaglia and the Marist Organisation.

Counselling

80. I have never felt the need for counselling for what I endured at St Joseph's. I wouldn't say that I think about my time in boarding school a lot but it does come to mind from time to time.

Records

81. I have never tried to get my records but I have heard that the archived records are held in storage somewhere near the borders.

Lessons to be Learned


- 82. There should be checks and certifications done on those looking after such institutions. Orders like the Marists can be magnets for the wrong type of people joining them for the wrong reasons. I know certification exists today but there should be structures put in place where there is a process put in place where a person making a complaint could do so without fear of repercussions.

- 83. Religious orders should not be put in charge of children

Other information

- 84. Children should not be sent to a boarding school at the age I was. I was too young. I know that older children can have better experiences at boarding school though that may also be down to improvements that have been made to such place. Certainly the Catholic Church should be looking at ways to ensure places they run are improved.

- 85. 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.

Signature 

Dated 23 APRIL 2019.