

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GCD

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GCD. My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mother and father were both Catholics. My mother's sister was a nun. My mother's parents were Irish. I had one younger sister. I stayed not very far from the centre of Glasgow before I went into care.
3. My mother sent me to school when I was roughly six years of age. The first school I went to was St Patrick's Primary School. We later moved to Springburn. After we moved I went to St Aloysius Primary School. That was the last school I went to before going to St Bosco's.
4. I didn't start at St Patrick's when I should have done at the age of five. The classes had maybe been going on for six months before I started school. I've never found out the reason why I didn't start school at the same time as everybody else. Most of the people who were in school with me had been at nursery. I hadn't been at nursery.
5. I didn't know anything. I couldn't spell. I couldn't settle in school because everybody was ahead of me. When teachers came in they would think that I had been in the school from day one. They didn't realise that I was just in the door.

6. I automatically did not like school because I had no friends there. Everybody was a complete stranger to me.
7. As time went on I would invent excuses not to go to school. I would say I had a sore throat or I had sprained my leg or something. That went on for a period. My mother let me get away with it. Later on a summons arrived and my mother was taken to court. She was fined five shillings, or seven shillings and six pence, because I was not going to school. After that I went back to school for a couple of weeks before the same thing started happening again. Another summons would arrive and my mother would get fined. Later on my father started taking days off from work to take me to school. My father couldn't be there all the time though. I would just go out the door of the school after he went away.
8. Eventually the Glasgow school board and the court got fed up with fining my parents. At the time I didn't really know what the Glasgow school board was. I thought it was just the guy who came chapping your door. A year after the fines stopped the Glasgow school board decided to take us back to court. I was nearly twelve. The court decided that they were going to send me to an approved school. I hadn't stolen anything, beaten anybody up, gone shoplifting or done anything like that whatsoever. However, I was put in an approved school. I was sentenced until the end of my schooling. I was put into a school with kids who had broken into houses and done more serious things than me.
9. I think the guy who took me away from the court was a social worker. I didn't know who he was or what his name is now. He didn't take me away from court in a car. I remember him being concerned about how he was going to get me to Aberdour in Fife. He decided to take me on a bus. There was no Forth Road Bridge in those days so it was a long bus trip with a number of stops. The guy was so terrified that I would run away that he bought me comics and things to make sure I sat on the bus. After a few stops we got to Aberdour.

**St John Bosco's, Hillside, Aberdour, Fife**

10. It was a small school run by the Salesian Order. It could hold about fifty people but there was only really forty there at any given time. I was mixed in with other groups of boys from other areas. There were boys from Edinburgh, Wishaw, Hamilton, Dundee and other places. There were very few boys from Glasgow. There wasn't a continuous flow of people. After me the next boy who came in was maybe three months later. When I arrived, I became "number [REDACTED]". I was referred to as "Number. [REDACTED] GCD [REDACTED]".
11. My parents didn't have to pay for me being at the school. I believe that they got their family allowance stopped. I think that was the only thing that happened. It wasn't much anyway.
12. It took me a wee while to figure out what was going on in the place. My only experience, before going into the school, of priests, nuns and monks was that they were gentle people. I never saw anything like what I saw before I went there. I saw a lot of cruelty being dished out on people.

*First day*

13. I walked up the hill towards the home with the guy who took me from the court after the hearing. I remember us meeting with a brother called Brother [REDACTED] GTD at the entrance. Brother [REDACTED] GTD had a black cloak on with a kind of cape. I never heard what Brother [REDACTED] GTD and this guy talked about. I stood there with my hands in my pockets thinking "This is quite good this place. There's a football pitch and the grounds are nice. I might enjoy it here." Then the guy who brought me there went away.
14. Brother [REDACTED] GTD called over a boy to show me around the home and to show me the ropes. Brother [REDACTED] GTD then told me to take my hands out of my pockets. I took them out then put them back in again. That's when Brother [REDACTED] GTD whacked me straight in the face. That surprised me. The only time I had seen priests was at weddings or funerals or when they came into school to give a lecture on religion. They weren't

thought of as violent. My experience of them hadn't been like that. I thought maybe it was because he was half a priest, a trainee or something, and that was why he had hit me.

15. After I was hit I was taken to SNR [REDACTED]'s office by the boy Brother GTD [REDACTED] called over. SNR [REDACTED] was Father LOB [REDACTED]. He had had a thick belt. He made sure that it was lying out in his office so you could see it.
16. Father LOB [REDACTED] sent the boy who came up with me away to get me a bundle of clothes. I was then taken for a shower by Father LOB [REDACTED]. Every part of my body was inspected by him whilst I was in the shower. I was then given my new clothes. They were short trousers and a khaki shirt. I've a feeling they weren't brand new clothes. I was then issued with a number [REDACTED]. I was told that if my number was announced I should stand up.
17. By the time I arrived at the home everything was pretty well finished for the day. Because of this, after I was washed and dressed, I was shown to my dormitory. There was a bed there which I had to make up. I had no experience of making up a bed.

#### **Routine at St John Bosco's**

18. You got up at six in the morning to say a prayer in silence. You were then marched down to the chapel. You would spend about an hour in there having mass. You would then go for breakfast. You would say a prayer first. Then you had your breakfast and said another prayer. You were then allocated your work.
19. After you finished your work you went to school. That would be roughly about ten o'clock. At eleven o'clock a bell would be rung and everybody had to stand up and say a prayer. You would then be allowed to go out in the yard to play. After that a whistle would be blown. There were numbers painted on the yard's ground. The

whistle was the sign for you to go and stand on your number. You would then be taken for lunch. You would eat your lunch in silence.

20. At lunchtimes Father<sup>LOB</sup> would read a book out loud whilst you were eating. He would walk up and down whilst reading. You weren't speak at lunch because Father<sup>LOB</sup> would hit you over the head with a soup spoon if you did. It was strange the books that Father<sup>LOB</sup> used to read. He read books about the Third Reich or the Nazi party. I remember him putting on German accents when reading out the stories.
21. After Father<sup>LOB</sup> finished reading you were allowed about ten minutes to talk. You would then say a prayer and go out in the yard for ten or twenty minutes. After that you had your afternoon session at school. That could go on until about half past four. The time you finished depended on what they wanted to teach you.
22. After school you would get your evening meal. After that you got what they called 'recreation'. During that time you would play billiards, read a book or listen to the BBC light programme. That went on until about seven or half seven.
23. After recreation you were given a shower. You had a shower every night. After your shower you got dressed into your day clothes and you were marched back in silence into the chapel for evening prayer. You would be there for about three quarters of an hour. After the prayers one of the priests would give you a wee story. It would be a story about the priest's life or something like that. You would then be marched back up to your dormitory in silence. You then had maybe about quarter of an hour before the lights went off. It was possibly about nine o'clock when you went to bed.
24. There were some tasks on a Saturday but no tasks on a Sunday. You got an hours extra lie-in on a Sunday. You would be got up at seven rather than six.



*Washing*

25. The priests or brothers inspected you in the showers. They would check you to see whether you had washed yourself. They would tell you to open your legs and check under your arms. I don't know why they had to inspect you. You felt like cattle. Maybe they thought we were daft and we weren't able to wash ourselves. Sometimes the priest or brother would be there a bit longer. I never twigged to that to begin with.

*Sleeping arrangements*

26. There were four dormitories in the home. I wasn't always in the same dormitory throughout my time there. One dormitory was near the central heating. That dormitory was quite hot. The boys who wet their beds were sent to that dormitory.

*Work and chores*

27. You worked during the day, after breakfast, for about two hours before school. The boys did everything. You would be cleaning the main house and the dormitories, polishing the floors, cleaning the toilets, cleaning the church, cleaning the school or doing the gardening.
28. The school had a gigantic walled garden in its grounds. Various things were grown there. There were no gardeners. The lads did all the work in there. It didn't matter what the weather was like. Sometimes you were made to do landscaping of the property. You would only do that if the weather was ok. The landscaping of the property wasn't an everyday event. That was only done every now and again.
29. I think, after a while, you settled down into a particular job. I was in the garden all of the time. I wasn't green fingered or anything like that. Being in the garden meant that you could get away from what I call "the intellectual ones". It was like the army. You didn't want to be in Aldershot where all the brigadiers were, you wanted to be away from them. Being in the garden meant you were out the road of it all.

*Friends*

30. When I first got there I didn't have pals. You would wait until the next boy came in. He would then become your pal. I did eventually have pals whilst I was there. I had pals throughout my time at the school.

*Food*

31. For breakfast we had porridge, cornflakes and toast. On a Sunday we had eggs. There wasn't really a problem with the food.
32. At certain times of the year the apples were ready. We collected the apples for Father **GVQ**. He would count the apples. I don't know what they did with the apples. Father **GVQ** would take a knife to any of the apples that were bruised. He would give you the bruised bit to eat.

**SNR**

33. **SNR** was Father **LOB**. He later on had a nervous breakdown and chucked it in. I know that he came back again after I left the school. I heard that through the grapevine.
34. **SNR** was called either Father **GVS** or **GVS**. He was a Glasgow man. I'd say he wouldn't have been older than forty when I was there. I believe he is now deceased. I know that he was found out to be what he was, an abuser, later on in the late sixties. He got caught abusing two twins. He was moved either on or left the priesthood. I had left the school when all that happened but I heard about it. Father **LOB** and Father **GVS** were probably the two worst priests there.

*Staff – brothers and priests*

35. A brother was either an up and coming priest who had passed some of their tests, someone who was not good enough to pass the tests, or someone who just wanted to be a brother. None of these guys were married. You could tell that a lot of them were homosexuals. We would say “Stay away from him because he’s a poof”. Homosexuality was against the law back then. I wonder now whether they all just sort of joined the club.
36. There were two schools or training colleges for the priests in Battersea and Bolton. During the school holidays trainee priests would come up to help out and cover the other priests. There was one younger trainee priest who helped out during the holidays. I must have felt sorry for him so I kind of got close to him. He was a trainee priest called Brother **GVR**. He bought me a pen. He asked me whether I would write him a letter once a week when he got back to Battersea. To be honest, I couldn’t write. When he came back the following year he asked me why I wouldn’t write to him.
37. I found out recently that Brother **GVR** got done for abusing people. I looked him up on the internet. He became a priest. He got the jail. He got sent down for two or three years. He never did anything to me but I remember him being nice to me. He would just talk to me and give me things.
38. Father **GVQ** did the gardening and did a bit of the religious education as well. He was not the worst priest by any means. He was a big Irish guy. I’d say he was probably in his fifties when I was there. He wasn’t one of the brightest. How he was a priest I don’t know. He wasn’t a sexual abuser. He was just a big, thick, Irish guy. Believe it or not, although he used to batter the hell out of us, he was one of the better guys.
39. They weren’t all bad. Maybe about ten per cent of the brothers and the priests at the school were good. Some of the priests would pull you to the side and say “Play the game, they’re all mad here.” There were one or two who were like that. I wouldn’t



say that the ones who beat you up were the worst. You knew where you stood with them. It was the ones who came around with their torches at night that you had to watch.

*Staff - rectors*

40. There were priests called rectors. There were three rectors during my time there. I can't remember their names. Three of the rectors were Scottish. We did nickname one of them "Don Bosco" because he acted as if he founded the place. They didn't attend the school. They would give a lecture every now and again. They were the heads of the religious Order. They were the heads of the church side of things.

*Staff - other*

41. The matron was a devout Catholic. Her brother was a Catholic priest from another Order. She only maybe controlled the linen and the priests' clothes. She didn't do the cooking. There was nothing happened with her.
42. There were cooking staff. A wee while after starting you would get given the job to help them dishing the meals out and doing the washing up. Everybody got a turn of that. The cooking staff were the only staff the school employed other than the brothers, the priests and the matron. There were no cleaners. The laundry was sent away in wicker baskets to an outside laundry.
43. There were a few figures who we saw at the school who we didn't know what they did. I don't know whether they helped out in the office or something. They were from the religious Order. I remember one of the guys was from the Falkland Islands.

*Education and schooling*

44. Other than the woodwork room, the classrooms were really just basic classrooms. You would get taught religion at school on top of the normal religion you got taught outside of school. The Salesian Order had its own programme of religion. Their

programme was given priority above your schooling. Whatever they wanted to do would be given priority. If it was a saint's day you would be off school.

45. I was pretty good at art. They asked me to put one of my paintings into a local competition and I won it. I could paint better than the ones who were supposed to be teaching me.
46. The teachers weren't qualified teachers. They hadn't been to university or anything. The people who taught us were just picked from the brothers and priests that were there. Some of the teachers were pretty well educated but others weren't. I didn't sit any exams or anything like that when I was at the school. There was nothing. I left with no qualifications whatsoever.

*Religious instruction*

47. You had to read the bible at certain times. Benediction was every Wednesday and took up about two hours in the evening. That was compulsory for everybody. Religion took up a huge amount of time at the school.
48. We had what they called "religious education". There would be one afternoon session given to that a week during school time. You would be taught what mass was, who the pope was, who his cardinals were and other things like that. You were also taught a bit of Latin. If you didn't understand the Latin you would get slapped about.
49. On a Sunday the chapel allowed outsiders to come in. They were people who were Roman Catholics from the area. On the Sundays the priests would pride themselves on the boys' singing ability in front of these people. If you didn't sing you were singled out and slapped or battered.
50. Being an altar boy was compulsory. There was a rota that said certain people had to do it at certain times. If it was your turn you would have to get gowned up at six o'clock in the morning and go straight down. One day I remember one of the priests

giving out communion to everybody. One of the altar boys couldn't stop laughing. The priest made him get off the altar. The priest gave the boy a hard time after that. He never gave the boy the job back there again.

51. If you are a normal Catholic you go to confession and never see the priest again. It was different at the school. The priests were there all of the time. They were your teachers. They were your everything. They would come up to you every now and again and say "You have not been to confession for a while. Is there anything I can help you with?" I started thinking "I'm not going to tell this guy that I had done this and that so he could get me the next day or so that he could go and tell somebody else." We all became virtually atheist from going to the school.
52. I really drove the priests mad with not going to confession. I just wouldn't go. They thought that there was something the matter with me. They used to say "There's a boy who doesn't believe in God." I got a few doings for saying I was an atheist and I didn't believe in God. I got right doings because I wouldn't attend their communions and confessions. I wouldn't get involved with a minute of it.

#### *Holidays and excursions*

53. The school shut down for holidays in the summer. During that time the school would take you to various locations like Aberdeen, Rothesay or Ardrrossan. We would go away for two weeks. The younger priests in training would come up from Bolton and Battersea during those holidays to help out.
54. You were allowed to go on a Sunday walk into Aberdour. You had to go in a party. You weren't allowed to stray. We were herded like sheep.

#### *Recreation and activities*

55. At the end of the day you had recreation. You would play billiards, watch television or read books. The television was only on once a week or something. There were

only two channels back then. If the brothers or priests thought the programmes weren't suitable they would turn the television off.

56. There were competitions against other football teams. The school had an annual sports day. I was pretty fast at running and I was good at jumping. The priests and brothers would give some of the boys the same age as me a head start. They allowed some of the pets to get that. Some of the other boys used to say "I'm going to tell my dad about this. That's not right. They shouldn't be allowed to do that." I knew that they were wasting their time though.

*Christmas, birthdays and St John Bosco's day*

57. At Christmas you were released for about five or six days. The school would let you go home. The school wouldn't let you spend New Year at your parents' home. I think that was because they didn't want you to see any drinking or anything like that.
58. The only way you wouldn't go home for Christmas was if your leave had been cancelled. You could have your Christmas leave cancelled if you had done something like absconding. They hated it if one of the boys had their leave cancelled at Christmas because someone would have to be left behind to look after that boy. They would want to go off back to Ireland to see their relations. When Father <sup>GVS</sup> [REDACTED] he was wise enough not to keep people in during Christmas.
59. You got a cake baked for you by one of the cooks on your birthday. It was just a basic sponge cake with a bit of icing and a couple of candles on it. People would sing happy birthday. There'd be only enough cake for six or eight bits. You got a bit and gave the other bits to whoever your friends were. It wasn't restricted or anything like that. You used to bargain with the other boys whose birthdays were about yours. You'd say "My birthday's this week and yours is next week so I'll give you a bit of mine if you give me a bit of yours." There were no presents or anything like that.

60. The school's big holidays were at Easter or on St John Bosco's day. I can't remember what day that was but any time it was St John Bosco's day they had a big party.

*Visits home*

61. You only got to go home at Christmas and perhaps after Easter. You maybe got to go home at the end of the summer holidays. I think there were only four times that you got leave. I can't remember what was the other time you could go home. You never got anything more than a week when you went home for leave. It wouldn't be more than that.
62. When my grandmother died my father rang up the school and said "Have him back right now, have him on the next train." I was allowed a day off to go to my grandmother's funeral. I was only away for the funeral. I was right back at the school after the funeral was finished.

*Clothes and possessions*

63. You used to wear short trousers with a khaki shirt. You were also given clothes for Sunday best. It was a suit with short trousers. Shoes and football boots were all repaired at the home. In that way the school was self-sufficient. There was one of the lads, that was there longer, who got the hang of doing that.
64. Any clothes, shoes or documents you had with you when you came into Aberdour were destroyed. They were put into a box and then they were incinerated. This meant that, from day one, you had no photos or anything at all with you. I remember I had a few things with me when I arrived but nothing of great value.
65. I discovered that your possessions were burnt because I was made to burn someone else's stuff when they came to the school. Who burnt the new boys stuff would just be a matter of who was around at the time. They would ask who was available to go and burn the stuff.



66. When I was asked to go and burn the stuff I just thought it was because of hygiene. I was thinking of rabies and all sorts of other diseases. That's what I thought as to why things were being burnt back then. When I think about it now, they did that to take away from you any identity you had and so that you just became a number.

*Pocket money*

67. You got one shilling five pence a week pocket money. It was enough to buy you two bars of toffee or something. You would get that every week. They had a small cupboard which had penny sweets in it. You spent your pocket money there. If you were bad your pocket money could be stopped for up to three months.

*Letters and parcels*

68. You were allowed to write one letter a week home. The priests gave you a stamp. All the letters were censored by the priests. You could not write how you were actually getting on. You couldn't write "I'm having a bad time here. The priest is touching me up".
69. They also censored all of the letters that came in. The letters were all opened up and looked at by the priests. You knew that the letters had been censored because they all came to you already opened. You never got a sealed letter.
70. You were allowed parcels from your parents. It would only be foodstuff. Some parents were richer than others. That meant that some boys were getting parcels every month. They ended up putting a stop to it. Some of the boys were ending up getting a lot of tuck. Those boys used that to bribe other boys along the lines of "You be nice to me and I will give you a Mars bar." That's why they put a stop to it.

*Visits and inspections*

71. I got visits from my parents about once a month. I can't remember what day it happened on. It was probably a day towards the end of the month. It was probably at the weekends. It wasn't during the school programme. Your parents could take you out of the school to the village for fish and chips or whatever. You could sit about the school with your parents if you wanted to but, usually, you just wanted to get out. I remember that, when you were seen by your parents, the priest would come out, touch your head and say to your parents "Oh <sup>GCD</sup> is doing well, he's doing brilliant here."
72. I never saw a social worker or an inspector whilst I was there. There might have been occasions when they brought someone into a class, however, as far as I know, nobody checked up on the quality of the education we got. I never saw anyone checking up on our welfare. I think there were rules and regulations to say that that should have happened but I never saw anybody. It might be logged somewhere that I saw somebody but I can't remember it.
73. I remember them bringing in bailies who were sort of councillors. We had to stand up for them when they came in. We maybe got a visit once a year off of them. The school would make sure that you had your best clothes on when the bailies visited.

*Healthcare*

74. You would maybe see a doctor once a year. The doctor would come in and examine everybody. I don't recall getting any vaccinations. If you were unwell you would have to see one of the duty priests or brothers. If they thought you were ill they would give you an aspirin or send you to the matron if she was on duty. You also went to the dentist. They took you to the dentist by bus. The dentist was in Dunfermline.

### **Abuse at St John Bosco's**

75. Corporal punishment was used everywhere back then in school. The difference was though that you had to stay with the people who gave you the punishments. One of the other punishments you used to get was lines. You would be given lines for talking in a line, in a corridor or in the chapel. You could get a hundred lines. The school got smart to how fast you could do the lines. After that they would tell you to write out six pages of a book. That would take up most of the evening. There was also a marks system. You would get either a good or a bad mark depending on your behaviour. If you got a bad mark you had to get five good marks to cancel it out.

#### *Bed-wetting*

76. If you wet the bed you would be sent to the end dormitory to sleep. That dormitory was nicknamed by us the "water nellies dormitory". Quite a lot of boys wet the bed. I personally didn't. If a boy did wet the bed they would get him out of bed, pull down his pants and smack him with their hands. The school would then stop the boy's pocket money.

#### *Running away*

77. The boys who did run away were always caught. Where were you going to run away to? You are only going to go back to Glasgow or to your parents. The police didn't take that long to find the boys who ran away.
78. The abuse I saw for anyone who got caught running away was horrendous. The punishments would go up on the board. If a boy absconded he would be made to stand in the corner any time they were out in the yard. They were made to stand up in class during lessons. They had to stand in the corner during lunch. For the first week the school would also just give the boy water and a slice of bread cut into wee squares. The boy couldn't watch television or do recreation. The boy would also get slapped. It was not just SNR who would slap the boy. All the other priests would take a turn at slapping him. All the boy's privileges were gone. If any

of the boys ran away in your company then you would get a doing as well. You were expected to report it if you saw one of the boys running away.

79. I was wise enough not to abscond. I knew that you wouldn't get anywhere. I'd seen what happened to boys who had. The punishments didn't stop any of these boys running away. There were at least two boys who absconded and were never heard of again. We were told that the boys had been transferred somewhere else and that they weren't having them back. That might have been the case but I don't know.

Father **GVQ**

80. When I was about twelve I was asked to move a part of a wall in the garden. Whilst doing that something happened and I broke my leg. I knew, when it happened, that I had broken my leg. I was asked to push a wheelbarrow up a steep hill by Father **GVQ**. There was no way I could push it up the hill because of my leg. I said to Father **GVQ** "There is no way I am going to be able to do this". Another boy backed me up because he had seen me breaking my leg.
81. Father **GVQ** had a piece of hosepipe that was about four feet long. He thought I was "at it" and repeatedly whacked me with the hosepipe. Eventually the other boy ran and got one of the other priests to come down and carry me away. The priests then realised that I might have broken my leg. I was then taken to a hospital in Dunfermline. The hospital x-rayed me and confirmed that I had broken my leg. I came back to the school with a stookie. I had to stay in the sick bay downstairs for a while.
82. After I broke my leg I became a bit of a pain for the school. I couldn't do anything. I was summoned in to see **SNR** Father **LOB**, in his office. He more or less told me that I had caused them a bit of grief because I got my leg broken. He said that he was going to give me a "conduct mark". That meant I was a bad boy and I would not take part in anything like recreation or watching television. I was told I would be made to sit in a classroom and read a book. I couldn't be an altar boy

because I couldn't get ready in the mornings quick enough to go down. After four or six weeks I returned to hospital to get the stookie cut off.

83. Later on, after I broke my leg, I was planting things in the garden. I was planting the plants in a row using a piece of string to measure them all out straight. Father <sup>GVQ</sup> was watching me. There was a metal rake. It probably had about eight teeth in it. Father <sup>GVQ</sup> looked at the plants and said to me "That's not straight, do it again." I then started doing the plants again. Father <sup>GVQ</sup> then lifted the rake and brought it right down on my hands. The teeth of the rake stuck in my hand. He then pulled the rake out and blood started spurting from my hand. He must have hit a vein or an artery or something. He then gave me a hanky and made me go and see the matron. The matron asked what had happened and I just said it was an accident. She bandaged me up. It was frightening seeing the blood spurting out like that. I don't remember getting a tetanus shot or anything like that.
84. I think Father <sup>GVQ</sup> was spooked by what he had done. He later came to speak to me. He said "Your language should not have been as atrocious as that. I'm going to give you three good marks for not saying something about it."
85. The school kept bees for honey. Father <sup>GVQ</sup> would make you stand where the bees were as a punishment. You would be swatting the bees away. You would get stung by them. You would end up putting vinegar on where you were stung. The bees would sting you all the time.
86. There were nets put up around the vegetable plots. We would be made to go out and disturb the pigeons by Father <sup>GVQ</sup>. We would clap our hands. The pigeons would be caught up in the net. We were then given a pickaxe handle to go and club the pigeons. You had to kill the pigeons for pest control but they also used them in the kitchen. They cooked them there. When you were killing the pigeons you were encouraged to kill as many pigeons as you could. You would get a good mark if you killed as many as you could.



One of the other things Father <sup>GVQ</sup> did was make you put down corrugated iron on the ground. The sheets would be left for a few days. The field mice would go in under the corrugated iron. Father <sup>GVQ</sup> would then make you shake the corrugated iron. The mice would come out and you would be made to stamp on them as they came out.

87. I used to pretend I was killing the pigeons and the mice. I didn't like doing it. I don't know whether that was abuse. I don't know whether on farms that sort of thing was normally done. What I do find odd is that they were making wee kids do that sort of thing. They were making wee kids kill animals. I'm not sure whether that was right. It didn't feel right at the time.

*Father* <sup>LOB</sup>

88. Father <sup>LOB</sup> had a train set. The other priests referred to it as "Father <sup>LOB</sup>'s folly". He had a big room where he kept his train sets. I could look in the window and see the train sets but I was never ever admitted into the room. All the good boys who played the game (the pets) could get into the room and play with the train sets with him. Father <sup>LOB</sup> gave visitors the impression that the train sets were for the boys. He made out that it showed that the boys were getting looked after well. I'm pretty well certain that it was the donations given to the church that paid for the train sets.
89. One time, my friend stole a packet of Oddfellows from the matron's house. When my friend showed me them I said "Good, we'll sell them and make some money." My friend got caught. He got sentenced to four strokes from Father <sup>LOB</sup> for the theft. I got sentenced to three strokes because I sold the packet.
90. When you were sentenced they wouldn't tell you when you were going to be punished. They would write it up on a board. They wouldn't do it there and then. When it was your time three priests would come and get you. They would take you into a room and take off their cassocks. They took their collar off. It could take two of them to hold you down. Father <sup>LOB</sup> would then pull your trousers down but

leave your pants on. He would then take a good swing until he got it right. If he hit your legs it wouldn't count. If he hit your legs ten times it didn't matter – it still wouldn't count. It was Father <sup>LOB</sup> [REDACTED]'s job to do that. He was a sadist.

91. I remember one time hearing Father <sup>LOB</sup> [REDACTED] hitting one of the other boys. There always had to be another priest there to be a witness. I remember hearing a priest shout "Stop, stop, stop that's enough, enough, enough!".
92. One of the punishments was that you would not be allowed a visit from your parents. Your parents would be sent a letter saying that their visit was cancelled because you had been naughty. I remember, on this occasion, that this boy's mother got fed up with this. The mother came in anyway after he was punished. They didn't turn her away. She insisted that she wanted to see her son.
93. I saw what was going on because my parents were there at the time. The mother saw the boy and saw the injuries to his eyes and mouth. You could see that she was raging. The mother took the boy into the toilet, pulled down his trousers and saw the injuries. She went mad. She went into Father <sup>LOB</sup> [REDACTED]'s office and started shouting and balling at him. She threatened him that she was going to get the police and everything. I never heard anything more after that. The boy certainly didn't get beat up as much after that.

*Other priests and brothers*

94. They brought in the other staff to help with the holidays. The other staff would be ok for the first week or two. They wouldn't slap you about or beat you up like the rest would do. They would soon be told that "This is the way you do it, don't be nice to these wee boys". After that they became just as bad as the rest of them.

- ██████████
95. There was a lad who came in when I was about thirteen. I'd been there about a year and a half. I'm pretty sure he was called ██████████. ██████████ had only been in the school for a wee while. It took you a time to get to know what went on in the school.
96. ██████████ was a sickly boy. He didn't take to the tasks too well. I remember hearing other boys saying to the priests "He's at it, he's trying to get away with this or that." Because of that the priests would make ██████████ run around in circles on the football pitch or in the yard. As time went on you could see that the boy was getting more sickly. About a week after all this started one of the priests said "Right, ██████████, if you're sick go to the matron." The priest was angry. ██████████ then went to the matron. Within a couple of hours ██████████ was taken to the hospital. He was in the hospital for a couple of days before he died. After that the priests started panicking. They changed all their garments to black.
97. The school's excuse was that ██████████ died because of leukaemia. I've no doubt that ██████████ did die of leukaemia, but I am not sure you can get leukaemia and die a couple of days later. There's got to be a longer period of illness than that. The school's harsh treatment of ██████████ meant that he did not get proper medical treatment. It didn't take any level of intelligence to realise that the boy was sick.

*Sexual abuse and the "pets"*

98. The priests were like vampires. They sneaked about at night in the dormitories. They would ask wee boys whether they needed help going to the toilet. They would touch wee boys up. They would try to do that to me but I was streetwise. I would just say to them "Get away."
99. The priests had it all sussed out. They read your letters. They knew whether you had a family or didn't have a family. They knew whether you had a father, mother or were an orphan. They knew who were the more vulnerable boys. The sexual abuse

went on all of the time. It was a known fact that boys were being abused. You would see the priests, every now and again, putting their hands up boys' trousers.

100. There were a number of lads who we called the "pets". We called them "Father <sup>LOE</sup> [REDACTED]'s pet" or "Father <sup>LOB</sup> [REDACTED]'s pet" etc. Everybody knew who the pets were. We noticed that the pets always got good marks. Even if you were ahead of a pet in a queue a pet would step in and take your place. The pets would always get taken somewhere where we weren't taken to. The pets got any perk that was going. Because of that some of them became quite powerful.
101. The priests and brothers having their pets led to trouble in the school. The boys would torment the pets. That would lead to the pets running to their priests and reporting it. That would then lead to the priests giving you a smack or a doing. Sometimes the pets would get younger boys for the priests. The pets would suss out who was not streetwise and take them up. They would do that.
102. As time went on some of the pets got brave. The pets could fall out with priests or brothers. They would challenge the abusers. The abusers couldn't control the pets all the time. They had created a kind of monster. The pets would get out of hand as they got older. They would start wanting things off the abuser. The abuser would say "I'm reporting you to the headmaster" and the pet would say "Aye, you report me to the headmaster and I'll tell him about you." The pet had a bit of power in that way.
103. In later life I met some of the pets when they were grown up. I met some of them in Central station in Glasgow in the late sixties. I went up and spoke to them. They ended up just being rent boys. I asked them how they were getting on but you knew that was what they were getting up to.

Father <sup>GVS</sup> [REDACTED]

104. Father <sup>GVS</sup> [REDACTED] did give the beatings but he didn't do it as enthusiastically as Father <sup>LOB</sup> [REDACTED]. He used to carry a chain with him like a prison



warden. He would come up to you and whack you round the back of the head with the chain. He would just do that if he felt like it.

105. Father <sup>GVS</sup> [REDACTED] was definitely one of the priests who would creep into the dormitories at night and ask wee boys whether they needed help going to the toilet. I remember one of the boys complained to me about Father <sup>GVS</sup> [REDACTED]. This was just before I was about to leave. The boy asked me "What should I do here about him? Do I go to the police about this?" I said that the police wouldn't do anything about it. I told the boy that it had been going on since I had started at the school. It was too early on in my life for me to have views about how to prevent things.

*Brother* <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED]

106. There was one particular brother called Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED]. He is still alive. He is presently in Bolton. He's now what's classified as [REDACTED] for the Order. He'll be about eighty odd now. Even though he was a sexual abuser, he wasn't the worst guy there. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED] stayed in the attic. He would take his pets up into the attic. The pets would go up into his attic and read comics. The lights would be on all the time. He would take his pets into his room and feel them. I once went into the attic. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED] tried to touch me. I said "Get away!" He just laughed and kept one or two of the other boys there instead.
107. The boys would be led away at night by Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED] to the priests' rooms. You wouldn't see the abuse but you would hear what happened from the boys who were taken. The boys would say "He's touching me", "He's wanting me to this" or "He's doing this to me."
108. One day I was tasked to dig a hole in the grounds. I had to find a pipe. I was digging away with a pick but I couldn't find the pipe. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED] came along with another boy whilst I was digging. The boy was called either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He was about fourteen. I was a wee bit older than him. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> [REDACTED] told me that I was needed somewhere else. I walked off but couldn't find what he



was wanting. I maybe went a couple of hundred yards away. I walked back and saw that my pick was still in the hole. That's when I saw the bushes moving. I went across and saw Brother <sup>LMW</sup> abusing [REDACTED]. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> was doing oral sex with the boy. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> got up straight away then got hold of my face. He then said "What did you see, what did you see, what did you see!?" I said that I hadn't seen nothing. [REDACTED] then said "He'll not say nothing because he's getting out shortly!"

109. One other time I was late from doing gardening or something. I had to go and take my wellies off then take a shower. At that particular time everybody had already had their shower. As I walked into the shower room I heard a bit of noise. One of the shower cubicle doors was shut. I opened the door and it was Brother <sup>LMW</sup> with the same boy, [REDACTED]. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> was abusing the boy. Brother <sup>LMW</sup> said "You again <sup>GCD</sup> get out of here!"

*Sexual abuse between the boys*

110. It was quite common for the pets to abuse other boys. Nothing happened to me but there were a couple of younger boys who were taken round the back of the garden and abused by the older boys. I'm pretty sure that the older boys involved had been abused themselves. I knew everything that was going on because I was streetwise. I knew who not to talk to in certain areas and who not to go to for messages. However, some of the younger boys didn't know about that. The older boys who abused the younger boys were about fifteen. I was about thirteen when I went in so I was wise enough to realise what was going on.

**Leaving St John Bosco's**

111. Before I left the school Father <sup>GVS</sup> got me into his office. He said to me "Anything you have seen or heard in here or anything that has happened here is totally private. You are getting sent out of here on licence. I can have you back in here "like that"". I knew perfectly well that he couldn't have me back in the school

because I was fifteen and that was the age that you left. However, I did think that he could put me in a young offenders' place or somewhere like that.

112. I was put out on licence even though I hadn't done anything. Licence was a bit like being on probation. If you did something you could be brought back. I knew that some boys, who had left when they were fourteen, were brought back in because they had done something like shoplifting or something. I knew though that I hadn't committed any crime. If I did commit any crimes, after I left, the court would find that out. The court would realise that they couldn't send me back. I was quite aware of that.

### **Life after being in care**

113. When I left the school I stayed at my mum and dad's. I didn't stay there very long. I found it difficult to stay there so I just got my own house. It was quite easy to get a house in those days. Houses weren't expensive.
114. I got married when I was eighteen. I had three kids. I eventually got a few delivery boy jobs. I ended up doing a twenty year stint in the army. I never encountered brutality anything like what I had in that approved school in the army. You might get in trouble if you fought somebody but it was nothing like it was in that approved school.

### **Reporting of abuse**

115. There was nobody you could talk to about what was happening at St John Bosco's. You just talked amongst yourselves. There was no opportunity to speak to people off the site.
116. I wouldn't have had the guts to speak to my mother at the time about what was going on. If I'd said anything to my mother she would've just said "You must have been

doing something wrong. It must have been your fault. Priests don't do these things." My mother would tell you that you shouldn't be bad to these men because they'd given up their lives for you. She would say these things not realising how bad these guys were. My father wasn't a fan of priests, but he would have just said that I was making up stories because I just didn't like it there. There was no point at all in telling my parents.

117. If I had told anybody at the time they wouldn't have believed me. These people were seen as doing good work. Who else was going to look after a bunch of rowdy kids who would steal the eyes out of your head or set fire to your house? That was the impression that people had even though it wasn't the case. The religious order in southern Ireland controlled everything. You couldn't say boo to anything.
118. The rectors would come and give a spiel at evening prayers and say "If any of you boys have any problems with the staff then you come and see me." I know that that was tried by some of the boys. However, anybody who approached the rector just ended up getting a doing off the other priests.
119. On one occasion a couple of the boys absconded. One of the rectors went and got the boys. That was maybe done over the headmaster's head but I don't know. I heard from the boys that they were told by the rector "Come back boys. You won't get punished. I'll make sure that nothing happens to you." The first thing that happened when the boys came back was that they were punished and beaten up by the priests in the school.
120. I can remember one of the boys saying to me about the rector, "See him, he's a lying fucker. He promises this and he promises that." That proved to me that the rector had no authority over things. He might have had authority over the church side of things but he didn't have authority over the school. It was the headmaster's job to be in control of discipline and things like that. The headmaster would just overrule the rector.

121. I never spoke to anyone in authority after I left the school. How could I go to a police officer and say anything? They would just ask you what I was doing in an approved school to begin with.

### **Impact**

122. I don't trust anybody. I don't trust the police, union officials or politicians. I think that is because I shouldn't have been sent to the school. I never did anything. It's left a bad stain on me. It's made me not trust society or anything in society.
123. I think I lost a bit of my childhood. I've lost out on a lot of my education. When I left there at fifteen and a half I couldn't read. The only way I learnt to read was through sitting on the top of the bus and watching people read newspapers. The school knew that I couldn't read but they didn't have proper teachers who could teach me. I think being there affected my prospects.
124. When I left I couldn't tell anybody I had been at an approved school. I had to lie. I wouldn't say, at job interviews, what school I had actually gone to. You wouldn't name a Catholic school. Employers wouldn't employ Catholics back then. You would invent some school.
125. The one thing you wouldn't say is that you were in an approved school. Saying that would be like saying you were in the jail. Everybody back then thought that people who went to approved schools must have robbed an old woman, burnt down a house or something crazy like that. That was difficult for me. I had no vocational qualifications or anything like that. I never had any qualifications to be a joiner, a plumber, a mechanic or anything like that. I had nothing. I had difficulties getting work.

**Records**

126. At one point I was contacted by a guy from the Lantern Project down in England. The guy who contacted me was the founder of the project. He put me in contact with INCAS. I spoke to them on the phone and they helped me get some of my records. That's the only time I have made an attempt to get my records.
127. I didn't expect to get any records at all. I was surprised I got anything. The Order must have transferred my records to Bolton because that's where they sent them from. There is no record, in the records I got, of me breaking my leg or anything else.

**Other information**

128. Part of the thing was that God ordained the Pope, the Pope ordained the cardinals, the cardinals ordained the bishops and the bishops ordained the priests. The priests would say that "God can't be wrong, can he?" The priests thought they couldn't be doing anything wrong because they were appointed by God.
129. In theory, the headmasters in these schools run by religious orders could say "Don't bother me, go and see the cardinal." That cardinal could then say "Don't bother me, go and see the Pope." At that time they could get away with murder.
130. I don't think the Glasgow board or people like that were interested. I understand that they aren't going to be but if these schools were to be set up again they should not be run by religious orders. They should be run by the government. There should be balances and checks that people can look at.
131. I don't know whether the authorities who made these mistakes can be sued or pulled over the hot coals. I don't know whether it is a bit late in the day for people to be put into the jail. What happened in the school in my day wouldn't happen now. There are too many checks and balances. Maybe Britain was prospering too well after the



war and they never thought about these things. They maybe thought they were doing us all a favour. They maybe thought that putting us in an approved school would mean that we would learn to read and write and get a good job. I don't know what they were really thinking at that time.

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

Signed.....  GCD

Dated..... 24 - 8 - 2017 .....