

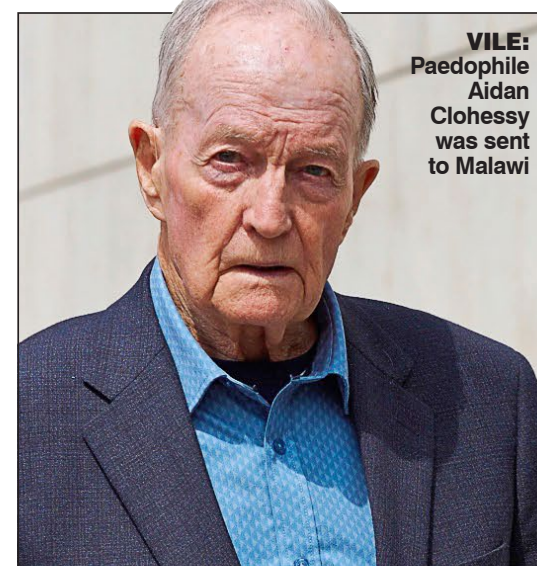


MARILYN'S LAST CLAIM: I have JFK secrets to shock the world

SEE PAGES 34-36

'OGRE' BROTHER ABUSED STREET KIDS IN AFRICA

St John of God, accused of cover up, pays out millions to convicted abuser cleric's victims here and in Malawi



VILE: Paedophile Aidan Clohessy was sent to Malawi

The **IRISH Mail**
ON SUNDAY
EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL INVESTIGATION
PAGES 6,7,8,9,10,11&24

A **LIFELONG** predatory paedophile was left free to prey on children in Africa for decades as his superiors in Ireland covered up his crimes back home, an Irish Mail on Sunday investigation reveals.

Brother Aidan Clohessy, 85, was described by a judge this week as 'an ogre' who 'secretly carried out atrocities' in Ireland while being sentenced to more than five years in prison.

In mitigation, lawyers for the former school principal told Dublin Central Criminal Court that Clohessy led a mission in Malawi

By **Michael O'Farrell**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

to develop 'mental health services'. However, the MoS can reveal that, in the lead-up to his prosecution, Clohessy's superiors in the St John of God order spent more than €3million on settling civil cases.

These cases involve ex-pupils of Clohessy in Dublin and former street children in Malawi in southeastern Africa.

Up to 20 cases from Malawi have

Turn to Page 6 >>

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Br Aidan's mission

► From Page One

been settled and a similar amount are pending. All settlements were made without any admission of liability.

Some of those who received civil compensation from the St John of God order still had to go through the trauma of testifying in court because Clohessy pleaded not guilty.

Clohessy, who was the principal of St Augustine's in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, from the early 1970s until 1993, was jailed for a total of five years and four months this week after he convicted of sexually abusing six Irish boys at the special needs school between 1969 and 1989.

Before Clohessy's trials in Dublin, the MoS travelled to Malawi to speak with victims there, who detailed horrific abuse they suffered at the hands of the now-convicted paedophile.

'Sometimes he raped us, sometimes he played with our private parts, sometimes he

'Someone in Ireland knew he was a risk to us'

beat us,' Stephen Chiumia said.

'Most of the things he was doing, he was doing when we went to the bathroom. He would take us to the bathroom, one after the other.'

Mr Chiumia was one of many street children Clohessy brought to live in his home in Malawi.

At the time, Clohessy's superiors in Ireland were reassuring the authorities here that he had no access to children.

Another alleged victim who lived with Clohessy in Malawi, Makaiko Banda Chimaliro, told the MoS: 'What makes me angry is the fact that someone in Ireland knew that he was a risk to us and they still decided to send him to Malawi to do the same work where he was exposed to more kids.'

'Sometimes I even feel like I would have been better off as a street kid compared to the way I was abused.'

Clohessy remained in Malawi from 1993 until 2012 when he was withdrawn overnight amid a Vatican investigation, called a Canonical inquiry.

The Vatican and Clohessy's order have refused to comment about this inquiry.

No one at St John of God's services in Malawi was told why Clohessy was suddenly recalled without notice.

'There wasn't even a single rumour,' St John of God's then clinical director, Harrison Chilale, told the MoS in 2017.

No effort was made to trace those put at risk in Malawi – until the MoS tracked them down.

The cover-up of Clohessy's past by his order was so successful he was able to lie to international funders, telling them he had never been accused of abuse, securing more than €1m in funding for St John of God's children's projects in Malawi run by Clohessy.

In 2010, Clohessy's work with children in Malawi was the subject of a documentary called *The Warm Heart of Africa* (Croi Te Na hAfraice) which aired on TG4.

'There was a time when everywhere you went you were meeting

'I feel like I was robbed of my future. It hurts me so much...'



By **MICHAEL O'FARRELL**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

EDWARD PHIRI is 37, the father of four young children aged between four and eight.

He lives in a one-room, mud brick home in Mzuzu, Malawi, and supports his family by selling potions in the local market that his wife makes from herbs.

As a child, although Edward had parents, he often slept rough at the bus depot in the centre of Mzuzu.

In 1999, at age 11, Brother Aidan invited Edward home to wash his clothes and bathe.

Then the abuse started.

'He used to wash my penis. Of course I was young. I didn't know what was happening but most of the time when I took my bath he would come and take my penis – touch my penis. Now, as I am mature, I can say he was doing it like masturbation. But I was young, and didn't understand.'

Edward was also physically punished, accused by Brother

Aidan of stealing wine. The abuse and punishment led him to consider suicide.

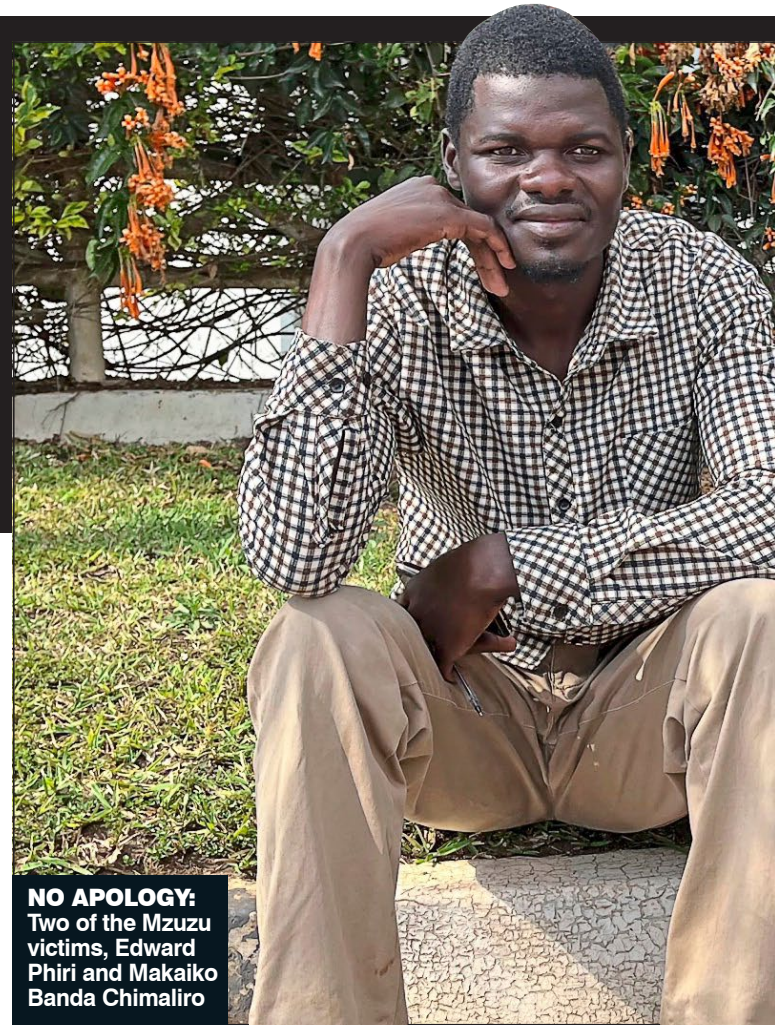
'During my time, I used to even think to hang myself,' he told the MoS.

'I went home and I take strings... I even put strings up in the house to kill myself, but some neighbour passing by took me from those strings.'

Today, despite Edward's experiences with St John of God, he is dedicated to religion, working with a local pastor.

'Brother Aidan, yeah, he was a man of God but you know sometimes the devil uses such people,' he said.

Edward told us he is happy to speak out as he hopes that this will encourage others to come forward. In 2022, Edward sued Brother Aidan and the head of the St John of God order. The order ultimately settled for a life-changing but confidential sum, without admitting liability.



NO APOLOGY: Two of the Mzuzu victims, Edward Phiri and Makaiko Banda Chimaliro

Looking to the future, Edward is planning to buy a farm and a house for his family.

'I think there is hope that somehow, something might change in my life,' he said.

MAKAIKO BANDA CHIMALIRO is a 42-year-old gardener and father of five children aged between eight and 22.

Makaiko and his wife and family live in a shed-like home

made from mud bricks on the outskirts of Mzuzu.

He met Brother Aidan on the streets of Mzuzu in January 1995, when he was 12.

'He was in the company of some black men,' Makaiko told the MoS. 'They approached us, and they said to us that the man worked for St John of God and he wanted to help us – to remove us from the streets because the streets are dangerous and we could easily be killed.'

'We were happy that this

children who were begging.

'You could see that they were suffering,' Clohessy told the programme.

'We decided that St John of God should take leadership. People literally went out onto the streets to identify the children and then they'd invite them to come back to hear their story.'

Even as this programme aired on TV, St John of God was still receiving new abuse complaints about Clohessy from his former Irish pupils at St

JAILED: Convicted paedophile Aidan Clohessy



Augustine's, but these were kept under wraps, and he was left unsupervised to continue living and working with children in Malawi.

Clohessy sought to use his time in Malawi to seek a lower sentence in mitigation. Outlining his role in establishing a mission in Malawi, his barrister Ronan Kennedy told the

court his client 'devoted a lot of his life to serving others'.

'He is a person who has, despite his failings, made some contribution to society,' Mr Kennedy said.

He added that Clohessy lived a 'humble and quiet existence' and still 'lives in service of others' by

'Invite them back to hear their story'

tending to the 11 elderly members of the St John of God order resident in Stillorgan.

Mr Kennedy also sought leniency on the basis that his client had been 'subject to significant adverse publicity in the national media'.

'In many respects he was already condemned and judged in the court of public opinion before he was ever tried in this court,' he said.

Mr Kennedy also pointed to the fact that his client 'didn't stand in the way' of the civil cases being 'dealt with'.

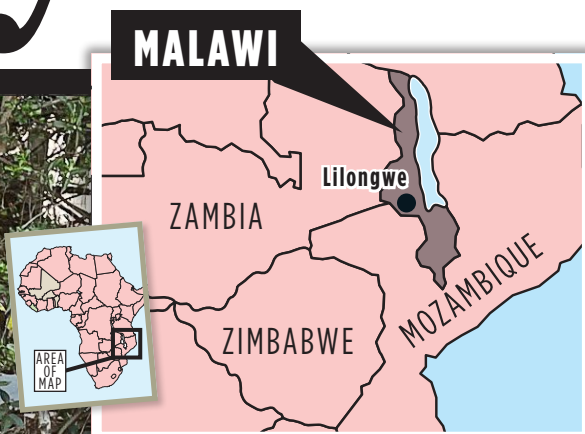
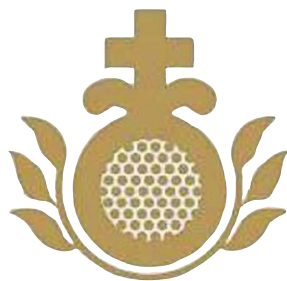
Clohessy, with an address at the Hospitaller Order of St John of God, Granada, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin, was convicted of 19 counts of indecent assault following two back-to-back trials held behind closed doors last month.

At his sentencing hearings this week, Clohessy's barrister told the court his client would not be appealing the verdicts.

Mr Kennedy said this would 'bring some closure' to the victims. But Clohessy has never apologised or expressed any remorse for his actions.

The historical case against the former school principal – one of the oldest to ever be prosecuted in Ireland – followed a near-decade-long campaign by this newspaper. Our investigation, the first part of

to prey in Africa



white man was going to take care of us.'

Makaiko recalled being bathed by Brother Aidan.

He also spoke of beatings: 'If we didn't go to school he would ask you to take off all your clothes and then lie down. Then he would whip you naked.'

Describing other abuse, he added: 'There were two bathrooms in Brother Aidan's yard – outside and in the house. When he tells you to go and bathe in the bathroom in the house, he would come there and

then start having you to help him masturbate.'

Makaiko remembers there were 'about 15' other boys living at Brother Aidan's compound.

He said the boys slept inside Brother Aidan's house but knew not to go inside when there were visitors or until the cook left each evening.

'The cook would leave and then we were able to go into the house at around 7.30... but whenever the cook was in the house, we would never enter the house,' he recalled.

Makaiko said that he is angry at those who sent Brother Aidan to Malawi.

'What makes me angry is the fact that someone in Ireland knew that he was a risk to us, and they still decided to send him to Malawi to do the same work where he was exposed to more kids. That makes me disappointed and angry at the authorities for doing that.'

In 2023, Makaiko sued Brother Aidan and the head of the St John of God order.

The order settled for a life-changing but confidential sum, without admitting liability.

But Makaiko said: 'No matter how much compensation we get, it's not enough because the pain and the hurt goes deep. It's beyond compensation. There is no amount of money that can make up for the shame and the pain that we've gone through.'

JOHN PHIRI is 36 years old and has never had a home or a steady job.

He met Brother Aidan when he was just eight, living at the bus depot in Mzuzu, where street children slept.

He then went to live with Brother Aidan, where at first things were good.

'After four years, he began to treat us badly,' John told the Irish Mail on Sunday.

'He used to abuse us in different ways. He used to touch our buttocks.'

'One day he gave me a soft drink and in two minutes I fell down. I was knocked out. I didn't know what happened for some time.'

'But when I got up I realised my buttocks were hurting.'

'I didn't know what was causing the pain until I went to the toilet. Then I realised something was wrong. The pain lasted for a whole four days.'

John, right, went to hospital, where he was told: 'You've been raped.'

'I couldn't do anything because I was so young and I did not know what to do,' he recalled.

'It hurts me so much. How could a man have sex with me? I feel like I was robbed of my future. It hurts me. Sometimes I even want to kill myself.'

John said he wants those who put him at risk to face justice.

'The fact they knew he was a threat to kids here in Africa shows they are very bad people. What I want to say is I wish they would get arrested. I would be very happy to see that.'

Last year, John sued Brother Aidan and the head of the St John of God order, Donatus Forkan.

The order settled for a life-changing but confidential sum, without admitting liability.

'I will try to start a business, to multiply that money and make life better,' John said.

STEPHEN CHIUMIA is a 33-year-old carpenter from Mzuzu. He was orphaned as a

child and grew up in the streets of the city, moving around daily to find shelter and food.

In 1999, when he was aged 11, he met Brother Aidan.

'Brother Aidan said he could help us,' Stephen told the MoS when we met him in Mzuzu.

'He picked us up and took us to St John of God.'

Stephen then lived in Brother Aidan's walled compound, on the outskirts of Mzuzu, for five years, until he was 16.

Being bathed by Brother Aidan was a routine that took place two or three times a week.

'Sometimes he raped us, sometimes he played with our private parts, sometimes he beat us,' he recalled.

'Most of the things he was doing, he was doing when we went to the bathroom. He would take us to the bathroom, one after the other.'

Stephen, right, and other boys living in Brother Aidan's house felt imprisoned with no escape.

'We could not get out because there was a guard. The guard did not let us get out. His orders were not to let us get out.'

Stephen said he is still affected by the abuse he suffered.

'It hurts me that he did this to me. I can tell you if I met him today, things would not end well.'

In 2024, Stephen sued Brother Aidan and the head of the St John of God order. The order settled for a life-changing but confidential sum, without admitting liability.

But no one apologised, something Stephen mentioned that he would like. Instead, he said, 'They just gave me money'.

which was published in 2018, tracked down new victims in Ireland and spoke with street children in Africa who told us that the brother frequently watched them bathe in a purpose-built shower block.

This coverage prompted more victims to come forward and ultimately led to the successful Garda investigation and State prosecution that concluded this week.

But the jailing of Clohessy is only part of a much wider, international cover-up that can now be told in full for the first time.

During Clohessy's trials, jury members remained ignorant of the cover-up of the risk he posed for decades in Africa by his superiors.

Their actions in keeping a lid on the danger Clohessy posed to children enabled him to remain living with minors in Malawi.

The court was also unaware that, in the lead-up to his trial, St John of

God spent millions settling dozens of civil cases against Clohessy and the order. The cases being taken by Dublin law firm Coleman Legal are unprecedented in that no African abuse victim had ever before sought recompense for abuse in an Irish court.

'I was in shock when I heard about Africa'

These civil cases are also being taken against the leader of St John of God in Ireland, Br Donatus Forkan, who dispatched Clohessy to Africa after he abused children here. He frequently visited Clohessy in Malawi, where he was known widely simply as Br Aidan, as secret settlements were paid out to victims here.

Unusually, Clohessy – whose top

criminal defence team was privately funded – took the stand himself. Clohessy denied each charge, often with two-word answers, delivered with a shrug.

'That's incorrect,' he said repeatedly. 'Didn't happen.'

At times he chuckled as if he found some questions ridiculous, and he was frequently heard humming to himself in court.

This confident performance was in marked contrast to the testimony of victims. Describing the abuse they suffered, they broke down emotionally, cowering from the nearby presence of their tormentor.

One of them, Kildare man Joe

Devine, suffered a panic attack and collapsed to the floor under cross-examination by Clohessy's defence, requiring an ambulance.

The episode delayed proceedings for several days and could have jeopardised the entire trial if the key witness had not been able to resume his evidence.

When the MoS first confronted Clohessy in January 2018 he denied any wrongdoing, although he acknowledged his order had made settlements to his former pupils.

'I don't think anybody is guilty until they're proved guilty,' he said at the time. 'Innocent until proven guilty.'

Now, after decades of silence,

those abused by Clohessy can finally speak freely. They include Wayne Farrell, a former pupil of St Augustine's school in Dublin where Clohessy was principal until he was sent to Malawi in 1993.

'Life will never be the same. The memories are always there, and the damage can never be repaired,' he told the MoS.

Mr Farrell said he was appalled to learn Clohessy had been sent to Malawi after abusing him here.

'I was in shock when I heard about Africa. He's a predator. He picked on weak people. Frail people,' he added.

The St John of God order refused to respond to detailed queries about the number of alleged abuse cases involving Clohessy or how much it has paid out in settlements to victims.

'There is no comment,' a spokesman said.

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HE WOULD SAY, 'SON, NO WORDS'
Overleaf: Chilling testimony of victim

WAYNE FARRELL was sitting at home on the couch when he casually picked up a copy of the Irish Mail on Sunday.

It was January 28, 2018.

Wayne cannot read or write but as he flicked through the pages, a picture of an old man caught his eye. The photo was of Brother Aidan Clohessy. It was then that something in Wayne snapped.

'That's when it happened,' Wayne recalls. 'I just broke down, sitting on the sofa and I threw it [the paper] on the ground.'

Suddenly, Wayne was full of rage. He was crying uncontrollably too.

'What's wrong?' asked his sister Michelle, seeing his distress.

For the first time in his life, Wayne – who was then 44 – told her about St Augustine's.

Wayne was eight when he was transferred there after his First Holy Communion.

Prior to that he'd been attending 'Benincasa School for slow learners' run by the Dominican order in Blackrock, south Dublin.

St Augustine's, on nearby Carysfort Avenue, run by the St John of God order, was a school for the mildly intellectually disabled.

Brother Aidan Clohessy was the school principal at St Augustine's from the early 1970s until 1993.

Within a year of arriving at the school, Wayne was targeted.

The abuse could happen anywhere – at the pool, in the gym and often in the principal's office.

'He was watching all the time. And he'd just stand there, staring. You just knew he was coming for

'You just knew he was coming for you'

you,' Wayne recalls. 'He'd touch me on the shoulder, and I'd look around and he'd say: "Come with me son." You knew you were in trouble then.'

Each day, as he got off the bus at the school gates, Wayne faced a new nightmare.

Walking into the building, he'd watch for any tell-tale sign of trouble from Brother Aidan.

'He'd be standing at the double doors with his hands in his pockets. As soon as he'd seen you, he'd have the comb over the hair, and you f***ing knew you were going to get done that day. You knew it. You would feel it.'

Brother Aidan's office was through the school's main double doors and up the corridor, on the right-hand side.

There was then one step up into the room.

Inside, Wayne remembers a religious statue, a sink, a desk to the left, chairs and a window opposite the door. Through the window, a pond outside was visible.

The first time Brother Aidan called Wayne to his office, he had no idea what was in store.

Removing a key from his pocket, Brother Aidan locked the door from the inside and returned the key to his trousers.

No escape was possible.

Then it began.

'Take off your clothes,' Brother Aidan ordered.

At first, Wayne refused.

'No.'

Then Brother Aidan reached for his cane and drew his belt from around his waist.

'What do you want?' he asked,

He would put his arm on my shoulder and say, 'Son, no words'



By **MICHAEL O'FARRELL**
INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

threatening Wayne with a beating, a frequent occurrence for students at St Augustine's.

'I don't want anything,' answered Wayne, confused.

Brother Aidan grabbed Wayne by the ear and lifted him up.

'Son, you listen and do what I tell you,' he warned.

Eventually, Wayne gave in.

'I stripped off and he sat in front of me naked. He came around behind me. He would always put his arm on my shoulder, and he'd say: "Son, no words." Then he started rubbing his penis up and down me backside.'

Over the years that phrase – 'son, no words' – was replaced with a menacing gesture that haunts Wayne to this day.

Every time Brother Aidan placed his forefinger over his lips in a shushing motion, Wayne knew what was about to happen.

He still remembers the gold ring on Brother Aidan's hand, with an embedded red gemstone, and the way he kept twisting it.

Once, Wayne ran for the window to escape. But it was hopeless.

'I tried to get out of it one day because he had me naked. He gave

me such a whack that I just [fell over] backwards.'

Wayne travelled to school on the bus, but sometimes he'd be called to the office after school. When that happened, he'd miss the bus and have to walk home afterwards.

The walk, down Carysfort Avenue into Blackrock and back to Dún Laoghaire, took an hour.

'It was eating away at me all the time'

'In winter it was horrible,' he recalls, breaking into tears.

After several years, Wayne's mother pulled him from St Augustine's. She never said why. She must have seen the bruises from the beatings. She couldn't possibly have imagined the rest.

Wayne never spoke about the abuse until 2018 when he saw this newspaper, when he finally opened up to his sister.

Wayne's dream was to be a fireman or a policeman, but he'd never learned to read or

write in St Augustine's. Just how to be afraid.

He was a champion swimmer, though, and from the age of 18 he volunteered with the Dún Laoghaire lifeboat crew.

Wayne would go on to save many lives and win bravery awards for dramatic and selfless rescues at sea. He also often worked as a diver, recovering submerged bodies for the emergency services.

But since he suffered three minor strokes in recent years,

Wayne has been unable to volunteer any more. His beloved daily swims in Dublin Bay have ceased.

For work, Wayne served time on fishing trawlers, helped at a funeral home and even had a stint as a Dublin Bus driver on the famous 46A route.

He always tried to keep busy, to run ahead of the memories that chased him. But it never worked.

'I tried to put it behind me, but it was eating away at me all the time... When

COMING FORWARD: Joe and Sally Devine in 2018 and, below, Joe's story as told with the help of the MoS





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

'I JUST BROKE DOWN AND THREW THE PAPER ON THE GROUND'

The photo of accused abuser Brother Aidan Clohessy that Wayne Farrell spotted in the Irish Mail on Sunday on January 28, 2018. The image unearthed memories of his abuse at the hands of Brother Aidan while Mr Farrell was a student at St Augustine's school, where Clohessy had been principal from the early 1970s until 1993. Mr Farrell was targeted within a year of arriving at the age of eight.

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

JUSTICE AT LAST: Wayne Farrell finally had the chance to tell the court this week what Brother Aidan had done to him

ran a now-closed compensation scheme.

But he doesn't care. For Wayne it was never about the money. He only ever wanted justice for what Brother Aidan did to him.

'He has stolen everything I wanted in life,' he told the MoS in the days before Brother Aidan's trial began this month. 'I want justice done. I hope justice is done.'

'I'm not afraid of him. I'm a big guy now. What he did is a crime – if I did what he did, I'd be in jail. So what's the difference with him?'

'I want to go into court. I want to be there to tell the judge what he's done. That's all I want, for him to get put away, even for a month, because at the moment, he's walking around. I want that f***er in jail. I don't care if he's 101. I'll wheel him to jail. I'll put him in a wheelchair to jail.'

This week Wayne finally got his wish as his abuser, now 85, was convicted of 19 counts of indecent assault following two separate trials at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court last month, and sentenced to a total of five years and four months in prison.

But the trial almost never happened, and Wayne was very nearly not involved in it.

Numerous victims from St Augustine's came forward to the Redress Board two decades ago and their cases were settled in secret.

No prosecution resulted, and Brother Aidan remained free.

Then in 2018, the Irish Mail on Sunday tracked down former St Augustine's pupils who had never

been before the Redress Board and published their statements. A week after he saw Brother Aidan's face in that newspaper coverage, Wayne walked up to the counter in his local Garda station.

'I want to report an incident of sexual assault that happened at school,' he told the officer at the front desk.

'When did it happen?' he was asked by the garda.

'When I was young,' he answered. 'I was sexually assaulted in school – what do I do?'

Through the hatch, Wayne was asked to provide his name and number on a blank sheet of paper.

'I'll arrange for you to come in,' he was told. 'We'll be in touch.'

Wayne walked back out the door

'I don't socialise really because I fear people'

that day thinking that he'd made a giant personal leap. But nothing ever happened. No one called. The bravery he had shown in coming forward, after years of silence and shame, had all been for nothing.

'I felt I was getting somewhere but I was let down by the State again,' he says.

Five years later, in 2022, Wayne called this reporter for the first time. He had nowhere left to turn.

The day after his call, I sat down with Wayne on a bench at Bulloch Harbour, overlooking Dublin Bay, and he told me his story.

The harbour, where his family run a small lobster business, is a special place for Wayne.

'I come down here out of the way of everyone,' he says. 'I don't socialise, really, because I fear people. I'm down here out of the way of everything.'

Aidan Clohessy had, at this point, been charged with the abuse of the other St Augustine's pupils that our 2018 investigation had been able to track down. But the Garda team responsible were unaware of Wayne – despite his visit to his local station to report his abuse, years beforehand.

That was corrected only when we provided Wayne with the details of the team that was prosecuting Brother Aidan.

This week, after many let-downs and many years, Wayne finally got his chance to tell the court what Brother Aidan did to him and to see his abuser get justice.

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you get time to think about these things it just comes back. It never goes,' he says.

Meanwhile, Wayne never felt he could tell anyone.

'Imagine going home to your friends or relatives to tell them that had happened to you. Then days they wouldn't believe you because of the Catholic religion. That was God. And that was it.'

At night, he medicates to keep the memories and emotions at bay.

'I take sleeping tablets at night-

time to make me sleep because I wake up so angry. If I knew where he was, I'd go after him.'

Today, Wayne feels let down by

'He stole everything I wanted in life'

the State authorities responsible for St Augustine's.

'When I was young, I was in the

care of the State because I'm a slow learner. I was f***ing abused under their watch.

'I'd love to meet the Minister for Justice and say it to them – how do you think I feel? Has it ever happened to you? Yet you let him [Brother Aidan] walk around.'

Unable to read or write, Wayne never even knew that the Redress Board existed.

Set up in 2002 in the wake of the Ryan Commission into abuse at religious-run schools, the board

asked her husband of many years.

'It was the shame,' Joe told her.

'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 almost torn them apart – was at last becoming clear.

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

'Do you remember our shed was burgled?' she asked him. '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. She explained to him that 'the shame is not yours. You did nothing wrong'.

Joe understood and, with the help of this newspaper, he made a statement to gardaí.

This week, Joe saw his childhood tormentor jailed for abusing him and others.

Among them were Patsy Carville and Wayne Farrell – both of whom also came forward for the first time after seeing the newspaper that day.

You were a child, the shame is not yours

By Michael O'Farrell

FOR 35 years – until he saw the front page of the newspaper on January 21, 2018 – Joe Devine never told anyone about being abused.

Joe cannot read but he knew what the story in the Irish Mail on Sunday was about.

'That's Brother Aidan,' he told his wife Sally as he broke down.

'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 that he had long been shouldering.

'Why didn't you tell me?' Sally



BREAKING 35-YEAR SILENCE ON ABUSE

After seeing our John of God story husband reveals to us that h

Irish Mail ON SUNDAY
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION



From Br Aidan to Br D

1969

AGED 30, Br Aidan Clohessy is assigned to St Augustine's School for intellectually disabled boys.

1969 - 1971

ON an unknown date during these years, Patsy Carville, a pupil who lives at the school, is sexually assaulted by Clohessy in a gym store room.

1972

CLOHESSY, who becomes known by pupils as Br Aidan, becomes principal of St Augustine's.

1973 - 1989

ON various dates between these years, Clohessy sexually assaults five other pupils including Joe Devine, Gerry Quinn and Wayne Farrell.

1985

THE St John of God (SJoG) order receives its first child sex abuse complaint about Clohessy. It is disregarded and not referred to gardaí. He continues to abuse.

1991

THE SJoG order implements its first ever code for dealing with abuse allegations. It stipulates that anyone accused of abuse should be suspended or assigned duties that 'remove him from other children or clients' pending an investigation.

1993

CLOHESSY takes a five-year 'career break' and is dispatched to Malawi by then Irish Provincial, Br Donatus Forkan.

1994

IN Rome Br Forkan is elected a general councillor of the order, making him one of the five most senior members globally.

1995

MAKAIKO Chimaliro, a 12-year-old homeless child in Mzuzu, Malawi, is taken from the streets by Br Aidan to live in his home. He is routinely sexually abused.

1997

BACK in Ireland, Clohessy's order receives a second abuse complaint against him relating to St Augustine's. Then-Provincial Br Fintan Whitmore forbids Clohessy from having any contact with children in Malawi. This instruction is ignored and never enforced. Meanwhile, in Mzuzu, John Phiri, an eight-year-old living on the streets, is taken in by Br Aidan, who later begins abusing John when he turns 12.

1999

BR AIDAN invites Edward Phiri,

THIS week St John of God brother, former principal at St Augustine's School, Blackrock, and predatory paedophile Br Aidan Clohessy, was sentenced to five years and four months in prison for indecent assault of six minors. The main two witnesses against him came forward due to previous coverage in this newspaper, when we revealed Clohessy's identity, which was previously cloaked as 'Brother D' in a 2015 Safeguarding Report into the order. This week we reveal approx €3m in settlements and fresh victims of abuse in Malawi where, until 2012, Clohessy was revered in the country's third-largest city, Mzuzu, as a righteous man of God. The following timeline details the painstaking, expensive and at times frustrating lengths to which our journalists went to unmask a monster, and to hold to account an order's shocking inaction in the face of mounting allegations, to leave street children in harm's way. These children have now become men and have made numerous sickening allegations, in Irish court documents and to this newspaper, which given the nature of his convictions are very likely to be true but which, in any case, St John of God are in no position to deny.



By **MICHAEL O'FARRELL**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

an 11-year-old sleeping rough at the Mzuzu bus station, to his home. In the same year another street child, Stephen Chiumia, also moves in. Both are routinely abused. Meanwhile, back in Ireland then-taoiseach Bertie Ahern, below, makes an unreserved State apology to all victims of child abuse in publicly funded institutions such as St Augustine's. This paves the way for The Ryan Commission and a compensation scheme, the Redress Board.



2000

IN Rome, Br Forkan is elected First General Councillor – making him the second most powerful member of the St John of God order worldwide.

JUNE 12, 2001

THE Government publishes the legislation to set up the Redress Board. St Augustine's is not, initially, listed as a qualifying institution.

MARCH 28, 2002

THE Redress Board legislation is passed by the Dáil with last-minute changes that include St Augustine's for the first time. Now, anyone abused by Clohessy at St Augustine's can be compensated via the Redress Board in secret. He, meanwhile, remains living with and abusing children in Malawi.

2003

REDRESS Board payments begin to be made in secret to some of those abused by Clohessy at St Augustine's. By now SJoG has received 10 abuse complaints against him directly. These are separate to any unknown number of complaints about him processed in secret by the Redress Board [a number the order still refuses to disclose]. SJoG writes to

Clohessy (in Africa) to tell him 'not to have direct responsibility for programmes attended by children'. This instruction is again ignored and again not enforced. Some of those who received Redress Board compensation make criminal complaints to gardaí. These go nowhere.

JULY 16, 2004

THEN-Irish Provincial Br Fintan Whitmore testifies before the Ryan Commission. He misleads the inquiry by saying his order never received any abuse complaints until 1996, though the first complaint against Clohessy had been received more than a decade earlier in 1985. He also does not mention that he had instructed him to have no contact with children in 1997 while leaving Clohessy responsible for the care of children in Africa regardless. Asked why his order decided to contribute €1m to the Redress Board despite never having had any arrests or prosecutions for abuse, Br Whitmore tells the commission the indemnity provided by the Redress Board was an 'attractive proposition.'

JULY 16, 2006

THE Criminal Justice Act 2006 becomes law, making it a criminal offence for people in authority to recklessly endanger children by knowingly placing them at risk of abuse.

OCTOBER 14, 2006

IN Rome, Br Forkan is elected Prior General of the St John of God order, making him the global leader of the organisation.

OCTOBER 28, 2006

IN an address to the Irish bishops, Pope Benedict, right, focuses on child abuse in the Irish Church. He instructs the bishops to 'establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps



Born with polio and condemned to a life of abuse



EXPOSÉ: The MoS coverage of the case in January 2018, when we exposed 'Brother D' as alleged paedophile Aidan Clohessy

are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected, and above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes'.

2007

IN order to begin receiving funding from German children's charity Kindernothilfe, Br Aidan lies by signing a false declaration to say he has never been accused of child abuse. He goes on to secure more than €1m for the children's services he is overseeing in Mzuzu even though his order has instructed him to have no contact with children.

MAY 20, 2009

THE Ryan Commission report is published. The St John of God order escapes any negative criticism and St Augustine's is not mentioned at all. Clohessy, meanwhile, remains working with children in Africa as a new complaint relating to his time at St Augustine's is received.

2010

CLOHESSY and Br Forkan celebrate their Golden Jubilee together. Br Forkan goes on one of his frequent trips to Malawi, staying in Br Aidan's home. St John of God receives a new abuse complaint about Clohessy. Reacting to the publication of the Murphy Commission of Inquiry report into child abuse in Dublin, Pope Benedict issues a pastoral letter to the people of Ireland demanding 'urgent action' from the Irish Church saying 'a misplaced concern for the reputation of the Church and the avoidance of scandal' has failed to safeguard child abuse victims.

2011

THE St John of God order, continues to receive new complaints against Clohessy, dating back to his time as principal of St Augustine's. After carrying out a 'risk assessment' the order concludes Clohessy represents a 'low risk of physical or sexual abuse' because, according to the order, he is 'not in a position of authority over children'. Yet Br Aidan remains living and working with children in Malawi, where no

one has yet been informed of the allegations against him or the secret settlements made via the Redress Board.

2012

AFTER yet another complaint by a victim who first came forward in 1998, Clohessy is finally withdrawn from public ministry and his access to children restricted. But the reason for his withdrawal is kept secret. No efforts are made to establish if children under his care in Malawi since 1993 were abused. Twenty-seven years after the first 1985 complaint against Clohessy, his order belatedly forwards it to gardaí. The complaint goes nowhere.

2013

THREE more complaints relating to Clohessy's period at St Augustine's are received by his order and a canonical inquiry is commenced by the Vatican. No one in Malawi, where Br Aidan lived and worked with children for 20 years, is informed of the Vatican investigation.

2014

ANOTHER three complaints relating to Clohessy's period at St Augustine's are made. He now faces 20 different sets of allegations from his time at the school. One of the complainants makes a formal garda statement. Clohessy denies any wrongdoing when interviewed by gardaí and the DPP declines to prosecute at that stage.

DECEMBER 2015

AN audit by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) is critical of SJoG's management of the complaints against Clohessy. The audit identifies him only as 'Brother D'. It also does not refer to his presence in Africa for two decades. The audit is welcomed by Br Donatus Forkan (who is Irish Provincial again) as evidence that no member of the



to Prisoner #126787



SCANDAL: Our story about how Clohessy was allowed to keep working with children in Malawi

order has ever been arrested or prosecuted for abuse.

JULY 2016

THE MoS publishes an investigation into €1.6m secret pay top ups to SJoG executives.

APRIL 13, 2017

AS part of our continuing SJoG investigations, we inform Br Whitmore that we intend to report his inaccurate testimony to the Ryan Commission. In response, Br Whitmore and his order claim we have libelled him in our questions: 'Please note that our clients demand that you immediately, unequivocally and in writing, without any pre-conditions of any sort, retract these statements and comments and issue an unequivocal apology in writing to Br Fintan Whitmore, the St John of God Order and St John of God Community Services in default of which we expressly reserve our clients' rights to issue defamation proceedings.'

APRIL 16, 2017

WE publish the story about Br Whitmore's misleading commission testimony. Despite its threat, the order does not sue. Its reaction makes us want to establish the identity of 'Brother D' and track down victims. It quickly becomes clear that Br Aidan Clohessy is Br D. We resolve to prove, and publish, this.

JUNE 22, 2017

WE find and speak with former homeless heroin addict and St Augustine's pupil Con Carroll. He tells how he was abused by Clohessy and how complaints to gardaí were dismissed by the DPP. With his help, we locate four other victims in Ireland.

OCTOBER 2017

WE travel to Malawi and speak with street children Br Aidan was allowed to have control over despite allegations against him.

DECEMBER 2017

WE confront Clohessy in Dublin. 'I don't think anybody is guilty until they're proved guilty,' he tells us. 'Innocent until proven guilty,' he adds.

JANUARY 21, 2018

WE name Br Aidan Clohessy as 'Brother D', an alleged paedophile, and outline the decades-long inaction that allowed him to continue to be in a position of power over children despite the allegations. Joe Devine, a former St Augustine's abuse victim who is unable to read or write, sees a photo of Clohessy on our front page. He and other victims, including Patsy Carville, right, come forward as a result of the coverage. Shortly afterwards a Garda criminal investigation is launched.



AUGUST 2018

POPE Francis visits Ireland and meets child abuse survivors. He tells them priests who abuse children and those who cover up for them are nothing more than 'filth in the toilet'.

JANUARY 4, 2019

CLOHESSY is interviewed voluntarily but under caution by gardaí. He denies abusing Patsy Carville and Joe Devine.

2021

TIRED of waiting for a criminal prosecution, some St Augustine's victims begin to lodge civil cases in the High Court against Clohessy and SJoG. In an unprecedented legal move, Dublin law firm Coleman Legal also launches civil actions in Dublin on behalf of Br Aidan's victims in Malawi. The order will go on to settle these cases privately rather than let the cases be heard in open court.

JUNE 9, 2021

CLOHESSY is interviewed, under caution, about another victim, Michael Duignan, right, who has come forward. Clohessy again denies everything.



JANUARY 24, 2022

ANOTHER St Augustine's victim, Wayne Farrell, contacts the MoS. Despite reporting his abuse to his local Garda station in 2018 when he saw our coverage, his case has been ignored. Now, five years later, we refer him to the garda team prosecuting Clohessy and he becomes the State's lead witness.

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

CLOHESSY is charged with multiple counts of indecent assault relating to four victims from St Augustine's. They include Joe Devine and Patsy Carville, who both came forward after they saw Clohessy's photo in the MoS. His lawyers secure a court gagging order to prevent the charges being reported publicly.

MAY 7, 2022

A CAMPAIGN of intimidation by parties in Malawi loyal to Br Aidan is launched against victims in Mzuzu. Victims are directly threatened with violence and offered cash to withdraw their complaints. In Dublin, St John of God condemns the intimidation.

JUNE 20, 2022

CLOHESSY attends Blackrock Garda Station to be interviewed under caution about Wayne Farrell and Gerry Quinn. He denies everything.

JUNE 25, 2022

THE MoS and other media groups successfully apply to the Dublin Circuit Court to have the gagging order lifted. Clohessy is named in relation to the charges for the first time.

OCTOBER 13, 2022

CLOHESSY is arraigned and a

trial date is set for November 2024 – then over two years away.

NOVEMBER 7, 2022

AN RTÉ Documentary On One: Blackrock Boys is broadcast. It sparks a renewed focus on historical abuse in religious-run schools and a Scoping Inquiry, which includes St Augustine's, is ordered by the Government.

FEBRUARY 21, 2023

CLOHESSY is further charged with fresh counts against two new victims, including Wayne Farrell.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

THE Scoping Inquiry report is published. It confirms 112 allegations of abuse, involving 29 alleged abusers, took place at St Augustine's. Many of the allegations relate to Clohessy. The Government approves a new Commission of Investigation into religious-run schools as recommended by the Scoping Inquiry. In the same week the report is published in Ireland, St John of God's lawyers negotiate settlements with more than a dozen victims in Mzuzu, without admitting any liability.

APRIL-MAY 2025

AFTER repeated adjournments and delays, two separate but back-to-back abuse trials against Clohessy begin at the Courts of Criminal Justice in Dublin. Due to recent changes in the law, he can't be named until convicted. He pleads not guilty, forcing his victims to testify in court even though St John of God has already paid civil settlements to most of them. Jurors remain ignorant of these pre-trial settlements.

MAY 13, 2025

CLOHESSY is found guilty of 10 counts of abusing Gerry Quinn, right, and four counts of abusing Wayne Farrell in the first trial.



MAY 30, 2025

CLOHESSY is found guilty of five additional counts of abuse against four others, including Joe Devine and Patsy Carville, in the second trial.

JUNE 23 & 24, 2025

CLOHESSY is sentenced to four years for abusing Gerry Quinn and Wayne Farrell by Judge Elva Duffy. The next day he is sentenced to a further 16 months for abusing Patsy Carville, Joe Devine, Michael Duignan and one other by Judge Martin Nolan. His total sentence is five years and four months. He informs the court he will not appeal the verdict of either trial. He is sent initially to Mountjoy Prison, where his prison number is 126787.

'NO COMMENT' Page 24

IN 2017 this newspaper, as a tangent to our investigation into St John of God's €1.6m top-up payments scandal, discovered the order had given wrong evidence to the Ryan Commission about when they had received the first allegation of abuse by a member.

While preparing to report this, we contacted the order to offer them the right of reply (as we do with all our stories). Their response was a strongly worded threat and the charge that we had already defamed Br Fintan Whitmore, the former Provincial, in our questions and that if we proceeded to publish our story, they would consider suing.

This was the strongest response St John of God had ever given in a large number of dealings with them in the previous year, including our initial uncovering of the secret top-ups to executives. We checked our reporting, confirmed the information with our sources and published. Then we did what all good news organisations used to be able to do – we asked ourselves a question. Why was SJoG so defensive about this story?

A quick investigation revealed a 2015 Safeguarding Report identifying five still-living individuals, each assigned a letter of the alphabet to conceal his identity. Interestingly, Br Donatus Forkan, the St John of God (SJoG) Irish Provincial, welcomed the report at the time as confirming that no one from the order had been prosecuted for child sex abuse.

A proper reading of the report showed that far and away the most prolific allegations were against 'Br D', the worst member of the quintet. From the details available about the alleged abuse by Br D, it was clear that they were the allegations which Br Fintan Whitmore's wrong testimony most helped to disguise.

This newspaper resolved to confirm and publish Br D's identity if legally possible. Our investigation involved significant resources (again something which, viewed through the prism of eight years, is less available to newspapers today) and commitment to following the evidence wherever it led us.

Quite early on we identified through a basic process of elimination that Br D was very likely Br Aidan Clohessy. To publish his name when he had been neither charged or convicted of a crime was a tall order, but we continued to investigate, discovering some of his victims at St Augustine's School in Blackrock, Dublin, where he had been principal.

Through the bravery of four victims we confirmed that SJoG had made redress settlements with people who said they were sexually abused by him. Our investigation moved to Malawi to interview street children assisted by the SJoG mission, run by Br Aidan Clohessy between 1993 and 2012.

Malawi is a country much like Ireland up until recently, where admitting to being sexually abused carried the burden of stigma. While several people confirmed that Clohessy used to bathe with children in a purpose-built shower block, specific details of molestation were difficult to elicit.

One gentleman admitted that he had been inappropriately touched but, due to defamation laws and his inability to travel here from Africa to testify, his claims had to be glided over in the final version

A St John of God brother was just convicted of child sex abuse. We told them we believe he also abused African street children. They said: 'No comment'

The IRISH Mail
ON SUNDAY
COMMENT

of the story. Before publishing our story in January 2018 we completed the final part of our investigation and approached Clohessy to give him a right to reply.

He confirmed that he was Br D but denied the allegations against him and insisted, rightly, that a person is innocent until proven guilty. The story published in January 2018 was not that Aidan Clohessy was a paedophile; it was that SJoG, in the face of mounting allegations against him, were making settlements with the Redress Board in his name while leaving him in charge of programmes dealing with children in Africa.

That story and photograph of Clohessy had far-reaching effects. It brought forward a number of victims who could neither read or write because they were intellectually disabled and had the misfortune to be abused by Clohessy rather than properly educated.

These brave men went to the gardai with their allegations, starting an investigation that over seven years often seemed interminable. It took four years for Clohessy to be charged with indecent assault and another three for him to stand trial on those charges. He was recently convicted, and this week jailed for more than five years.

BUT in the background at that time, our investigations continued and our coverage included reports of civil settlements made by SJoG not only to victims in Ireland but also in Malawi. Last year we took a second trip to Malawi and spoke to former street children to whom SJoG had made settlements (involving life-changing sums of money) without the order admitting liability. Our reporter Michael

O'Farrell spoke to four victims who were much more explicit about Clohessy's abuse in Africa while his superiors in Dublin did nothing. But because of the trial, we could not yet report these details.

This week, after the first conviction of a SJoG brother for child abuse, this newspaper approached SJoG with explicit details of what his victims said not just to us but, it is understood, in their statement of claim to the Irish courts that forced the SJoG to make settlements rather than have them heard in public.

We asked why the order had failed to protect children in Africa against someone who had so many claims against him and whom they now knew to be a convicted paedophile. The order's response: 'No comment.'

For some reason SJoG believe it's appropriate to welcome an

anonymised report that confirms the existence of allegations, but no prosecutions with a statement of welcome, while treating the first ever conviction with cowardly silence. There are many reasons SJoG may have chosen not to respond, as there are many moving parts to the situation. But at the very least, the order could have expressed regret for what happened to the six victims who this week belatedly received justice from the Irish courts. Or offered to provide counselling to these damaged men. They could have made a statement about their current safeguarding procedures and how they differ from former policies. But they chose not to.

Clohessy, for his part, fought the charges all the way, going so far as to take the stand, which is highly unusual in these trials, to deny the allegations. When, during sentencing, his barrister was asked for mitigating factors, he cited Clohessy's time in Malawi as an example of the good he had done.

He also confirmed he would not be appealing his sentence, meaning the legal process is over. When the judge asked for other mitigating factors, usually an expression of remorse or an apology, Clohessy's lawyer said his instructions extended no further than this.

THIS failure to apologise – and Clohessy's insistence on running a criminal case, forcing his victims to testify, a strain that caused one of them to faint on the stand – was likely the last monstrous act of evil control from a man that a sentencing judge labelled an ogre.

The reality is that paedophilia is a derangement of the mind and Clohessy's lack of remorse must be viewed in that context. The other members of SJoG, an order that does much good around Ireland, need to reflect on that fact.

Clohessy's crimes took place between the late 1960s and early 1990s. SJoG's decision to meet the conviction with silence has been made in the Year of Our Lord 2025. It is not a position that is tenable for an organisation so involved in Irish society and which professes to be a Christian organisation.

It is nearly 20 years since Pope Benedict told the Irish Church to 'establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected, and above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes'. The world is now on to its second Pope since then.

St John of God's silence this week is not a position that is reflective of any empathy for Clohessy's victims, or with the alleged victims of any other abusers within the order's purview.

The Scoping Inquiry into State-funded religious institutions that took place after the RTE programme on Blackrock College suggests 29 abusers and 112 allegations in relation to St Augustine's. While Clohessy accounts for a high proportion of these, it would be silly to think other SJoG abusers will not now also be unmasked.

Regardless, the time for silence in the face of child sex abuse convictions, and credible allegations that they have paid out settlements for, has long since past.