



LARISSA NOLAN

Straight talking...

Child abuse in schools was like a satanic cult

SOME of you may have reacted as I initially did to the horrifying scoping inquiry into sexual abuse at religious schools. I averted my eyes.

I could not read the harrowing and distressing details.

But then I realised, we cannot turn our faces away. We owe it to those who were abused to look, listen and fully comprehend the true scale of the horror.

It is tormenting reading, but how can we say: "Oh, this is too much for me?" Compared to the living hell those children were put through?

This report reveals one of the worst mass atrocities in the modern age and it happened here, in Ireland, on a grand scale as recently as the 1980s and 1990s.

Perpetrated against our most vulnerable, day in, day out, under our noses, in the place kids should be safe.

The government-appointed inquiry into historical abuse revealed a total of 2,400 allegations of sexual abuse and 844 abusers in 300 schools.

There were 590 allegations against 190 abusers in 17 special schools.

Nobody was deemed to be beyond their evil clutches.

A quarter of those abused were

trapped in boarding schools. Little did their parents know they were sending them off like lambs to the slaughter.

The full extent of it was laid out in the testimonies of the 137 survivors, detailed in their own words.

It is depraved. It is like a satanic cult. It is beyond nightmares. It is heartbreaking.

Their abusers dehumanised their victims and went to lengths and insatiable efforts I can only compare to the tactics of the Nazis during the Holocaust.

It was orchestrated evil. I wish I could travel back in time, walk into the classroom and line those priests up and shoot them.

Many reported how the abuse happened in front of the class, with one victim pinned down in front of the other students and raped.

Another said it was "part of what happened in class" while yet another says, "sex abuse was one of the rituals of school life".

If they were not being abused, they were witnessing it happening to a classmate. One said: "He'd get through as



TOUGH READING Irish Mirror story many of us as he could at a time. He abused us in front of each other."

In boarding school settings, one child victim was taken from his bed at night, wrapped in a cloak and gagged and raped. Another spent their first night watching a boy being beaten and raped by two priests.

Others told how the principal knew and often witnessed it: "The principal would open the door, see the abuse taking place, even rape in

progress, and just close the door again."

Another said: "I thought I was going to die" and more told of the physical pain of it that left them unable to make their way home, or having to hide blood-stained blankets.

One referred to the school being run as a paedophile ring. "You wouldn't want to hear what else they did to me. You would wonder about the world."

It has every hallmark of being a paedophile ring, abusers covering for each other, operating freely, in a culture of fear and silence and total control over victims with no voice.

It appears to me that paedophiles were drawn to the job, where they could take their pick of a constant supply of child victims and hide behind the cloth.

It was a safe place for paedophiles in conspiracy, and that's why they chose the job,

Half of them are dead now and most of the other half have been convicted.

But I hope the gardai go after any of them left behind, whatever age they are, and hang them high.



POLICY Michael D Higgins

Irish crisis in housing normalised

HOW long is the housing crisis going on? You'd be amazed, and dismayed, how many of the general public don't actually know at this stage.

For the record, it's been 10 years of kids growing up sleeping on couches in cramped bedsits, or 4,000 of them in emergency accommodation.

It's been a decade of government policy that meant workers couldn't afford to rent or buy and adults living with their parents until they're 35.

What Michael D Higgins called "our great, great, great failure... not a crisis anymore, but a disaster".

But because it has gone on so long the dismissive notion of: "It's always been this way" has taken hold.

Not true. We built social housing for generations. Lots of us grew up in them.

We went so mad on houses during the Celtic Tiger the banks

collapsed, and the state found ways to push up rents so small landlords could pay the banks back.

The Government is doing something about it now the issue has moved up to the middle classes and is affecting their adult children.

I commend Eoin O Broin and Sinn Féin's new policy to solve the housing crisis, but I fear it's now been normalised, a scar on society, and it's too late.

Lar's HERO of the week

SYMBIOSEXUALITY

Researchers at Seattle University have identified a new sexuality - symbiosexuals, who are attracted to couples. Nice one. Sounds like a free pass for everyone.

Lar's ZERO of the week

RAY-BAN AVIATORS

Famous Aviator-wearer Joe Biden has worn them forever as his signature style. But lately, he's killing off the cool of these classic shades.



FANS DECIDE WHAT TO PAY

POLITICIANS are all over the Oasis concert tickets controversy, which hiked prices to €400.

They're calling for a ban on dynamic pricing, which sees costs rise along with a surge in demand.

The same leaders who shut down live music for two years of a lockdown are now the saviours of rock 'n' roll.

They want to control it with new laws, so Fianna Fail is introducing an amendment to the concert sales' Bill to "protect fans".

But fans can protect themselves by refusing to pay €400 for a ticket. Nobody is forcing them to.

Like former Ticketmaster boss Tommy Higgins said: "I can't understand why people lose their minds at this."

The popular idea that

"working class" Oasis are failing their working class fans reveals a lack of knowledge about both class and music.

Talented artists can no longer make money from record sales.

Liam and Noel Gallagher are doing what every successful working class person would rightly do, make the most of an opportunity for profit.



TALENTED Oasis stars Liam and Noel Gallagher