

EXCLUSIVE



Tragic Martha's plans to marry boyfriend after divorce came through

PAGES 8 & 9

30 MORE CLAIMS AGAINST 'OGRE' BROTHER AIDAN

New cases prompt Minister to write to St John of God demanding that child protection measures are met

THE HEAD of the St John of God order is facing mounting pressure to step down as a trustee of seven State-funded special needs schools as 30 more cases of alleged abuse involving serial abuser Brother Aidan Clohessy emerged.

This pressure intensified as Children's Minister Norma Foley, this weekend wrote to St John of God seeking assurances about its safeguarding standards in the wake of decade-long revelations in the Irish Mail on Sunday.

And it comes as more political and public figures added their voices to demands that Br Donatus Forkan, who is at the helm of the order, also face criminal investigation for the reckless endangerment of children.

Sinn Féin and Labour both called on the St John of God provincial to stand aside and for a criminal probe into how the order allowed a lifelong predatory paedophile to prey on vulnerable children.

Concerns about the position of Br For-

EXCLUSIVE

By **Michael O'Farrell**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

kan in State-funded roles of responsibility over children were raised after Clohessy, 85, was jailed in June.

Clohessy – described by the trial judge as 'an ogre' – was jailed for abusing six boys at St Augustine's school for special needs children in Blackrock, Co. Dublin in the 1970s and 1980s.

Following his sentencing, the MoS revealed how Clohessy was free to prey on children in Africa for decades as his superiors in Ireland covered up his crimes at home.

In the aftermath of our coverage, around 30 more victims have come forward in Africa alleging they were abused by Clohessy, in addition to as

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**Fleabag's
Phoebe
looks swell
taking a
stroll in her
denim
dungarees**

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‘Head of the order has to step aside’

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many as 20 civil cases from there that have already been settled.

The St John of God order has privately settled these African cases in the Irish courts without any admission of liability.

Together with recent settlements to Irish victims, the part-taxpayer-funded order has spent more than €3m on civil cases in the past year.

The MoS now understands that, since Clohessy’s imprisonment, further victims have come forward in Malawi, bringing the number of alleged victims seeking recompense there to more than 50. The head of the scandal-plagued order dispatched Clohessy to Malawi in 1993 as part of the cover-up of his fellow cleric’s crimes in Ireland.

While in Africa, Br Clohessy remained free to abuse further vulnerable children until he was withdrawn in 2012 amid a Canonical Inquiry. Ever since, the Vatican have remained silent on the outcome of this investigation and no one in Malawi was ever told why Clohessy was withdrawn.

In the past month, the Vatican has continued this policy of silence despite repeated requests from the MoS to answer questions about the cover up of Clohessy’s abuse in Africa.

Meanwhile at home, further criminal

‘I’m surprised Gardai haven’t investigated yet’

complaints from former St Augustine’s pupils against Clohessy are also being considered by the Director of Prosecutions, though no new charges have yet been filed.

Despite his role in the cover-up of Clohessy’s abuse, Br Forkan remains at the helm of the order. In this capacity, he is a trustee on the board of a charitable company called the St John of God Hospitaller Services Group.

This is the parent company to St John of God Community Services Ltd, which receives more than €200m annually from the HSE to provide services to intellectually disabled children and adults throughout the State.

In their role as trustees of the wider St John of God group, Br Forkan and his fellow trustees exercise considerable control over State-funded resources.

They retain the power to appoint the CEO of St John of God Community Services Ltd and exert considerable influence over the ethos and management of the organisation.

However, pressure is growing for Br Forkan to stand aside as his order is rocked by dozens of more alleged abuse cases. Ms Foley has written to St John of Community Services in the wake of ongoing MoS investigations into the abuse scandal and its cover-up.

It is understood the minister’s letter acknowledges the work St John of God does to support children and adolescents with intellectual disability and seeks confirmation from St John of God Community Services that all the necessary child protection measures under the Children First Act 2015 are being complied with and implemented. Ms Foley has also sought assur-

ances that all the necessary child protection measures are in place in the parent company, St John of God Hospitaller Services Group, and that all individuals at all levels of the organisation are in compliance.

Br Forkan is a trustee of seven publicly-funded primary schools run by his order.

In Dublin, these include St Augustine’s in Blackrock; the Carmona Special School in Dún Laoghaire; the St John of God School, Islandbridge; and St Peter’s school in Rathgar.

Other schools of which Br Forkan is a trustee include; St Mary’s Special School in Drumcar, Co. Louth;

St Raphael’s school in Celbridge, Co. Kildare; and St Francis Special School in Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Several public figures, including former HSE board member and Barnardos CEO Fergus Finlay, have called for Br Forkan to be removed from any publicly funded role and demanded he be investigated for recklessly endangering children.

So too has Kindernothilfe (KNH), the German children’s charity that funds St John of God’s operations in Malawi.

The charity told the MoS: ‘With regard to Brother Donatus, it is in our view now urgent that an independent and transparent review of all related events be conducted. ‘Individuals who held central

INSTITUTIONS’ SILENCE FURTHER DAMAGES VICTIMS OF ABUSE

THE manner in which religious organisations close ranks to protect themselves when abuse scandals emerge only serves to further damage victims, according to consultant psychiatrist Paul Moran, who works within the St John of God group.

‘Where it has become clear that terrible abuse has happened, the responsible organisations,

by their silence, is further damaging the victim,’ he told the Irish Mail on Sunday.

At considerable risk to his own career, Mr Moran has continued to criticise the approach of the St John of God order, saying the head of the order, Br Donatus Forkan, should step down until an investigation into his role in facilitating abuse cover-ups is conducted.

‘From my experience, the harm caused by the abuse is exacerbated by the social response of the important people, and that could be in a family setting, or it could be in the wider community or society,’ Mr Moran said.

‘The sense of exclusion and rejection experienced by the abused person, on top of being abused, compounds the damage of the abuse.’



PREY: Edward Phiri, who was abused by paedophile Clohessy, with his family in Malawi and, below, fellow victim Makaiko Chimaliro, on right



PREDATOR: Aidan Clohessy was jailed in June for abusing six boys

IN 2005, as founder and executive director of the One In Four charity, I worked to secure a recommendation from the Ferns Inquiry that those who recklessly endanger children should face criminal sanction.

The 2006 Criminal Justice Act made that a crime — yet no one has ever been prosecuted for it.

We fought for this law to ensure accountability for those who wilfully concealed allegations or knowledge of child sexual abuse and enabled further abuse.

It was meant to criminalise conduct like that of St John of God in its handling of convicted paedophile Br Aidan Clohessy.

The cover-up in Clohessy’s case allowed him to keep abusing in Africa.

It is clear Br Donatus Forkan – the head of the St John of God order – bears significant responsibility for allowing Clohessy access to enormously vulnerable children for many years, despite extensive knowledge of multiple credible allegations of child sexual abuse. Clohessy continued to abuse with effective impunity.

Forkan and other Church leaders must be held accountable. First and foremost, he is not a fit person to serve on the board of any organisation with responsibility for children or vulnerable adults.

You don’t need a Garda investigation to prove it – although that should happen. There are only two possibilities: either Forkan was unaware of the abuse, which would be gross negligence given the information available, or he knew and actively covered it up. Either is grounds for resignation.

This is not ‘just another abuse story’.

You may think you’ve heard it all before, but what has never been acknowledged by the Vatican, or understood by wider society, is that the cover-up was wilful, deliberate and directed from the highest levels of the Church. It wasn’t the result of a few incompetent leaders making bad calls or doing bad things. It was the result of deliberate and systematic policy mandated by the Vatican and underpinned by Church law. The first complaints

Cover-up was mandated, required and directed by the Vatican



By **COLM O’GORMAN**

against Clohessy were made in 1985. Yet he remained in a senior position in Malawi until 2012.

The Church acted only then to remove him and launch a Canonical Inquiry – a full 27 years later. It is not credible that they knew nothing until 2012. Under Church law, the Vatican has had exclusive authority over such cases for decades.

This was not mere negligence or a tragic

oversight. It was a deliberate, sustained cover-up that protected a known abuser and gave him extraordinary access to some of the most vulnerable children on the planet. It demands accountability — starting with the removal of everyone who facilitated Clohessy’s crimes from any position of responsibility involving children or vulnerable adults. But it must go further.

Br Forkan is responsible for his leadership role and the decisions he made, but many others above and around him share equal responsibility. They too must be held to account.

The facts are clear and well established: this cover-up was mandated, required and directed by the Vatican. It was wilful, deliberate, forceful, systemic and global. This case is a stark example of that reality.

It is staggering that no one in the Church ever sought to check whether Clohessy continued to abuse in Africa even after they removed him in 2012 – until the Irish Mail on Sunday did. Nor did they make any apparent effort to identify and support his victims there.

Why? Because they simply did not care

‘This was a cover-up that protected a known abuser’

enough to do so. This is an organisation that knowingly placed a man with multiple allegations of child sexual abuse in a position of immense authority over vulnerable children. If they cared a jot for those children’s safety, why would they do that?

The answer is they didn’t. They left him in place until the risk of scandal became too great, then removed him quietly – concerned only with protecting their power, position, authority, reputation and money.

It’s not complicated. They sent Clohessy to Malawi and allowed him access to children because they did not care enough about those children.

They removed him when it served their interests, without regard for his many victims there. Because they did not care.

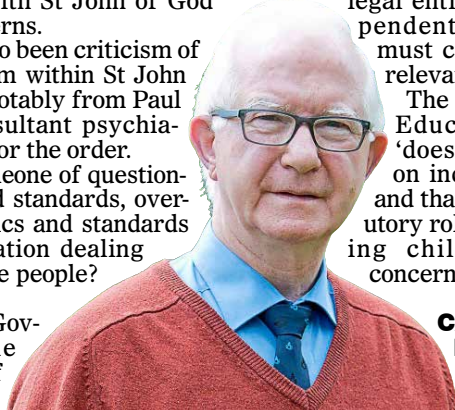
■ Colm O’Gorman is a former executive director of Amnesty International Ireland and the founder of One In Four.

responsibilities and may have knowingly contributed to the endangerment of children should not be allowed to assume further leadership roles in child-related institutions – whether they are still active or have already left.’

KNH also confirmed it is engaging directly with St John of God about its concerns. There has also been criticism of Br Forkan from within St John of God, most notably from Paul Moran, a consultant psychiatrist working for the order.

He said: ‘Someone of questionable ethics and standards, overseeing the ethics and standards of an organisation dealing with vulnerable people? Can’t be right.’

To date, the Government, the departments of Health and



CALLS: Donatus Forkan, of the St John of God order.

of abuse’. However, Labour justice spokesman Alan Kelly told the MoS: ‘It’s quite clear this all needs to be investigated. I’m surprised that An Garda Síochána haven’t investigated this yet. I would hope that will transpire in the near future.

‘Many very established people have said this person should stand aside from the provision of services, and that is something I fundamentally agree with.’

The Tipperary North TD said he intends to raise the matter in the Dáil when it returns from the summer recess.

The former Labour leader also encouraged the board of management of the schools under the trusteeship of Br Forkan to ‘look at their roles’.

Sinn Féin education spokesman Darren O’Rourke also called for ‘a criminal investigation into these extremely serious revelations’.

The Meath East TD said: ‘Donatus Forkan should step down or should be removed from those positions. He cannot be allowed continue in roles where children and vulnerable adults are involved, or which are in receipt of State funding, through the HSE, the

Department of Health, the Department of Education and Youth, or elsewhere.’

He added: ‘We cannot have deflection, delay, evasion or silence in this regard. History should have taught us that well enough. We cannot have it repeat itself. There must be accountability.’

The Irish Catholic Bishops Conference did not engage with queries relating to the St John of God abuse revelations. A spokesman would only say the Conference has no role in overseeing religious orders.

The St John of God order also said it had no comment to make in response to the latest abuse allegations made against Br Clohessy.

The communal body representing religious orders, the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland, also declined to comment.

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‘YOU DIDN’T KNOW WHAT WAS COMING’ Pages 6 and 7



The Irish Mail ON SUNDAY SPECIAL INVESTIGATION



By **MICHAEL O'FARRELL**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

JOHN LEACY will never forget the nights that he spent lying in his bed as a child, listening for the approaching footsteps of Br Aidan Clohessy.

'It would put the hair up on your back. That's the way it was,' he recalls.

When they came, the footsteps would move up the stairs to the landing, pause and then continue, heading into the nearby bathroom.

Listening in the darkness, John would hear the taps in the bathroom running as Br Aidan prepared himself for what was to come.

Beneath his blanket, John never knew until the footsteps approached his own bedroom door whether it would be his turn – or if he'd be lucky that night.

'You never had a sleep,' the now 66-year-old Co. Wexford man told the Irish Mail on Sunday this week.

'You couldn't settle... you didn't know what time he would come'

'You could never settle down in your bed because you didn't know what time he was going to come to you.'

Often – twice a week at times – as John held his breath, it was his door the steps would come to.

Then he knew it was his turn.

'He'd tip you on the head and he would say, "You come with me now."

'He'd get you out of bed and bring you downstairs. He'd be in his jocks.'

Downstairs, Br Aidan would pull John's night clothes off, and the abuse would begin.

'He pulled the pyjamas off me many times. Many, many times...'

Other boys knew about the abuse but no one spoke about it openly.

'How'd you get on with him last night?' was as close as anyone might come to acknowledging the terror that they all lived with.

It was a question no one ever answered straight.

John is the eldest of five children. Because he was a slow learner, he was sent to St Augustine's special school in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, in September 1970 at the age of 13.

He is sure of that date because it was the same month his grandfather – whom he simply called Pa – died.

Pa had never wanted for his grandson to be sent to attend St Augustine's.

But when his grandfather died, John's fate was sealed.

'We went up in a little Mini. My uncle drove the car and my father came and my mother came.'

When they got there, one of the St John of God brothers brought John out to see the playing fields as his parents slipped away.

I remember I looked around and my parents were gone. I never said goodbye to them. I started crying then.'

He soon came to the attention of the feared school principal. And after some time – perhaps months later – Br Aidan began to abuse the vulnerable boy.

'He'd bring you over by the hands. You'd have your pyjamas on you and he'd pull you across him... He'd beat you on the arse and start rubbing you. He'd say, "open up your legs."

'You'd be terrified, you know. You'd be all tensed up. He'd be at you there for a good 10 minutes.

'You'd be roaring your head off.

You'd be crying. You didn't know what was coming. You'd be saying to him: "Stop, stop, stop."

Another assault occurred in the school library after John broke into a storeroom with another pupil and stole bottles of Guinness.

'At the end of the table he stripped me naked. He stripped all the clothes off me, trousers and all, down to the bare arse and spread me legs out... He used the belt now that time.'

Another brother was present in

the room at the time, but he said and did nothing.

'They were afraid of him,' recalls John. 'He was the head man there at that time.'

'[Br Clohessy] was the law. He was like Hitler. No one ever stopped him. Never.'

John was due to go home that weekend but couldn't because of the injuries to his body.

'Me parents would have seen the state I was in.'

As a boarder, John only went

home for Christmas and during school holidays.

After each trip home, he would hide to try to avoid being sent back to St Augustine's.

'When I was going back to school, I used to hide my bags and run away. I'd plead with my mother not to go back to school. I didn't want to go back.

'I said: "Mommy, I'm not going back, I'm just not going back."

'People around the area would come to see you to say, "John, go

back. For your mother's sake. You'll get on all right." You cried the whole way back on the bus.'

With no other choice, John simply endured what he had to.

'I got strong in the place. I got to hate him and grew harder.

You just get hard then. Strong, tough in your ways because you had to face this for another three or four months, you know.'

When he got older John was moved into a house that had a front door which opened directly onto

Carysfort Avenue. Pupils at St Augustine's referred to it as 'the big house'.

Br Aidan had a room there too. It was in this house – long since demolished – that John would again lie awake at night, listening for the approaching footsteps.

'That's where I got the heavy going with him,' is how John describes this period.

Then, one night after being brought downstairs, John said he simply snapped.

They mean his plight and the abuse he suffered will not be ignored.

The first time John realised there was a chance of justice was when he saw an RTE report of Clohessy being charged, on the TV news on October 13, 2022.

The next day, John bought

a copy of the Irish Daily Star and found a story about the case.

Cut out and neatly folded, that original article remains in his wallet to this day.

Although it is now yellowed and brittle, it rests between his cash and photographs of

grandchildren, some of whom he's never seen.

'Principal faces trial and sex charges,' reads the headline.

Asked why he keeps the tattered cutting, John simply replies: 'To look at it... That is something I'll always keep.'

forever



TREASURED: The front pages of the Irish Mail on Sunday issues from June 29, above, and July 6, right, that John displayed in his kitchen



Naked and terrified, he lunged at Br Aidan, knocking him off his chair backwards.

John then made a run for the house's front door and burst out into Carysfort Avenue.

'I had nothing on me at all. I had no underpants or anything on me. I went out the front door. I'll never forget it.'

Br Aidan coaxed him back inside, and, all this happened in the middle of the night, no one was about. No one saw a thing.

But after that, Br Aidan didn't come to John's door anymore.

At the age of 17, John left St Augustine's and he got a job in Wexford in gardening, then going on to excel in the building trade.

He worked hard. But he drank hard too.

'I went to drink – heavy drinking. I was drinking 20 pints a day.'

With a now-estranged partner, he

had five children. But he wasn't right. 'I was never myself, like. I had so much built up inside... I had no love to give, the way that I was.'

He had no love for himself either. 'I went about committing suicide. I had the rope around my neck.'

But his daughter walked into the garage and saw him: 'She started crying. She saved my life, really.'

That was 12 or 13 years ago.

He began to get help, but the drinking continued. Eventually, in 2022 it nearly killed him as he was

hospitalised in a coma for months.

Sober for the first time and recovering in bed at home, he was dumbfounded when he saw Br Aidan's face on the television news.

'I said, "You bastard. You're back in Ireland."

It was October 2022, and Clohessy had just been charged with abusing others at St Augustine's – a crime he is now in prison for.

Until that moment, John thought his abuser was dead.

Towards the end of her life, when

his mother finally began to believe him, she asked John to complain to the local priest. But thinking his tormentor was dead, he told her: 'No, it's too late now.'

In earlier years – during his adult life – John even went as far as seeking Clohessy out at St Augustine's to confront him.

'I remember I met a man. He was actually a caretaker in the school at the time. "Oh," says he, "Br Aidan is gone out of here. He's gone to Africa."

John asked the caretaker if Clohessy would be coming back.

'No,' he was told. 'He'll never be coming back here.'

John immediately thought of the children that Br Aidan would inevitably be coming into contact with in Africa.

'It was a disgrace what they [St John of God] did there – sending a man in that condition to do more damage out there.

'I was a strong enough fella and it still near put me in a mental home.

'I thought, "God love those children out in Africa." I did. He wasn't going to change.

'But at that time, you could go no place. The guards wouldn't look at it. It wasn't talked about.'

After seeing Br Aidan on the news, John contacted the Wexford Rape Crisis Centre.

'They were very good to me. I'm with them ever since.'

Soon he was meeting with the same Garda team that have successfully prosecuted Clohessy.

'I thought, "God love those children in Africa"'

But now, nearly three years later, there has still been no decision from the DPP.

John did not even know that his childhood tormentor had gone on trial: 'I didn't know that the case was going on.'

Then, a garda detective friend of John's from Cork rang and told him Clohessy was in jail.

'Jaysus, to tell you the truth, I felt a new man.'

John wants the same thing every other victim of Br Aidan Clohessy wants – justice.

He said that he was initially too embarrassed to talk about the abuse he suffered: 'I was like a f***ing victim' – but now I don't give a damn.'

Being from Wexford, John knows all about the scandal of Fr Sean Fortune, which resulted in the Ferns Inquiry.

In that instance, Fr Fortune was moved around by his superiors – who included Bishop Brendan Comiskey – and was subsequently left free to abuse others.

To John's mind, there is little difference between people like Bishop Comiskey and those who were responsible for sending Br Aidan to Africa.

Ultimately, Bishop Comiskey resigned in 2002 following the airing of the BBC documentary Suing the Pope.

John believes that Donatus Forkan – the head of the St John of God order and the person who had sent Br Aidan to serve in Malawi – should also resign.

'What went on there was a big cover up, the same as the bishops. The man [Donatus Forkan] shouldn't still be there. Sure, it's the same as Brendan Comiskey.'

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Board chairman of SJoG charity is also the head of Tusla's audit and risk panel

Calls to stand down from State role after Order's inaction on abuse



By **Michael O'Farrell**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

THE chair of the main publicly-funded charity run by St John of God – the order at the centre of damning abuse allegations involving dozens of children in Ireland and Africa – is also a key board member of the State agency responsible for protecting vulnerable minors.

The revelation has sparked calls for Charles Watchorn – a private sector finance executive who is the chair of St John of God Community Services (SJOG CS), having been a director since 2018 –

'He should act now to address those concerns'

to stand down from the board of Tusla.

Former HSE board member and CEO of the children's charity Barnardos, Fergus Finlay said that, in light of damning revelations of abuse perpetrated by jailed serial paedophile Brother Aidan Clohessy, Mr Watchorn should have 'no involvement whatsoever with the statutory agency that is responsible for the protection of children'.

Mr Finlay was speaking in the wake of a near-decade long investigation by the Irish Mail on Sunday into an international child abuse cover-up by the St John of God order.

Describing his role on his LinkedIn profile, Mr Watchorn speaks of bringing 'expertise in financial management and corporate governance' to the charity that 'guides our strategic direction and operational efficiency'. He also speaks of the importance of 'integrity' and 'compliance' with regulatory rules.

The profile reads: 'My leadership extends to championing change and fostering a culture of accountability with the primary goal of enhancing the experience of our service users and ensuring the ethos of Saint John of God will be continually nurtured throughout the organisation.'

Mr Watchorn has also been a board member of Tusla since 2020, where he is chair of the agency's Audit and Risk Committee.

According to Mr Finlay, membership of both boards is untenable, given the reported safeguarding concerns about the St John of God order.

He also said the head of the order, Br Donatus Forkan, 'has really serious questions to answer about the protection of a child abuser and therefore about reckless endangerment.'

The former Labour Party advisor told the MoS: 'If Charles Watchorn knows Br Forkan, and if he knows the role Br Forkan has allegedly played, then he has no place having any involvement whatsoever with the statutory agency that is responsible for the protection of children.'

The founder of abuse charity One in Four, former Amnesty International Ireland executive director Colm O'Gorman, added: 'Given his role on the board of Tusla, and the fact that he chairs its Audit and Risk Committee, it is difficult to

imagine that Mr Watchorn is not alive to the significant issues which arise from how the order and Br Forkan managed complaints or suspicions of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Aidan Clohessy.'

'In that context, I would expect that Mr Watchorn would act to immediately address those concerns, including the issue of Br Forkan's ongoing role in governance.'

Mr Watchorn did not respond personally to several attempts to contact him this week, via registered post, as well as emails via St John of God and Tusla.

Tusla also would not comment on concerns raised about Mr Watchorn's dual role.

As part of the cov-

COVER-UP: Clohessy and order head Br Forkan

30 MORE CLAIMS AGAINST 'OGRE' BROTHER AIDAN

REVELATIONS: MoS reported last week on more claims against Clohessy

er-up of Br Aidan Clohessy's crimes, the predatory paedophile was dispatched to Malawi as the St John of God order secretly settled cases back home. Meanwhile, Clohessy, now 85, was left free to continue abusing in Africa for decades.

Our reporting contributed to the recent prosecution of Clohessy, who was branded an 'ogre' by the judge who imprisoned him.

It has also sparked calls for the head of the St John of God order to step down and be criminally investigated for the reckless endangerment of children.

Aside from Mr Finlay and Mr O'Gorman, Kindernothilfe (KNH) – a leading Christian charity in Germany that funds St John of God's work in Malawi – has also called for Br Forkan to resign.

A KNH spokesperson said last night: 'We want to reiterate that our stance on the importance of independent and transparent investigations in child protection cases, both in general and in this particular case in has not changed. We still believe that an independent review of the roles of Donatus Forkan and other leaders in Br Aidan's presence in Malawi would be the right step.'

Pressure on Br Forkan increased last week after Children's Minister Norma Foley wrote to St John of God seeking assurances about its safeguarding standards.

Sinn Féin education spokesman Darren O'Rourke and Labour justice spokesman Alan Kelly have also called on Br Donatus Forkan to stand aside pending a criminal investigation.

Br Forkan dispatched Clohessy to Malawi in 1993 where he remained for two decades, working and living with children as the order secretly settled abuse claims from Irish victims.

All of the Irish claims relate to Clohessy's time as principal of the order's St Augustine's School for special needs children in Blackrock, south Dublin, during the 1970s and 1980s.

Separately, the order has

also privately settled cases taken by those who allege they were abused by Clohessy in Malawi.

As many of 20 such cases have been settled, without any admissions of liability, over the past year. Since Clohessy was jailed in June, dozens of further claimants have come forward in Malawi. All of the civil cases from African claimants, have been taken against Br Forkan, as well as Clohessy.

The victims claim Br Forkan's actions in sending Clohessy to Malawi – and leaving him there for decades – put them in danger when they were children.

Some of the Malawi victims whose cases have been settled have spoken of their anger at being put at risk.

'What makes me angry is the fact that someone in Ireland knew that he was a risk to us,' Makaiko Banda Chimaliro told the MoS.

'They still decided to send him to Malawi to do the same work where he was exposed to more kids. That

'Issues arise how order managed complaints'

makes me disappointed and angry at the authorities for doing that.'

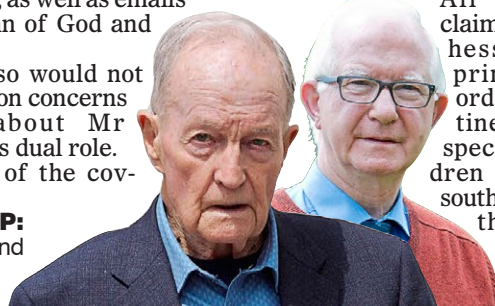
Br Forkan remains on the board of the St John of God Hospitaller Services Group – the parent company that controls the order's operations in Ireland, the UK and Malawi. He exerts considerable control over the order's main Irish charity, St John of God Community Services, which receives more than €200m annually from the State.

These funds are used to care for thousands of vulnerable children and adults with an intellectual disability. A spokesperson for St John of God Community Services said the organisation takes 'their responsibilities on safeguarding very seriously' and has 'robust measures in place to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of those in our care'. The spokesperson did not comment on the dual Tusla and St John of God roles held by Mr Watchorn. However, the charity confirmed it has responded to Ms Foley's letter and 'outlined in detail the stringent measures in place in regard to the Children First Act 2015'. A Tusla spokesperson said: 'When Tusla suspects that a crime has been committed, and a child or children have been wilfully neglected or physically or sexually abused, Tusla notifies An Garda Síochána where they investigate the crime.'

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CONFLICT: Charles Watchorn holds dual Tusla and SJoG roles



MAXWELL TAPES

**Ghislaine:
My 'frenemy'
Fergie had
the hots
for Epstein**

PAGES 14, 15, 16 & 17



**Your guide
to beating
heartburn
without
drugs**

SEE MAGAZINE

Our decade-long investigation revealed a religious order's cover-up of a paedophile's crimes as he was left to prey on African street children, now...

MAIL ON SUNDAY REPORT ST JOHN OF GOD TO GARDAI

By **Michael O'Farrell**

INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

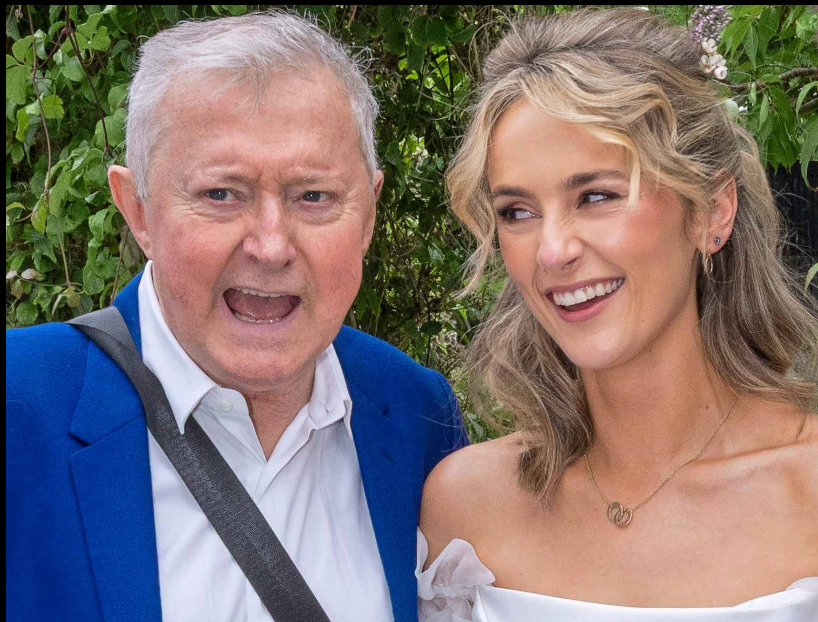
GARDAÍ are considering a criminal complaint about St John of God bosses who allowed a predatory paedophile to prey on vulnerable children in Africa for decades.

The complaint was submitted to the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB) by the Irish Mail on Sunday this week after political and public figures continued to demand a criminal probe.

The calls for Garda intervention follow a near-decade long investigation by this newspaper into how the St John of God religious order covered up the Irish crimes of serial paedophile, Br Aidan Clohessy, allowing him to abuse freely in Africa.

Br Clohessy was branded an ogre by a trial judge and jailed in June for abusing six boys in Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s.

After this abuse occurred in Ireland, his order dispatched him to Malawi and made



LOUIS'S YOUR UNCLE: Bride Lyndsay laughs at her godfather's antics

**Louis Walsh
celebrates
his niece's
wedding –
and a new car**

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St John of God bosses await Garda assessment of MoS complaint that order

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secret financial settlements with multiple victims here.

Now the GNPSB – led by Detective Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan – is assessing whether the complaint warrants a criminal investigation into the alleged reckless endangerment of children.

Putting children at risk of abuse has been a crime since 2006 when the Criminal Justice Act 2006 was enacted.

Under Section 176 (2) of the Act it is a criminal offence for anyone in a position of authority or control of a child abuser to put a child at risk. It is also a crime to fail to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

Upon conviction, the offence carries a prison term of up to 10 years. Crucially it's not actually necessary to prove abuse took place for a reckless endangerment prosecution.

The law was one of the recommendations of the 2005 Ferns Inquiry into the response by civil and Church authorities to abuse allegations in Wexford.

It was campaigned for by One in Four founder, Colm O'Gorman, a victim of Fr Seán Fortune – a paedophile priest who had been moved around by superiors who knew of the risk he posed.

Last night, Mr O'Gorman welcomed the possibility of a Garda investigation.

'It's a good thing in my view that it's now been reported by the Irish Mail on Sunday to the gardai and I hope the gardai carry out a really, really thorough investigation and that a file does go to the DPP,' he said.

'Ultimately that's going to be a decision for the DPP but, on the face of it, there would seem to be a prima facie case that needs to be investigated and if the evidence is there then it should be prosecuted.

'From a read of the legislation it's very clear that there is at least a case to be brought and a case to be

'He put rooms inside, they put beds there'

answered,' Mr O'Gorman added.

'There needs to be accountability for the fact that Br Clohessy was allowed to continue in positions of authority, that he was allowed to continue to have access to children who he continued to abuse for decades after the order was made aware of it,' Mr O'Gorman said.

'There needs to be accountability for that and that should include criminal accountability.'

Labour Justice spokesman Alan Kelly also called for speedy action.

'Given that a complaint has now been made to gardai, it is imperative that they investigate in a speedy manner, given how serious the issue is,' he said.

Others who have called for a criminal inquiry include Sinn Féin education spokesperson Darren O'Rourke, former Bernardos CEO, Fergus Finlay and Kindernothilfe (KNH) – a prominent Christian charity in Germany that funds St John of God in Malawi. The complaint is also backed by all of the Irish victims for whom Clohessy was jailed for abusing – and other victims in Africa who have already received settlements.

Any Garda investigation will consider evidence that St John of God superiors knew Br Clohessy was a risk when they left him in Africa. This will include publicly-available records such as a 2015 church audit into the order.

The audit by the National Board

'I hope gardai now conduct a thorough investigation'



VISIT: Donatus Forkan, left, with Br Aidan Clohessy in Malawi in 2010

for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) confirms St John of God superiors received many historical Irish abuse complaints

about Br Clohessy as he was left in Malawi.

Other readily-available evidence highlights the free access Br Clohessy had to children in Africa,



COVER-UP: MoS report into Brother Aidan Clohessy's Malawi abuse

despite these complaints at home.

This includes a 2010 TG4 documentary on Br Clohessy's work with children in Malawi. The documentary aired on national TV even as Br Clohessy's superiors in Ireland continued to receive historical complaints about him.

The role of those who knew – or ought to have known – that children in Africa would be at risk from Br Clohessy will also be examined in any investigation.

This will include – but is not limited to – the current head of the St John of God order, Br Donatus Forkan.

It was Br Forkan who first dispatched Br Clohessy to Malawi and left him there as secret settlements were made to victims back in Ireland.

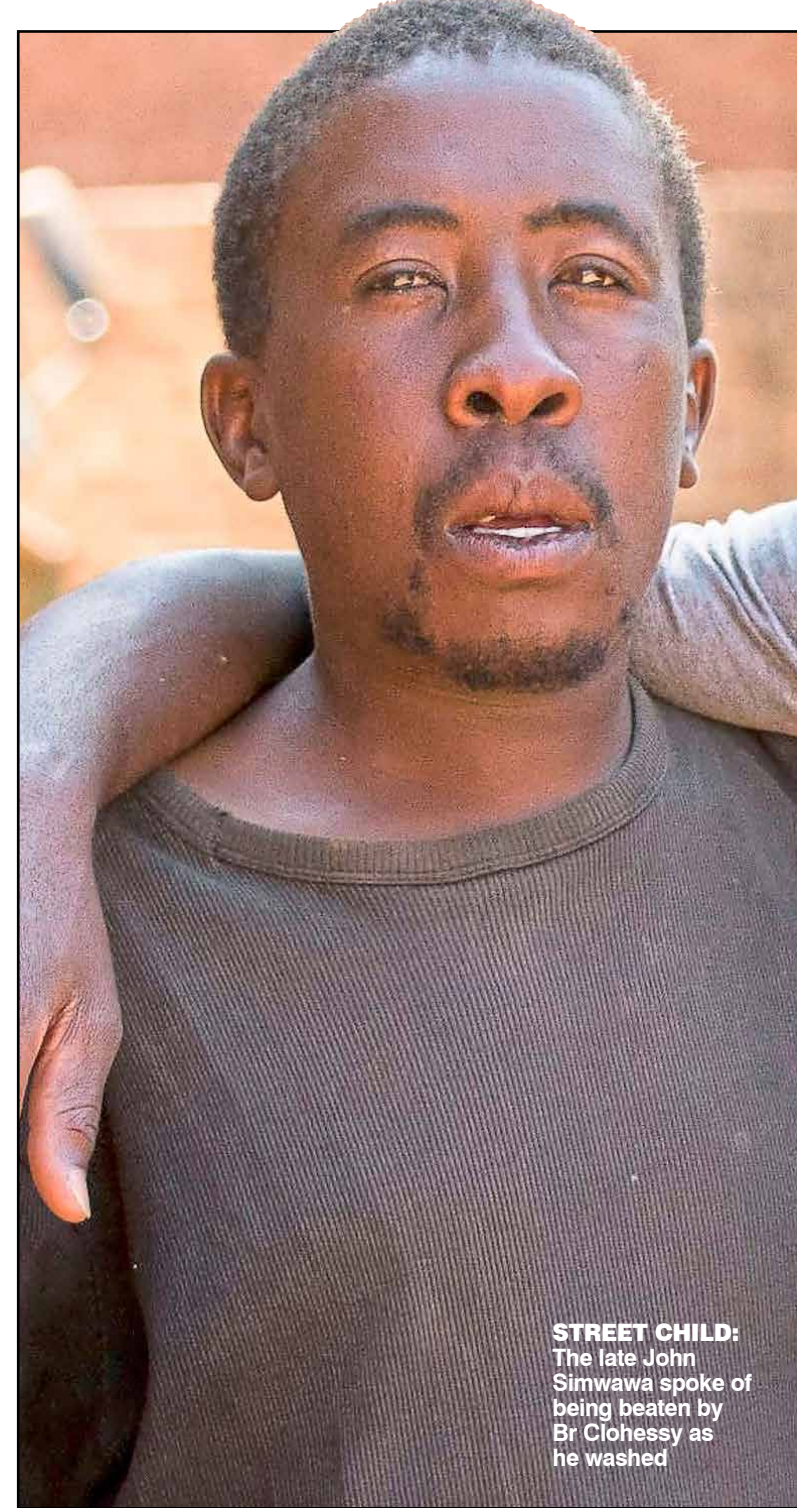
No one in Malawi was told of these settlements or Br Clohessy's child-abusing past as he was left free to prey on street children.

The St John of God order then conspired to keep Br Clohessy's child abuse under wraps after superiors finally withdrew him from Africa in 2012.

This occurred as the Vatican launched a Canonical Inquiry into Br Clohessy and gardai began investigating Irish complaints.

When the MoS first travelled to track down victims in Malawi in 2017, neither the Vatican nor the St John of God order had ever acted

left children at risk. The man who campaigned for a change in the law says:



STREET CHILD: The late John Simwawa spoke of being beaten by Br Clohessy as he washed

to establish the extent of any abuse Br Clohessy carried out there.

Our investigation uncovered numerous men who had been collected from the streets by Br Clohessy when they were children.

Many were horrifically abused – and although it admits no liability – the St John of God order has recently begun settling civil cases taken on behalf of these victims in Ireland. As many as 60 such cases from Africa have so far emerged – with 20 already settled.

Others in Malawi also told the MoS of the unfettered access to children that Br Clohessy enjoyed.

Br Clohessy's personal cook, Maxwell Chirwa, for example, confirmed that a garage at Brother Aidan's home had been converted and used to house boys.

'There was a place where Brother Aidan was keeping them. Built at the back where the garage was. He put some rooms inside. They put the beds there,' he told the MoS in 2017.

Mr Chirwa said this converted garage had been built in 2006.

'It was in 2006. The children were sleeping there inside, yes.'

He added that children remained living there for 'many years – some of them until they finished school.'

Mr Chirwa also said Br Forkan knew of Br Clohessy's living arrangements with children because he had stayed himself in the compound during visits.

'Yes... When they were building the garage he [Donatus] knew.'

Harrison Chilale – the then Clinical Director for St John of God in Malawi who worked under Brother Clohessy from the beginning – also confirmed these arrangements.

'They would stay at the Brother's house. I think Brother Aidan had some space where they would eat, wash and clean themselves up,' he said. 'The inside activities and behaviours I don't know. But I knew he kept children – I think up to 10 sometimes in one roof. There were a group of children he was keeping there.'

No one in Malawi was concerned about these arrangements because they remained unaware that Br Clohessy's order had received and settled repeated abuse complaints.

That remained the case even after Br Clohessy suddenly left Malawi overnight in 2012 without warning or explanation, having spent two decades there.

In Ireland, the St John of God order's charitable services are managed via a corporate structure

Clohessy's access to children was evident

By Michael O'Farrell

THE Irish Mail on Sunday first travelled to Malawi in October 2017 to investigate whether Br Clohessy had contact with children.

We did so after we confirmed that his superiors in Ireland had secretly settled child abuse cases with Irish victims before dispatching him to Africa.

It was immediately evident, in recorded interviews we conducted back then, that Br Clohessy had not only had unrestricted and unsupervised access to children – but he had housed them at his compound.

According to those we spoke to, he housed many street children in a specially-built garage at his St John of God residence. He would also bring other children home from the streets to wash them during his lunch break.

Much of this contact with children occurred after 2006 when the reckless endangerment of children became a crime in Ireland.

And it occurred as Br Clohessy's superiors back home continued to cover up the fact that they knew he represented a child abuse risk.

Meanwhile, no one at the services run by St John of God in Malawi was ever informed of the settlements Br Clohessy's superiors were making to victims back home.

The first person we found during that first trip to Malawi was John Simwawa, who has since died. John was 22 when we met him. He told us that from the age of about ten he began being collected by Br Clohessy at Mzuzu's Coffee Den – a central location where street children often hung out.

That places John in contact with Br Clohessy from 2005 onwards. He told us: 'Br Aidan used to come and collect about 15 of us and bring us to his house. He had a pickup with a canopy. He forced us to take a bath. He would pick us up in his

pickup truck, make sure we took bath, give us food and then he would take us back to the street. But there were other boys who were sleeping there.

'There were four boys who were staying with Br Aidan. I cannot remember their ages but they were younger than me.'

John spoke of being beaten by Br Clohessy as he washed.

He said: 'He would make sure we thoroughly cleaned ourselves and he would stand there and watch all the boys.

'He would beat us to make us wash. He would watch us and he had a stick. We were frightened. He would hit us on the buttocks.'

During our first trip to Malawi,



OUR STORY: 2018 investigation

several other former street children, spoke on condition of anonymity, about their time with Br Clohessy.

One said he first met Br Clohessy in 2002 and 'grew up with him for maybe 12 years'.

He added: 'He took us from the street when I was 12. He took us to his house where he was staying near the bishop.'

(The St John of God compound where Br Clohessy lived is beside Mzuzu cathedral and bishop's residence.)

Another man told of being taken from the streets by Br Clohessy when he was aged nine – something that happened repeatedly until 2008.

'Especially during the lunch hour he was taking us to his house and doing the same thing. He was giving us new clothes. He was doing this maybe like three times a week.'

headed by a parent company called the St John of God Hospitalier Services Group.

As head of the order, Br Forkan remains a director of this company.

This weekend, a spokesperson

'Rigorous policies and procedures'

for the group said it 'recognises the importance of and is committed to protecting all vulnerable people against any form of abuse.'

'We operate a zero tolerance approach to all types of abuse for

The former street child said Br Clohessy would give him clothes to try on after he had showered.

This continued until 2008 when he went to live with another white man who promised to take care of him.

Another former street child said he met Br Clohessy in 2007 when he was 13, adding: 'I first met Br Aidan when I was in primary school. I needed support with my school. That's when he started helping me. I was in primary school.'

'He found me in the street... At that time he was staying at the Formation house. He took me there, then I had a shower and he gave me some food and he gave me a place so I can stay.'

This individual said that at this time there were ten to 15 other children living in Br Clohessy's compound.

Another man told the MoS he started being brought to Br Clohessy's house at the age of seven, with his two brothers, and stopped in 2007.

He spoke of being washed by Br Clohessy 'every day, two times a day', saying: 'He was using sobo [soap] to wash us.'

He confirmed that Br Clohessy would wash the genitals of those present.

By the time we made our second trip to Malawi, in September last year, Br Clohessy's order had begun settling civil cases taken by his African victims in the Irish courts.

Those taking these cases have gone through a vetting process and been interviewed by experts and psychiatrists. They say they were brutally abused and raped as children having been taken off the streets by Br Clohessy.

St John of God and its provincial, Br Donatus Forkan, have never addressed or acknowledged the cover up that allowed Br Clohessy to prey freely on children in Malawi as they covered up his crimes back home.

That remained the case this week as a spokesperson for the order declined to comment. Instead the order said it 'encourages anyone who has experienced hurt to seek support and talk with the authorities.' An Garda Síochána's free confidential 24/7 Child Sexual Abuse Reporting number is 1800 555 222 or email GNPSB_SCMU@garda.ie michaelofarrell@protonmail.com

Independent advice and help can be accessed at Towards Healing Freephone – 1800 303 416/0800 096 3315 (Northern Ireland)/085 802 2859 (hearing impaired)/email info@towardshealing.ie

TIMELINE OF ORDER'S SHAMEFUL COVER-UP

OCTOBER 22, 1993

Paedophile Br Aidan Clohessy is dispatched to Malawi as his order covers up his crimes in Ireland.

OCTOBER 2005

The Ferns report recommends the reckless endangerment of children be made a crime.

JULY 16, 2006

The Criminal Justice Act 2006 is signed into law by President Mary McAleese, making the reckless endangerment of children a crime.

OCTOBER 14, 2006

Br Donatus Forkan, who sent

Clohessy to Malawi, becomes Prior General in Rome, making him the global head of his order. That same year, Clohessy adapts a garage at his Malawi compound to house street children.

2008

A new child abuse allegation against Clohessy is received by his order, the 10th such complaint since he was dispatched to Malawi. He continues to have unsupervised access to children.

2009

Another child sex abuse complaint, relating to Ireland, is

received by the order. Clohessy remains living and working with children in Africa.

2010

As a new abuse complaint is received, Clohessy and Br Forkan celebrate their Golden Jubilee together. Br Forkan goes on one of his frequent trips to Malawi, staying in Clohessy's home.

2011

Yet another child abuse complaint is made against Clohessy in Ireland, the 13th since he was sent to Africa. After a risk assessment, his order concludes he is not a risk

since he is not in a position of authority over children. He remains living and working with children in Africa.

2012

As further complaints emerge, Clohessy is withdrawn from public ministry and returns to Ireland.

2013

Clohessy briefly returns to Malawi for a conference with Br Forkan and then group chief executive John Pepper. The Vatican commences a Canonical Investigation, after which Clohessy remains in Ireland.