

Chapter 12

St Joseph's Industrial School, Salthill ('Salthill'), 1870–1995

Introduction

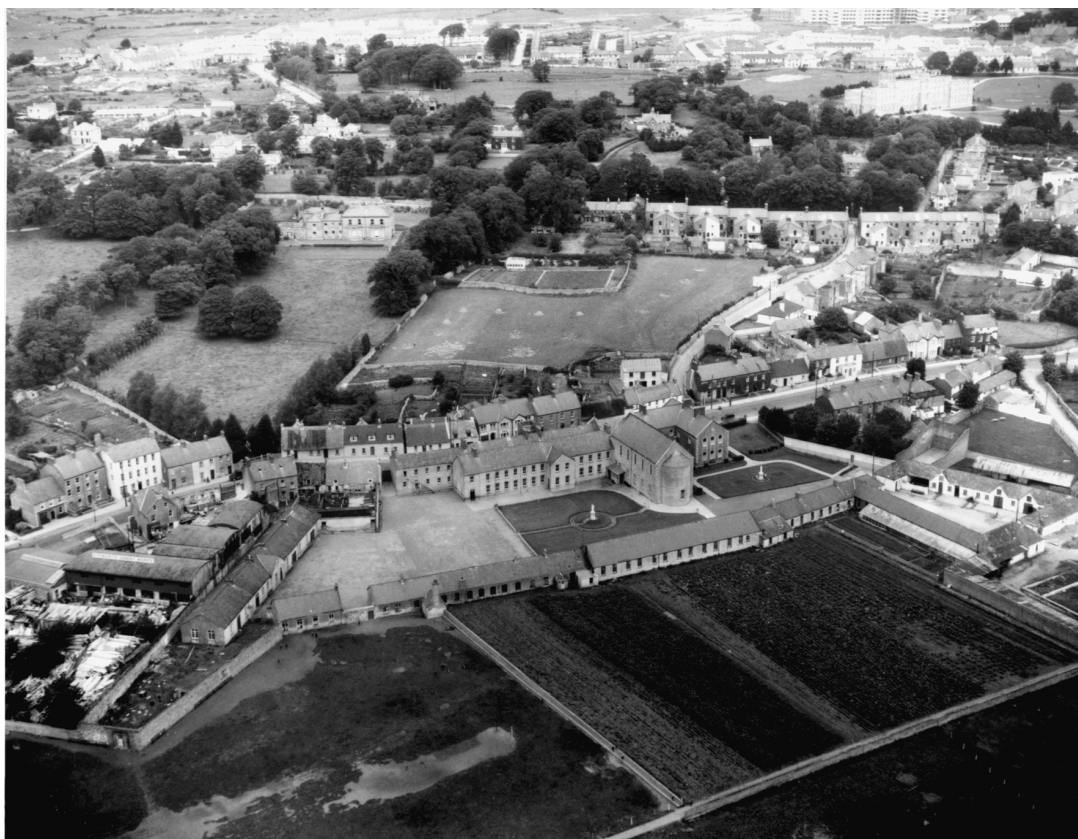
- 12.01** Oral hearings were not held into Salthill, and this chapter is based on an analysis of relevant documents, including those obtained by the discovery process from the Christian Brothers, the Department of Education and Science, the Bishop of Galway and the Health Service Executive (formerly the Western Health Board) and submissions from the Christian Brothers.

Establishment

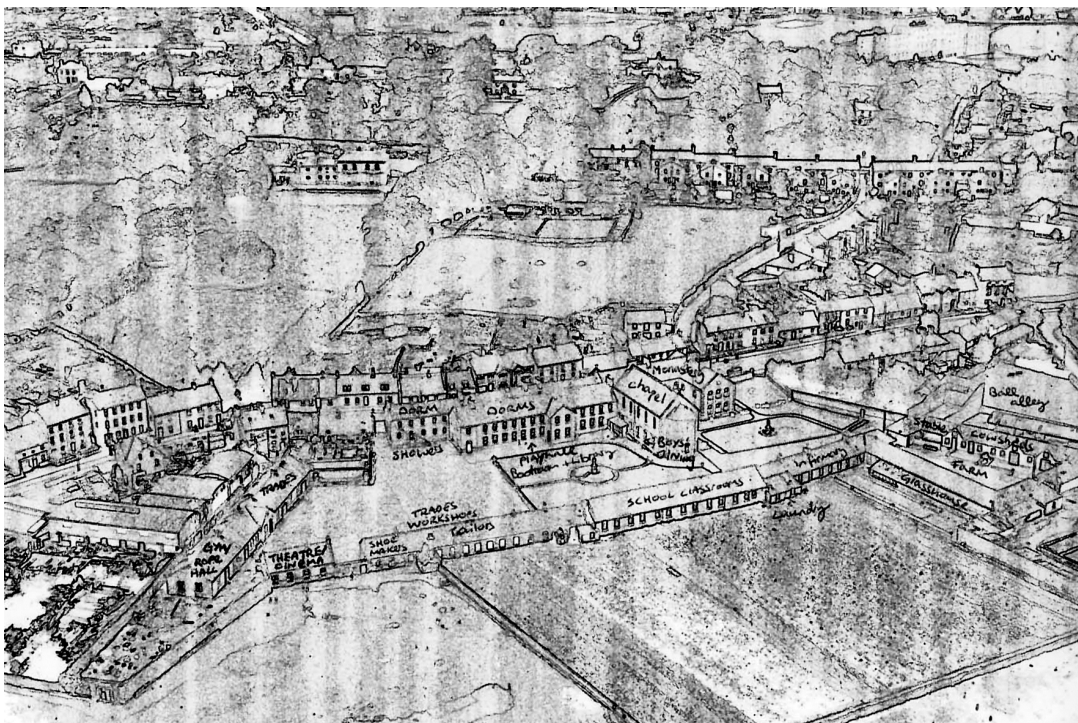
- 12.02** St Joseph's Industrial School, Salthill ('Salthill') traced its history back to 1870, when a public meeting in the Town Hall in Galway approved a proposal to establish an industrial school for boys and appointed a committee to implement the project. Land and premises were acquired in Salthill in June 1871 and were adapted to accommodate 50 boys.
- 12.03** The Patrician Brothers agreed to manage the School under a committee of laymen and religious. The purpose of the School was to take in 'neglected, orphaned, and abandoned Roman Catholic boys, in order to safeguard them from developing criminal tendencies and to prepare them for the world of industry'. According to the School annals, on 25th September 1871, 'twenty-one poor boys were admitted to the School, most of them in the lowest state of destitution and misery'.
- 12.04** The School got off to a difficult start, and initial reports from the Inspector for Industrial and Reformatory Schools were negative. There were problems with management in the School which caused the Patrician Brothers to withdraw. The Government Inspector, Mr John Lentaigne, called to the Superior General of the Christian Brothers in July 1876 and asked him to take over the running of Salthill.
- 12.05** The Christian Brothers inspected the premises and set out the terms upon which they would undertake the management of the School, and these were agreed with the Bishop. By the terms of this agreement, the Congregation held the property with the Bishop of Galway under a trust, of which the Bishop and two members of the Congregation were the perpetual trustees.
- 12.06** All existing debts and liabilities were paid by the committee that had originally set up the School, and an overdraft facility was set up in the local bank.
- 12.07** The Brother in charge was designated the Resident Manager and it was agreed, 'That he shall not be obliged to furnish any other accounts to the Committee, or sub-managers, than those annually presented to government'.

- 12.08** Although this agreement clearly envisaged that the School would be run under the supervision of a management committee, as required by the Industrial Schools Act (Ireland), 1868, such a committee was never put in place by the Congregation and it ran the School in the same way as it ran all its industrial schools.
- 12.09** The population of the School rose rapidly in the early years, with the certified number increasing to 150 in 1879 and 200 in 1886. Through fund-raising activities the School facilities were extended to accommodate the growing numbers, for example, a chapel and dining room were built from the profits of a three-day bazaar held in 1879. Workshops were built shortly after the Christian Brothers took over. It was part of the agreement entered into with the Bishop that the diocese would support fund-raising activity on behalf of the Brothers.
- 12.10** The annals from these early years showed a great interest in the School from political and religious leaders. The Duke of Edinburgh visited with a dozen army officers in attendance and, in 1895, both the Archbishop of Melbourne and Lord Carnarvon, the Lord Lieutenant, visited within a month of each other. In 1887, the Papal Legate paid tribute to 'this admirable institution and excellent establishment'.
- 12.11** After 1925, Salthill, like all industrial schools, came under the control of the Department of Education, and political interest in the School appeared to wane. There was no record in the annals of any leading politician visiting Salthill in the years following 1925.
- 12.12** Renovations and redecoration of the premises took place in the 1940s as they had fallen into disrepair. In 1943, Salthill was recognised by the Department of Education as a primary school which continued in existence until the early 1970s, when the remaining boys transferred to the local primary school.
- 12.13** The Institution underwent a radical change in the early 1970s. The Kennedy Report, published in 1970, had identified the problems inherent in the old institutionalised methods of childcare, and had given the existing institutions no alternative but to change their structures radically. All institutions either responded to this need for change or, like Artane, Tralee and Letterfrack, closed down.
- 12.14** In 1973, a new Manager was appointed and he worked with the Department in bringing about the changes that established the group home structure. The new Manager was more sensitive to the needs of the boys, and had the assistance of a trained and experienced Brother who had taken a special interest in childcare and had attended the Kilkenny course shortly after it commenced in the early 1970s.
- 12.15** The transformation of St Joseph's was completed in accordance with plans that were drawn up in 1987. Most of the land on which the School was located was sold for development and the money was used to build a new complex planned on modern childcare principles. The Brothers ceased to have an association with St Joseph's in 1995. The centre now consists of two units, each catering for six young people with a staffing ratio of 1:1 and operated by the Health Service Executive.

12.16 The Committee received the following photograph and plan of Salthill:



Source: The Morgan Collection, National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar, Dublin.



Source: Congregation of Christian Brothers.

Physical abuse

- 12.17** The documents that are discussed below contain a record of general complaints about violent behaviour by Brothers, as well as some cases that took place specifically in Salthill. They reveal that one Brother, who was found to have engaged in harsh and cruel treatment of boys in Letterfrack, was again the subject of complaints about severity towards children in Salthill. Another Brother was found to be repeatedly guilty of excessive harshness in schools to which he was assigned after his service in Salthill. Another Brother was warned by the Superior General about his conduct towards boys, and it was said of another that he should not be put in charge of boys. They also record some specific instances of severe punishment.
- 12.18** The information and comment in these contemporary documents were made at times when corporal punishment was permitted by law and was an everyday reality for many children. The fact that they were recorded suggests that the severity of the punishment was deemed excessive at that time.
- 12.19** A general observation in the Visitation Report of 1967 on conditions in the School suggested that some incidents of unacceptable corporal punishment were inevitable in Salthill:
- The boys are under constant supervision from the moment of rising to the time for retiring. This imposes a heavy round of duties on those immediately concerned with the boys. It is therefore almost impossible to maintain that evenness of temper that is essential for this work. A man on duty all day is bound to feel irritable ...
- 12.20** In the course of reflections on life in Salthill which he gave to the Congregation, a Brother, Br Burdette,¹ who taught there in the 1950s, acknowledged 'a certain severity in attitude' towards the boys:
- We worked all day, every day, an unfortunate indiscretion which should not have been allowed and which, undoubtedly, I think, was reflected in our treatment of the almost 200 boys confided to our care.
- Nevertheless, despite a certain severity in attitude towards them, due partly to the hardship of our own lives and partly to an inherited system of discipline which, even in my time, had begun to be discarded, my earlier comment holds true: no children ever meant – could mean – as much to me as they did; for, of course, they were orphans, every one.
- 12.21** Br Burdette was not correct. The majority of the boys in Salthill were not orphans, but had been sent there by the courts for non-attendance at school or because of a lack of parental control often in the context of poverty.
- 12.22** Br Burdette described his time in the Institution as 'the happiest, hardest, most demanding, and most memorable three years of my life'. He was not able, even at this remove, to appreciate the impact of a harsh and severe routine of discipline on the children in Salthill. He did not see it as affecting the overall atmosphere in the School, but it has been found in other schools examined by the Committee that such a regime created a climate of fear that permeated life in an institution.
- 12.23** In his report on Salthill, which was commissioned by the Congregation in March 2002, Br John McCormack cfc interviewed a past pupil who was there in the 1960s. This ex-resident acknowledged that 'we had happy times as well as the sad times' and recalled with pride participating in the band and the medal he won for hurling. He also asserted that he had received a good education in Salthill, as had most of the boys who were there with him. He arrived at the age of seven, and was fortunate to have an older brother there who could watch out for him. He

¹ This is a pseudonym.

mentioned one Brother, Br Michel,² as being very humane but had no such praise for any of the other Brothers there:

I was not terribly gone on the rest of the Brothers in St Joseph's in my time. They were strict and always made you toe the line. Some of them never smiled that I remember, but they must have ... Even though the Brothers were strict, there was none of them vicious or cruel. They must have had a tough time too.

12.24 It is a sad reflection on Salthill that even a past pupil who had reasonably positive memories of his time there could find so little to say in praise of the Brothers. He was in their care from the age of seven.

12.25 There follows an analysis of Brothers who were in Salthill and against whom allegations of physical abuse were made.

Br Chappell³

12.26 A Visitor in the late 1930s remarked that there was a greater sense of harmony in the Community since this Brother's departure and that:

By all the accounts I got it would seem to me that Br Chappell should never be put in charge of boys: his violent, vengeful disposition render him quite unsuitable for such a charge.

12.27 According to the records, he had been in Salthill for almost six years when he was transferred. Although he had served in a number of industrial schools prior to that, he did not work in any residential school after 1937 but worked as a domestic Brother in a Community house.

Br Leveret⁴

12.28 Br Leveret was transferred to Salthill in the early 1940s after a history of serious and violent abuse in Letterfrack. In the year before his transfer to Salthill, a Brother on the staff of Letterfrack wrote to the Provincial about the use of a horse whip on the boys. Br Leveret was one of the perpetrators of this brutal punishment. The Resident Manager forbade such punishments and directed that, in future, all punishments for serious offences would be administered by him, the Manager, in the presence of a third party. Br Leveret, however, did not comply with this direction, and the Resident Manager had to write to the Provincial to report that 'Br Leveret has not adhered to the regulations'.

12.29 He referred to Br Leveret in a subsequent letter:

Punishment: a stick is the general instrument used and even with this he goes beyond the rule. I have seen recently a boy with swollen hand, palm and thumb, the steward on farm remarked he was not able to milk for some days. A boy was stripped and beaten in his (Br Leveret's) room. He has put boys across his bed in room and even in unbecoming postures to beat them behind. The boys are absolutely afraid to divulge who punished them and won't even answer questions truthfully, through fear of being punished again. Only this week I got two little fellows crying and I asked them what happened they would not tell me.

12.30 Although Br Leveret wrote a letter in defence of his behaviour, the Provincial did not believe him and he was removed from Letterfrack that year.

² This is a pseudonym.

³ This is a pseudonym.

⁴ This is a pseudonym.

12.31 He was transferred to Salthill where he remained for almost 10 years. His proclivity for violence emerged again. A Visitation Report in the late 1940s noted that Br Leveret 'is said to be too severe in school'. A year later, the Superior informed the Visitor of serious misgivings he had regarding Br Leveret's suitability as a teacher in an industrial school. The Visitation Report noted that:

The Superior complained that Br Leveret was very severe on the boys and had injured at least two boys when inflicting corporal punishment. I spoke to Br Leveret and he said that on each occasion it was on account of boys giving him impertinence. He said one boy called him a tinker before the other boys in the class. It seems the Superior made some statement in the chapel when speaking to all the boys to the effect that he was against corporal punishment and that he was the responsible person in the place for inflicting such. The Brother Superior thinks that Br Leveret is not a right individual to have in an industrial school and would like to have him changed. He has rather light work here and is unwilling, according to the Superior to take extra duties.

12.32 Br Leveret was transferred to Cork and did not teach in an industrial school again.

12.33 Br Leveret should never have been transferred to Salthill after his behaviour in Letterfrack. The Congregation commented on the use of the horse whip in Letterfrack but made no reference to his subsequent move to Salthill. They stated:

The above incident demonstrates well how the Brothers generally did not approve of severe corporal punishment. Those who did not approve were courageous enough to speak out even though it meant having to live with the person against whom they spoke. The contention that those religious who did not abuse were culpable because they did not "stand in the way" of abuse they witnessed does not stand up to scrutiny. When abuse was known to a Brother, the documentation indicates that he made it known to the authorities.

12.34 • **Notwithstanding the warnings and reprimands he had received in Letterfrack, this Brother was transferred to Salthill where he continued his aggressive behaviour. It was an example of serious management failure on the part of the Provincial to have transferred such a man to another residential school.**

Br Sebastien⁵

12.35 Br Sebastien served in Salthill in the early 1940s. Some three years prior to his posting to Salthill, when being given permission to take his final vows, Br Noonan, the Superior General, drew his attention to a fault which would require correcting, namely his severity towards boys. Br Noonan wrote of his excesses:

This is indefensible; it is in every way against the canons of the teaching profession. Punishment in a moderate way is allowed; but severity is altogether to be avoided. It injures the boy's feelings and never produces real improvement.

12.36 • **No written record was kept of this Brother's performance in Salthill. Given his earlier history, such a record would have been expected.**

• **It was a persistent management failure on the part of the Leadership of the Congregation that violent men were so often posted to residential schools.**

⁵ This is a pseudonym.

Beating by an employee named Orvelle⁶

- 12.37** The Bishop of Galway wrote to the Superior in July 1950, complaining about the violent behaviour of an employee of the Industrial School. The letter said:

Dear Br Rousskin,⁷

On Thursday last, my attention was drawn to the fact that one of your employees, Orvelle, was beating some of the boys severely and in a very harsh manner. When I bade him desist he answered back very roughly indeed. I do not think that fellows like Orvelle should have such power and should exercise it so harshly and so publicly that they can be seen and heard from so many houses all around. If the boys are recalcitrant, they should be punished by a Brother, but Orvelle's methods would evoke indignation if they were directed against brute animals. I feel sure that you will be able to apply the proper remedy once your attention has been called to the matter.

- 12.38** The Bishop's letter records a disturbing and serious complaint, and it is surprising that neither the letter nor any response to it has survived in the records of Salthill. A copy of the letter was obtained from the diocesan archive but the original was not found in the Christian Brothers' discovery in relation to Salthill. Neither was there any information as to what action followed the receipt of the letter. It was a surprising example of indifference by a layman to an order coming from a Bishop. The Bishop's outrage that the man should be in a position to treat boys in a way that would have been cruel if directed at 'brute animals', should have caused the School embarrassment at the very least, and should have led to an investigation and serious sanction for the employee. No mention was made of this man in the annals, and all that is known is that he was not a member of the teaching staff, as he was not listed in any of the Visitation Reports for the period.

Br Delano⁸

- 12.39** There were no documented complaints about Br Delano's treatment of boys in Salthill during his service there in the early 1950s but his subsequent career in other schools, shortly after leaving Salthill, gave cause for concern.
- 12.40** The Brother came to the notice of the Provincial and General Councils because of repeated complaints of 'immoderate punishment' of his pupils in successive schools. The authorities were worried that he 'could become a very serious liability' and noted that he had narrowly escaped prosecution.
- 12.41** The Provincial wrote that there was no doubt about most of the complaints. Another Brother had witnessed the latest incident, when, in the course of a plain chant class, the Brother injured a boy by striking him on the nose and face, making his nose bleed.
- 12.42** The Brother's response to the disciplinary inquiries was to apply for a dispensation, which was rejected. Instead, he was ordered to remain in his vocation and was given a 'maneat' (an order to stay).
- 12.43** The Provincial Council did not recommend the dispensation because it thought that the way he administered punishment was something that the Brother 'can correct as some Brothers have done in the past'. The Provincial did not think the situation merited a Canonical Warning, even though the Brother had been given a previous, informal caution. The General Council considered the matter and ultimately agreed to issue the 'maneat'. The Provincial wrote to the Brother informing him of the position. He said that, by complying with his religious duties with meekness

⁶ This is a pseudonym.

⁷ This is a pseudonym.

⁸ This is a pseudonym.

and humility, the Brother would find that his 'difficulties with the pupils will lessen and that in time you will acquire that patience and kindness with children so necessary for us all as Other Christs in the school room'.

- 12.44**
- **The manner in which this case was handled suggested that the first concern was for the Congregation, for which the Brother 'could become a very serious liability'. The next consideration was for the Brother himself, who, it was hoped, would acquire the necessary teaching skills in time. The children who were likely to suffer at the hands of this man whilst he acquired these skills were not considered at all.**

Br Marque⁹

- 12.45** Br Marque was transferred to Salthill in the early 1970s, where he remained for 15 years. One Visitor was very critical of Br Marque who held a senior position in the Community at that time. He noted:

Unfortunately he has a problem with drink and when under its influence he can deal harshly with erring boys. The boys are aware of this weakness and the irrational motivation behind these punishments. This does not increase their respect for their staff nor their confidence in it.

- 12.46** The following year, the Visitor noted that Br Marque 'still has a drink problem but the Superior's good sense and vigilance have helped to lessen the gravity of the situation'.

- 12.47** The situation remained unresolved into the mid-1970s. The Visitor remarked that Br Marque gave the impression that he was not too happy in Galway and repeated, verbatim, the comment of the previous year: 'He still has a drink problem but the Superior's good sense and vigilance have helped to lessen the gravity of the situation'.

- 12.48**
- **The real problem was not just that this Brother drank but that, under the influence of drink, he administered harsh and irrational punishments to the boys. While 'the gravity of the situation' had been lessened by the Superior's monitoring, the question of whether children should have been under the care of such a man was not addressed. He should have been seen as an unacceptable risk to the children in the School and removed once this problem was identified.**

Br Remi¹⁰

- 12.49** An incident was recorded in the Manager's diary during the mid-1970s, concerning the behaviour of Br Remi. He spent most of his teaching career working in residential schools.

- 12.50** The diary entry from the mid-1970s stated 'Br Remi struck [Michael].¹¹ deformed his teeth'. The entry the following day noted that the boy attended the dentist.

- 12.51** He was mentioned by the Visitor as having difficulty in adapting to the new regime that was being introduced to Salthill at that time. He wrote:

despite his overt yearning for the good old days when boys were made toe the line in quasi-military fashion one senses that deep down he is slowly and reluctantly coming to appreciate that the new approach has something to recommend it.

⁹ This is a pseudonym.

¹⁰ This is a pseudonym.

¹¹ This is a pseudonym.

- 12.52**
- While the Visitor recorded his approval of the new, less rigid approach to controlling children as having something to recommend it, he was not nearly critical enough about Br Remi's yearning for the 'good old days' of a harsher regime. Br Remi should have been left in no doubt that violence was completely unacceptable, and incidents such as that recorded in the diary should have been avoided.
 - By the mid-1970s, there should have been a more formal procedure for recording and responding to physical abuse of children. There was no record that this incident was ever investigated, or that any disciplinary action was taken against Br Remi. Such an event, which was tantamount to criminal assault, was not considered to be sufficiently grave to warrant disciplinary action. It suggested that, notwithstanding the changes that had been effected in the regime, the underlying philosophy had not altered.

Diary entry 1981

- 12.53** A diary entry in 1981 read:

[John]¹² Back. 6.30. Had a chat with him and gave him a few clatters.

- 12.54** A casual approach to physical punishment was revealed in this entry. It suggested that giving a boy 'a few clatters' was acceptable when it should have had no place in childcare practices in the 1980s.

Sexual abuse

- 12.55** The documents revealed cases of actual and suspected sexual abuse in Salthill. They implicated five Brothers, one care worker who was a former resident, and another ex-resident who came back years after he had been discharged and got into the building on a number of occasions.

- 12.56** The documents covered the period from the 1930s to the 1980s. Three of the Brothers came under suspicion when they were in the Institution, while the other two came to notice in industrial schools other than Salthill. One Brother explicitly admitted that he had been guilty of immorality with boys for years, but he later withdrew the confession, and his subsequent dismissal was for unconnected reasons. In another case, the Brother tried to put an innocent interpretation on his conduct but the Provincial was clear that it was a 'lapse'. This Brother went on to abuse for over 20 years after leaving Salthill. The last Salthill case involving a Christian Brother was more equivocal, and concerned inappropriate behaviour for which he gave a somewhat odd explanation.

Br Emile¹³

- 12.57** Br Emile was working in Salthill in the early 1950s, when he wrote directly to the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome requesting a dispensation. He said that he never had a vocation and only took his final vows to avoid disappointing his mother. He confessed:

Since 1945 with the exception of two years back at College I have been interfering immorally and unchastely with boys under my care. I tried to give it up but failed. I realised that I was doing great harm to the boys, to the Congregation and damning my own soul.

- 12.58** He said that he had consulted two Jesuit priests on the matter and they strongly advised him to leave the Congregation.

- 12.59** The Monsignor dealing with the case sent a copy of the letter to Br Clancy, the Superior General, commenting, 'I think it is a clear case of letting him go'. The Brother then withdrew his application,

¹² This is a pseudonym.

¹³ This is a pseudonym.

asserting that he was depressed at the time he made the application and that what he had stated with regard to abusing boys was false. The General Council accepted Br Emile's retraction and his explanation for it, but felt it necessary to issue him with a maneat in February 1953.

- 12.60** Less than two years later Br Emile was accused of new, unrelated charges of repeated, serious disregard of religious obligations, including rebelling with others against the strictures of religious life. The General Council ultimately decided that it had ample evidence regarding Br Emile's unsuitability for the Congregation and that 'it will be in the interest of the...Community and of the Irish Province to have Br Emile's case disposed of as quickly as Canon Law permits.'
- 12.61** Two Canonical Warnings were then issued to Br Emile and were swiftly followed by a Decree of Dismissal, which was accepted by Br Emile. He subsequently got married and continued to teach in a national school until the early 1990s.
- 12.62** • **There was no record of any inquiries into the confessions made by Br Emile in his abortive application for a dispensation in the early 1950s which he made directly to Rome. It was not clear why he was issued with a maneat. To accept the retraction of such a serious confession without further investigation was a risk to children in his care.**

Br Dacian¹⁴

- 12.63** This complicated and difficult story of repeated sexual abuse is recounted here because the perpetrator's behaviour was first recorded in the Christian Brothers' records relating to Salthill. The Brother's history reveals a pattern of abuse extending over a period of 25 years in different schools. It illustrates the recidivist nature of sexual abuse, and the difficulties of reporting it.
- 12.64** Br Dacian had spent only four months in Salthill in the early 1960s when he was transferred in great haste to a day school in Dublin. A Visitor at that time noted:
- Br Dacian has been guilty of a grave indiscretion with one of the boys and I'm afraid he will have to be changed. He was otherwise most suited to this place and an ardent worker.
- 12.65** In a letter to the Superior General following his Visitation, the Visitor elaborated on Br Dacian's indiscretion. A pupil reported to the Superior that one night he had been awakened by somebody who had his hand inside his pyjamas touching his genitals. He could only make out an outline of the man but, by his shape and the sound of his voice, he recognised him as Br Dacian. When the boy awoke, the man had said to him that this was a serious matter and that he should not tell anyone.
- 12.66** The Visitor confronted Br Dacian about the allegation and he confessed that he was the person involved. However, he offered the explanation that he had merely been checking to see whether the boy had wet the bed, as he was a regular bed-wetter. But, as the Visitor noted, 'it is apparent that this does not explain everything'. Br Dacian assured the Visitor that he did not have any 'inclination this way' and that this was the first time anything like that had happened. The Visitor was 'inclined to believe him' but thought that a transfer was necessary, as other boys were aware of Br Dacian's lapse. The Visitor lamented that this change was necessary as 'he was a very good choice for that school where self-sacrificing men are so necessary'.
- 12.67** This experienced Visitor described the incident as a lapse and an indiscretion, and he was not satisfied with the Brother's explanation. Nevertheless, he left the matter unresolved and uncertain, which implied that he did not consider the allegation to be very grave.

¹⁴ This is a pseudonym.

12.68 The Brother later spent a year in Letterfrack in the early 1970s, where a Visitation Report noted that he slept adjacent to the boys' dormitory and was involved in a good deal of supervision.

Late 1980s

12.69 The next occasion of a documented complaint against Br Dacian was some 25 years later, when he was Principal of a primary school in the west of Ireland.

12.70 The Archbishop of the area sent for Br Tyeis,¹⁵ the Superior of Br Dacian's Community, and told him that he had received a formal complaint that Br Dacian was interfering sexually with a boy in the School. The prelate gave the boy's Christian name but said that he could not remember the surname. The Superior undertook to investigate the matter.

12.71 Br Tyeis did not have enough information so he telephoned the Archbishop's secretary for more details. The boy was Tom Murphy,¹⁶ a first year pupil in the secondary school, and his parents had gone some days previously to the Vice-Principal of the primary school to report what had happened. He sent them to the school chaplain because, as he later explained, he was too shocked by the allegations to do anything about them. The chaplain was unavailable so they spoke to another Curate, who in turn referred them to the Archbishop's secretary. They made their complaint to him that Br Dacian was sexually interfering with their son and that they believed that Br Dacian had also interfered with other boys whom they named.

12.72 The Superior, Br Tyeis, now had the details of the complaint against Br Dacian. He went to him on the same day as he had met the Archbishop and spoken to the secretary. Br Dacian admitted that he had interfered with Tom Murphy and said that 'the relationship' had been going on for two years.

12.73 Br Tyeis spoke to the Vice-Principal, who confirmed the parents' visit to him at his home on the previous Sunday. Br Tyeis met the Provincial, Br Travis,¹⁷ and reported what had happened.

12.74 Br Tyeis met the parents shortly afterwards in the Brothers' residence. Mr Murphy was angry, and he and his wife were seeking an apology in writing from Br Dacian. They did not propose to take legal action because they feared that the publicity would not be good for their son. They were unclear as to the details of the abuse but they suspected that anal intercourse might have taken place.

12.75 The Superior talked the matter over in confidence with two Brothers in the Community, and decided that Br Dacian would have to leave the Community 'for the present'. Br Dacian agreed and went the Cistercian Monastery in Roscrea.

12.76 The Superior reported to the Provincial that Br Dacian told him that he (Br Dacian) would have to leave the Congregation and that the Superior had responded that that might seem like the easy way out, i.e. to flee, but that there was no reason why he should have to leave. He also reported that a Brother (Br Peppin¹⁸), a friend of the Murphys who stayed with them when he was in the West, had recounted to him that the Murphys had recently said that they were suspicious that something in the nature of sexual interference was going on and that Br Dacian was involved, but Br Peppin said he had discounted the possibility.

12.77 The Provincial then visited Br Dacian in Roscrea and had a full discussion with him. There is no record of this conversation in the discovered documentation. Two weeks later, another meeting

¹⁵ This is a pseudonym.

¹⁶ This is a pseudonym.

¹⁷ This is a pseudonym.

¹⁸ This is a pseudonym.

took place at Cluain Mhuire, the provincial house for the St Mary's Province in Dublin, when Br Dacian maintained that he had nothing new to tell.

- 12.78** The Provincial did not meet the Murphys until some five weeks after the matter was originally reported. At this meeting with the Provincial, Br Travis, and the Superior, Br Tyeis, Mr Murphy complained about the delay, and expressed his annoyance at Br Travis's failure to contact them. He had found it very hard to get the Provincial's phone number. Br Travis explained that the Provincial headquarters in Marino was undergoing major renovations, which was why they had got no response from someone who could help them. He then explained that he himself had not contacted them because he had been told that Mr Murphy had stated that he did not trust the Brothers and was certain that they would want to cover up for Br Dacian and do nothing about the allegations.
- 12.79** Br Travis told the Murphys that he appreciated that they were very upset, as were the Brothers. They were shocked by the allegations. He said that Br Dacian was very upset. Mrs Murphy became angry at the mention of Br Dacian being upset and said that he was 'cute and intelligent' in the way he operated. The Provincial pointed out that he had interrupted his schedule and postponed appointments to come to the meeting and that he wanted to hear the allegations from them first hand. The Brothers questioned the Murphys about the origins of rumours in the locality and also about media coverage, following which the Provincial sought details about the complaints. The Murphys related how the matter came to their attention. They said that they still did not have an admission from Tom that Br Dacian had had anal intercourse with him, and they explained why they were suspicious that that had happened.
- 12.80** The Provincial expressed his concern regarding the allegations and said that he had full trust in the inquiries that the Superior was making. He said that he himself had taken the allegations most seriously and was carrying out a thorough, professional, private investigation. He said that he was aware that there was an independent inquiry being conducted by the Health Board. He could not reveal who he had been contacting, and the Murphys appreciated this. He said he wanted to get the truth regarding Tom and Br Dacian. In the light of his findings and those of the Health Board, he would take whatever action was required, 'but we must have the truth first'.
- 12.81** Mr Murphy said that he and his wife wanted three things immediately and they did not want the inquiry dragging on. They were: (1) a written apology from Br Dacian; (2) an assurance that Br Dacian would not return to the area and would not be in a position to deal with children; and (3) payment for psychological and psychiatric treatment for Tom. Mr Murphy proposed to send the bills to the Brothers, mentioning that he was at that time out of pocket in the amount of £100. The Provincial reiterated that the investigation would have to move to its conclusion before these points could be considered.
- 12.82** Neither Brother mentioned to the Murphys that Br Dacian had admitted sexually interfering with Tom over a period of two years. Nor did they give any indication that they were aware of his past record or even that they were investigating it, although they had had ample opportunity to do so during the preceding five weeks.
- 12.83** The meeting as recorded in the Provincial's memorandum was entirely directed to getting information from the family and seeking admissions from them to bolster suspicions by the Brothers that the Murphys were involved in publicising the allegations. The memorandum did not indicate any sympathy having been expressed or any expression of regret or responsibility by the Congregation for what had happened. Although the precise nature of the abuse was uncertain at that point, the essential facts had, as the Brothers knew already, been established, namely, that Br Dacian had, by his own admission, been sexually abusing the pupil over a period of two years.

12.84 Two days later, Mr Murphy had another conversation with Br Tyeis, at which he reported information that he had received from a friend in Dublin, that there was a serious complaint about Br Dacian's involvement with a boy at a primary school where the Brother had previously been Principal. He also referred to other suspicions. The Superior elicited from Mr Murphy his evaluation of the meeting two days previously. Mr Murphy repeated that he did not want to make a formal complaint to the Gardaí. The Superior emphasised that the Brothers wished justice to be done for both Tom and Br Dacian, and that there would not be a cover-up. He commented that the investigations would take time to complete. Mr Murphy asked whether Br Dacian would be back in the School and the Superior replied that, while it was not for him to say, 'Given the serious nature of the rumours and allegations I didn't think that the Provincial would ask him to return'. Again, the Superior withheld the information about Br Dacian's admissions, and treated the case as involving 'rumours and allegations'.

12.85 The Superior recorded his general observations. He thought it was obvious that the Murphys were being tutored, but not necessarily by legal people. He claimed to have detected anxiety on the Murphys' part about the possible revelations that might emerge from the investigations. He wondered whether a desire to claim monetary compensation might explain Mr Murphy's unwillingness to press charges. He recommended that communities and individual Brothers in them where Br Dacian had taught should be instructed not to comment on this matter in any way. This recommendation showed that Br Tyeis was aware of how a proper investigation should proceed, namely by inquiry in the schools where Br Dacian had worked previously.

12.86 The Superior's record of this meeting concluded with a note directed to the Provincial, in which he made three points. He referred to one of the Brothers in his Community whom he had consulted on the day that he received the complaint, and recorded that that Brother confirmed that Br Dacian frequently inquired about Tom Murphy's attendance at school. The other points recorded a teacher's denial that he had spoken about Br Dacian's activities, as Mr Murphy had alleged, and the Primary School Vice-Principal's statement that the Murphys were out to get money.

12.87 Br Tyeis had a later meeting on the same day with the Gardaí who were endeavouring to investigate, notwithstanding the reluctance of the Murphys to press formal charges. They gave him a report of the progress of their investigation, which he noted and supplied to the Provincial.

Early 1970s to early 1980s

12.88 Some months after the incident involving Tom Murphy, a Brother in the Community, Br Rique,¹⁹ was able to give some further information about Br Dacian's time in the Dublin school, which he recorded in a note entitled 'To Whom It May Concern'. There had been press publicity about the case, which was of great concern to the Christian Brothers and to the Murphys. When the story was published, Br Rique's sister appeared to know more about it than he did. Her source was another relation, Patrick Walsh,²⁰ a teacher in the Dublin school where Br Dacian had been Principal. This teacher had expressed surprise to the Brother's sister some two years previously, on learning that Br Dacian had been appointed Principal of a primary school, because of allegations made against him in Dublin that he had molested a boy and also because of other rumours about him. Br Rique asked Mr Walsh about these allegations. He said that the Vice-Principal of that school had spoken to each of the teachers individually about the matter. One of the teachers became aware of allegations against Br Dacian, who admitted to the teacher and one boy's mother that he had sexually abused the boy. Had he not done so, they told him, the matter would go public. Confirmation of what happened at the time appeared in a letter written by the teacher in the mid-1990s, seeking reassurance that the Brother was no longer involved with children. He wrote:

¹⁹ This is a pseudonym.

²⁰ This is a pseudonym.

A few years ago [Br Dacian] was involved in an assault of a sexual nature on a child. As a result of this he was taken out for treatment etc. This was done with the agreement of the family.

12.89 Br Dacian's personnel card recorded a break in service of approximately 10 months between his time in the Dublin school and his appointment to the school where he abused Tom Murphy.

12.90 During this intermission, Br Dacian spent time in the Cistercian Abbey in Roscrea, the retreat centre to which he again moved when the events regarding Tom Murphy came to light. He had in fact spent time on retreat there even before this, although the circumstances of that first retreat are not known.

12.91 During his second stay in the Cistercian Abbey (after leaving the Dublin school), he was referred to a Jesuit Priest for assistance with his problems and, it would seem, for assessment on behalf of the Congregation. The senior Brother who arranged the referral included in his letter to the Priest some background information about Br Dacian:

I believe his present problem may have had a bit of a history. There certainly was an incident some twenty years ago. What has happened in the intervening years I just don't know. I just fear that there may be more than two isolated incidents separated by twenty years or more. Perhaps my fears and feelings arise from being too long in office!

12.92 The Jesuit Priest gave a reassuring opinion about Br Dacian in a letter to Br Agrican²¹ at Cluain Mhuire:

I am confident that there is no risk of a recurrence of such an event in the near future – by which I mean over the next few years – he has had a severe shock. If the measures suggested are taken I am confident that there is no serious danger of a recurrence especially as a Director would enable him to recognise warning signs and take remedial action.

12.93 There is no record available of the measures that were suggested or of what the 'Director' was to do.

Early 1980s – incident in Gaelteacht

12.94 Further information about Br Dacian had emerged some four months before the Murphys made their complaint about his conduct. A memorandum in the records of the Brothers contains an account of information given by a father as to Br Dacian's offensive sexual activities with his son, Peter Brady,²² when the boy was in the Gaelteacht one summer in the mid-1980s. The matter came to light when the Principal of a Christian Brothers primary school in Dublin contacted Br Agrican and then another senior Brother, whose note recorded the information. The Principal heard the allegations from Mr Brady and thought it was important to notify the Congregation at senior level. He said that he was concerned about recommending groups of boys to go to the Gaelteacht in view of what Mr Brady had reported to him. He arranged for a meeting between Mr Brady and the senior Brother at Cluain Mhuire.

12.95 Mr Brady complained that, after Peter's first two days in the Gaelteacht, Br Dacian, who was teaching there, brought him to his room every night and sat him on his lap and fondled and kissed him and stroked his penis. Br Dacian would arrive when all were asleep and shine a torch in Peter's face and bring him to his room. One night, Peter tried to evade him by going to another bunk, but he was located by Br Dacian and brought away. Peter said that he was 'scared stiff' all during the holiday. Mr Brady had suggested to Peter that Br Dacian was very friendly and maybe

²¹ This is a pseudonym.

²² This is a pseudonym.

that Peter was exaggerating, but Peter insisted on the details as described, and recalled another particular incident when boys were waiting for presents they had ordered and Peter asked Br Dacian when they were coming. The Brother brought him outside and asked him if he really wanted to see him about the presents or did he want to see him himself. Mr Brady said that Peter had written to the family saying that he wanted to go home. The Bradys visited him on two weekends and found Br Dacian very helpful and friendly, and Mr Brady brought cigarettes as a present for Br Dacian but Peter objected, which struck Mr Brady as strange, but he did not follow it up.

12.96 When Peter came home, he received a letter from Br Dacian inviting him to visit the Brother at his Dublin school, enclosing a map showing how to get there. His parents thought that Peter should accept the invitation, but he would only go if he was accompanied, and his mother went with him but Br Dacian was not there.

12.97 Mr Brady did not wish to press charges, nor did he want Br Dacian to know the details or the source of the information. He was concerned that other boys might have been affected. Mr Brady made a favourable impression on the senior Brother who made the record.

12.98 After his second time on retreat in the monastery (following the allegations made in respect of Tom Murphy), Br Dacian went to a Residential Therapy Centre for Religious Clergy in England. The Provincial, Br Travis, wrote to him there with information about the progress of the investigations. Br Travis apologised for the delay in writing and expressed the hope that Br Dacian was finding his stay helpful and looked forward to visiting in a few weeks' time when 'I will be able to have a chat with you then'. He went on to describe the state of the inquiries:

I have had two further meetings with the Western Health Board and they have now concluded the investigations. They will not be following through with any proceedings, thank God. I have now to meet Mr and Mrs Murphy ... I hope this will be the final meeting. They still require an apology in writing which, on reading, they will immediately destroy in my presence. It should be brief and to the point. On the basis of legal advice I enclose a draft. I also enclose some of our own Cluain Mhuire notepaper on which you can write the apology in your own handwriting. However, write this apology only if you feel you should. I would need it to hand by Wednesday, [two days prior to my meeting with the Murphys] at the latest. When I meet you on ... I will bring you up to date on what has happened at all of these meetings. I am confident that it will all die down now with the help of God.

12.99 Br Dacian wrote the apology as requested by Br Travis:

Dear Mr and Mrs Murphy,

My purpose in writing to you is to apologise for my behaviour with Tom and any upset I may have caused to you, his parents. I regret it sincerely.

I am pleased to hear that Tom is back at school and faring well.

Yours sincerely,

12.100 Br Dacian wrote to the Provincial expressing his gratitude and appreciation that 'the whole affair is coming to a satisfactory conclusion', which he thought was due to the Provincial's 'delicate dealing of the matter'.

12.101 The documents in this case revealed, incidentally, other unrelated instances of sexual abuse by religious and lay teachers.

12.102 In his first meeting with the Provincial and the Superior, Mr Murphy stated that interference with boys was going on in the School for many years, going back 25 or 30 years, and mentioned a Br

Nathaniel.²³ The Provincial recorded that he and the Superior said they knew nothing about it, and noted that Br Nathaniel was a Christian Brother in the Community in the early 1950s who had later left the Congregation. The story of Br Nathaniel, as revealed in the Congregation's Rome Files, was that, in the mid-1960s, he sought and obtained a dispensation from his vows because of his trouble with the vow of chastity, although the record did not confirm that his sexual interest was in boys. The Brother had informed his Superiors that he had not been able to keep the vow of chastity for years. He was proposing to seek a job as a teacher in England. The authorities were keen to facilitate the Brother and, because 'it would make matters too pointed if he was now taken off' a course that he was to do, it was proposed to move him to the O'Brien Institute and have the dispensation executed from there.

12.103 The psychologist whom the Murphy family consulted reported to a senior social worker that the father of another child with whom he was dealing had himself, when he was a schoolboy, witnessed his Principal teacher, a religious Brother, sexually abusing a boy in front of the class on frequent occasions.

12.104 The story of Peter Brady emerged for the first time in that family when Peter's brother had an unpleasant experience of a sexual nature with a teacher in his school and warned Peter about him, whereupon Peter revealed to his mother and brother the abuse that he had suffered at Br Dacian's hands.

12.105 In none of the Br Dacian cases was there a prosecution or even a formal report to the Gardaí. None of the victims wished to pursue the matter by way of Garda investigation. In the Murphy case, the parents were fearful of the damage that might be done to their son by the publicity. The same was almost certainly true for the incidental cases mentioned above. These features of the responses of victims and their families to cases of abuse have important implications for abuse and the investigation of abuse, and often make it easier for perpetrators to avoid being required to answer for their actions.

12.106 The teacher who confronted Br Dacian in the Dublin school was the Principal, in the mid-1990s, when he wrote to Br Travis seeking confirmation that Br Dacian was no longer working with children. He wrote:

We have to be absolutely certain that no other children are at risk. If we do not get that guarantee we will have to get legal advice.

12.107 Br Travis furnished the required confirmation in his reply:

I wish to confirm that he is engaged in ministry with adults in England. His work does not entail any involvement or contact with children or young people.

12.108 In its Opening Statement on Letterfrack, the Congregation dealt with Br Dacian, who is referred to as Br R, as follows:

8. In ... Brother R, during his appointment to Salthill Industrial School was accused of touching a boy's private parts in the dormitory.

(a) He admitted that there was some truth in the allegation.

(b) Unfortunately, he was subsequently sent to Letterfrack [in the early 1970s], having spent the previous years in day schools.

²³ This is a pseudonym.

Comment:

- Details of the complaint were found in the Generalate Archives, which had been transferred to Rome in the mid-60s while only a short reference was made in the Salthill visitation report ...
- The Provincial Council who had been in office [at that time] were replaced by a new Council who had no knowledge of the original complaint when R was sent to Letterfrack.
- Hence, Brother R was sent to Letterfrack without any knowledge of the previous complaint on the part of the new Council.

12.109 These Submissions are included here for completeness. The Christian Brothers did not address the issues raised by the fuller account of Br Dacian's career of abuse contained in other parts of their own extensive documentation.

12.110 The case of Br Dacian is recounted in detail because it has significance beyond the story of sexual abuse in Salthill and other industrial schools. The later episodes illustrate some of the difficulties that confront persons reporting abuse and why they might be reluctant to prosecute it. These events happened relatively recently, at a time thought to be enlightened and in conditions that should have been conducive to proper investigation and sensitive treatment of victims and their families. It must be remembered that this account only contains what is recorded in documents and that there may be other instances that did not come to light.

12.111 In conclusion:

- **The Brothers' assurances to Tom Murphy's family that they would carry out a proper investigation, take action and not cover up were hollow: they did not investigate, they withheld information, and they supported the perpetrator.**
- **The Murphys were treated shamefully: the parents were in turn passed on from one person in authority to another; their case was treated with indifference; they were delayed a meeting with the senior Brother; and when the meeting did eventually take place, they were patronised, cross-examined and misled.**
- **The need for proper procedures and protocols is highlighted by these cases, but they are of little value if those in authority are working to their own agenda.**
- **The failure to deal with this abuser led to other children being victimised, and the Congregation bears responsibility.**
- **The danger perceived by the Christian Brothers was the revelation of sexual abuse rather than the fact of abuse.**
- **Victims' families were unwilling to prosecute this abuser in three separate cases, which would tend to suggest substantial under-reporting of sexual abuse.**
- **This perpetrator was able to exploit the reluctance of his victims to charge him and the complacency of his brethren.**

Br Gautier²⁴

12.112 A matter concerning Br Gautier was brought to the Provincial Council's attention in the early 1950s. The Superior wrote to the Provincial setting out the matter. He explained that there were occasions when Br Gautier had stripped small boys who were in care in Salthill in order to apply a medical lotion. This was not an uncommon practice, in that boys suffering from various ailments, such as scabies, were usually treated with a medical lotion. The Superior questioned Br Gautier,

²⁴ This is a pseudonym.

who denied emphatically that anything improper had occurred and volunteered to attend at the Provinciate in Booterstown to defend his actions.

12.113 The Superior wrote that Br Gautier had acted 'indiscreetly' and should have brought to his attention the fact that the boys required treatment so that he could deal with it as he thought appropriate. He warned that there were 'boys in our midst who have told lies about their companions with a view to having such punished'. The Superior remarked that he had intended to warn Br Gautier to be careful but that the matter lapsed from his memory. He added that Br Gautier 'is severe – I mean stern'. He accepted Br Gautier's explanation of the matter.

12.114 Br Gautier also wrote to the Provincial and explained what had led him to strip boys. It had been reported to him that two boys were suffering from a disease. He said that he had sought the advice of a priest on the matter. The priest gave him permission to strip the boys, to see whether they were in fact suffering from a disease. Br Gautier swore that nothing improper had taken place.

12.115 A Visitation Report later that year noted that Br Gautier was an untiring worker with no difficulty handling the large number of boys in the School. However, the Report noted that 'he resents direction or interference in his work. He has had difficulties with his Superiors, both in Glin and in Galway on this point'. The writer also noted that Br Gautier was below average intelligence.

12.116 Br Ryan of the General Council wrote to Br Rice of the Provincial Council six months later:

I think it would be well to give Br Gautier a transfer from there on the first opportunity. I got a hint of that some time ago. I do not imply great urgency, but merely for the young Brother's own sake.

12.117 Br Gautier was duly transferred to Limerick three months later. He never taught in an industrial school again.

- 12.118**
- **Br Ryan clearly had previous suspicions regarding Br Gautier and, in the light of these suspicions, his behaviour with the boys in Salthill should have given rise to urgent action.**
 - **The issue that should have been investigated was whether there was a sexual motive to what the Brother did. Relevant matters included whether it was his function to examine boys, what records he had kept of his inspections, where and when the examinations took place and in whose presence, why the Brother consulted the priest, and how many boys were involved. Before the topic was closed and suspicion dispelled, the boys should have been interviewed. In the result, no clear decision was made, but the Superior thought that the Brother acted 'indiscreetly' and he was transferred subsequently 'for his own sake'.**

Former pupil Brian Dunne²⁵

12.119 During the mid-1970s, the Resident Manager's diary recorded that, at 2am, a former pupil, Brian Dunne, who had been discharged some 10 years previously, 'broke in and interfered with boys'. The following night, at 1.30am, he again broke into the School and sexually assaulted five boys. On this occasion, he was caught by Br Marque. Eight months later, he once again broke into the School. No further details of these incidents are available. The former pupil had been in Salthill for six years during the 1960s.

²⁵ This is a pseudonym.

Patrick Nolan,²⁶ trainee childcare worker

- 12.120** A number of staff approached Br Burcet²⁷ in the late 1980s, expressing concerns they had in relation to a care worker who held a temporary position with the Christian Brothers and who had himself been a resident of the home during the 1970s. They recounted an allegation, made by a boy residing in the School, that Mr Nolan had attempted a serious sexual assault on him the previous summer. The boy alleged that Mr Nolan targeted loners and used bribery as part of his modus operandi. Another staff member also recounted a recent incident when she discovered Mr Nolan and a pupil alone in a room, supposedly practising for the school concert. When she entered the room, the boy was sitting on the care worker's knee and immediately jumped up. She also expressed concerns for another child who was close to Mr Nolan.
- 12.121** The Board of Management conducted an inquiry and suspended Mr Nolan, who denied the allegations. Approximately two months later, Mr Nolan was informed that the investigation was complete, that there were serious doubts regarding his professional trust, and the Board of Management felt it had no option but to terminate his employment with the School. He was given a lump sum to help him financially.
- 12.122** Mr Nolan brought proceedings against the School under the unfair dismissal legislation. In correspondence regarding this litigation, Br Burcet noted that 'it is most likely that Patrick Nolan in his defence will point out that he himself was sexually abused while he was in St Joseph's'. Br Burcet expressed concern regarding the potential damage that publicity surrounding the court case could do the School. The case settled on the day of the hearing. In the mid-1990s, Mr Nolan made a statement to the Gardai alleging sexual abuse by three Brothers whilst he was a pupil in Salthill.
- 12.123** In conclusion:
- **Although the allegations in this case were treated with more urgency than other incidents of sexual abuse cited above, the resolution of the case was motivated by a desire to avoid damaging publicity against the School. The consequences for other children who would come into contact with this man were not considered.**
 - **The treatment of Mr Nolan, a layman, can be contrasted with that of Br Dacian, which is outlined above and whose abuse also came to light at the same time.**
 - **Mr Nolan made serious allegations of sexual abuse which caused a settlement to be reached in his unfair dismissal case. There was no evidence from the Christian Brothers' files that these allegations were investigated by the Provincialate or passed on to the Western Health Board.**

Br Julien²⁸

- 12.124** Brother Julien spent seven years in Salthill during the 1930s. During service in his next posting, Artane, he was accused of misconduct. A personnel sheet in relation to Br Julien provided the information that: 'clear evidence came to light of serious, long, continued misconduct with boys in Artane. He asked for dispensation from his vows and left the Congregation [in] 1944'. Br Julien was implicated, along with three other Brothers, according to the Visitation Report, which noted:

In our Institution it should be considered a very grave offence for a Br to take a boy to his room on any pretext, or to be seen alone with a boy on any occasion. Unfortunately the Rule forbidding such was not observed in Artane. Boys were also taken out of the shops and off the parade by Brothers for various reasons. These have now been prohibited. The

²⁶ This is a pseudonym.

²⁷ This is a pseudonym.

²⁸ This is a pseudonym.

superior should have access to all rooms and stores in the institutions at all reasonable times and keys should be provided to enable him to have such access.

- 12.125** • **There was no documentary evidence as to any sexual activity by this Brother in Salthill but, given the recidivist nature of this crime, there must be serious concern regarding his time there.**

Br Piperel²⁹

- 12.126** Br Piperel taught in Salthill for two years in the mid-1940s. He had earlier worked in Letterfrack, where he had been the subject of a serious complaint that he was sexually interfering with boys. A full account of the case is contained in the chapter on Letterfrack but a brief outline of it is included here.

- 12.127** The Provincial received an anonymous letter of accusation from ‘a friend of the school’ in relation to concerns about Br Piperel’s behaviour in Letterfrack. The letter-writer asked the Provincial to change Br Piperel for the morals of the boys.

- 12.128** The Provincial did not conceal his disquiet. Having set out a transcription of the anonymous letter, he wrote to Br Piperel:

These recurring warnings are causing me grave anxiety. Taken in connection with what did happen between you and boys on a previous occasion there is quite justifiable cause for all my anxiety.

Has anything wrong, such as is described in the above letter, taken place between you and a boy, or boys? The matter is so grave, and is fraught with such serious consequences to you, to the Institution and to the Congregation, that I require you to be very open and candid with me. Please let me have a letter from you by return.

- 12.129** Br Piperel wrote a three-page letter defending his behaviour and alleging that another member of staff had made malicious allegations against him.

- 12.130** At the time of the complaint, Br Piperel had been in Letterfrack for some eight years and he continued his career there for another four years. Thereafter, he served in Salthill, Tralee and Glin for almost 10 years, including two years in Salthill. The records contained complaints about the Brother’s work and attitude in these institutions, but did not record incidents of sexual impropriety.

- 12.131** His last posting was to a school in Cork in the 1950s, where his career as a teacher came to a dramatic end as a result of a complaint by a local doctor about his inappropriate behaviour with a young girl.

- 12.132** In their Opening Statement for Letterfrack, the Christian Brothers recorded the facts about this Brother in summary form, noting that he ‘was given the opportunity to explain himself and give his interpretation of what happened’. They commented:

It is not clear why Br X was moved around from institution to institution despite being a danger to the boys. There is no detailed account to indicate what discussion took place about the matter, nor any indication as to why such a decision was taken.

- 12.133** • **This Brother was transferred to Salthill, notwithstanding the history of concern about his conduct with boys. Again, there was no evidence that he interfered with boys there, and it must also be borne in mind that no case was proved against him in Letterfrack. However, the documents indicated that the Brother Provincial had a serious concern**

²⁹ This is a pseudonym.

about his propensities, and that alone should have ensured that he was not appointed to another residential school.

Conclusions on sexual abuse in Salthill

- 12.134**
1. The appointment to Salthill of a Brother with a known propensity for abuse of boys showed a reckless disregard for the safety of children in care.
 2. Concerns were raised about three Brothers whilst they were in Salthill. In none of these cases was the abuse addressed, other than as a practical problem for the Congregation. One Brother continued in his post and the two others were transferred to other schools. In the case of one of them, there is documentary evidence of serious abuse of young boys continuing for over 20 years after his transfer from Salthill.
 3. The Congregation protected its own reputation instead of protecting children.

Neglect and emotional abuse

- 12.135** In the 1940s and 1950s, there were around 200 boys in Salthill. Unlike the position in Artane, many of these children were under eight years of age. In 1955, for example, over 80 of the 165 boys registered for the national school were in second class or lower. Despite the large numbers of very small children, staffing was no higher than in other industrial schools.
- 12.136** In Salthill, the absence of any childcare training had more serious consequences because of the age profile of so many of the children.
- 12.137** Although conditions improved in the mid-1970s, for the previous 40 years of its existence, Salthill did not deliver an adequate level of physical care to the children who were sent there. A picture of the Institution emerged from the Visitation Reports and the Department of Education reports for the period.
- 12.138** As in other Christian Brothers' schools, both the children and the Community were supported out of the capitation grants. Very little information was available in the Visitation Reports but, in one year, the figures were set out in detail. In 1943, £1,600 was allocated to the nine Brothers in the School by way of stipend. In that same year, the three teaching Brothers received £214, or £71 each, by way of salary from the Department of Education.
- 12.139** The financial position depended on the number of children, and in 1960 the Visitor noted that, 'As the numbers are being maintained the finances are satisfactory'.
- 12.140** In each of the succeeding years, stipends were paid into the House accounts, although no other breakdown of the figures was available. By the 1970s, the House account had a large credit balance in the bank, but this was accounted for, in part at least, by the sale of land.
- 12.141** In 1947, the Visitor observed that: 'Apart from Government grants ..., rent, shops and farm contributed substantially to the funds'. Notwithstanding this, in 1951, the Visitor referred to the serious disadvantage caused by the lack of a farm. There was insufficient land attached to the Institution to allow it to be self-sufficient in terms of food.
- 12.142** During the relevant period, funding for the boys in Salthill was adequate to meet their basic needs.
- 12.143** The early Visitation Reports from the 1940s were very critical of the lack of hygiene in the School.

- 12.144** In 1938, the Visitor's Report painted a rather dismal picture of life in the Institution. The Visitor noted that the workshops were very old and dilapidated. He advised that they be replaced immediately, as they presented a potential hazard.
- 12.145** He suggested that the chapel be heated during the months of rain, not only to preserve the timber but also as the children must be cold. Similarly, he noted that the recreation hall presented as drab, dark and cold, although 'a few expressed the view that the breaths of the large number of boys made the room quite endurable'. He recommended that a good heating system would be desirable for maintenance purposes. An indication of how cold the School must have been was gleaned from the fact that the Brothers tended to wear their cloaks at all times up to the month of April. The boys did not possess cloaks.
- 12.146** The Visitor was critical of the overall cleanliness of the boys' clothing and of the dormitories.
- 12.147** In 1939, Dr Anna McCabe³⁰ conducted her first general inspection of Salthill. She noted that the School looked untidy, as did the children. Otherwise, she found the boys were healthy.
- 12.148** The following year, the Visitor remarked that, 'this is the one of our institutions that has impressed me least'. The Institution gave a dirty, drab impression and 'tidiness is not a feature of the place'.
- 12.149** The boys' kitchen was renovated in 1942, as it was in a particularly offensive condition because of rats' nests, a fact that was not commented on by the Department of Education Inspector.
- 12.150** Dr McCabe wrote to the Resident Manager, after her inspection in July 1942, complaining about:
- the unsatisfactory conditions in which I found the beds and bedding, dormitories and corridors, in the matter of general cleanliness, also the need for painting and plastering of some of the walls.
- 12.151** Br Vachel,³¹ the Manager, defended the condition of the Institution, and blamed Dr McCabe's poor impression on the bad timing of her visit.
- 12.152** The Visitor in May 1943 was shocked at the state of disrepair and low standard of cleanliness of the premises, which he put down to wartime conditions, low finances, and a certain lack of energy on the part of the Superior due to his ill-health. The Report noted a lack of cleanliness in the boys' bedclothes, but reserved its main criticism for their eating facilities and implements:
- The boys' refectory is the part of the institution most lacking in cleanliness. The floor is in a bad condition. The oil cloth covering the tables is old dirty and in places ragged. The forms are dirty and badly need scrubbing. The plates and mugs are of aluminium and have the undersides dirty and greasy. Some of the mugs are of tin showing signs of rust. The plates that were once enamelled have a wretched appearance. The Brother in charge has too little to do but he is dirty and lazy ... The impression produced is that St. Joseph's is a neglected place inhabited by people devoid of a sense of cleanliness. Some cleanup may have been done in preparation for the visitor and the ordinary condition may be worse than what I describe so that if a Government Inspector came unannounced and made a close inspection his report would be very damaging and would bring shame upon us.
- 12.153** The Visitor was of the view that the situation in Salthill was so serious that a visit from the Brother Provincial would be necessary in order to drive home the gravity of the matter to the Superior.

³⁰ Dr Anna McCabe was the Department of Education Inspector for most of the relevant period. See the Department of Education chapter for a discussion of her role and performance.

³¹ This is a pseudonym.

- 12.154** A similar theme pervaded the Visitation Reports of the 1940s, and the shocking state of the Institution was referred to again and again.
- 12.155** The 1944 Visitation Report noted the shabby state of the boys' refectory and dilapidated condition of the outbuildings.
- 12.156** Dr McCabe conducted a General Inspection of the School in June 1944 and, once again, noted the tattered and patched state of the children's clothing and footwear. The Resident Manager complained about the difficulty in obtaining supplies and the prohibitive cost of material. He criticised the practice under which children were discharged into the care of their parents after spending only a short time in the Institution. This had a destabilising effect on the other children. He also regarded it as unfair that the Brothers fit these children out with new clothes, only for them to leave a short time later. Dr McCabe also noted that the premises were badly in need of repair.
- 12.157** In 1946, the Visitor expressed concern at the dangerous state of the workshops. He noted that there were seven boys employed in the bakery, which supplied the needs of the School. This workshop was dirty, with cobwebs everywhere. Five boys were employed in the laundry. He was critical of the laundry facilities, the torn bedclothes and the clothing of the boys.
- 12.158** The Visitor in 1947 noted that a series of long overdue renovations were underway.
- 12.159** The following year, the Visitor noted a number of improvements to the premises, including the dormitories, infirmary, bathroom, recreation hall and dining hall.
- 12.160** Despite the improvements introduced at the end of the 1940s, the Visitation Report for 1950 was still critical of the conditions for the boys and the Brothers. The Visitor observed that there was little in the way of recreation for the boys and that 'life is rather drab here for boys and Brothers. The boys can have little healthy to talk about'. He noted that the schoolyard was in a deplorable condition, the concrete being badly broken. He suggested the introduction of two young Brothers to the Community to inject some life into the Institution.
- 12.161** The Visitation Report for 1950 stated that 'a wave of immorality' had been discovered, which was dealt with by means of a four-day retreat for the boys.
- 12.162** In 1951, the Visitor drew attention to the unsuitability of the boys' dormitories. They were housed in two reconstructed old mills and were badly ventilated. He did not notice any improvement the following year: 'Conditions are just tolerable but no effort is made to put the touch of finality on either cleanliness or good order'. Tailoring and shoemaking were the only trades catered for in the School, and he recommended that a carpenter's shop be opened.
- 12.163** Dr McCabe conducted an Inspection of the School in June 1953 and, while she accepted that the School was well run, she noted that many improvements were required. She suggested a new washing machine and colander for the laundry.
- 12.164** In March 1954, the Visitor observed some improvements in the appearance of the premises. He criticised the boys' kitchen with its out-dated cooking equipment and only one functioning boiler that provided for all of the needs of the School. The pantry was damp, covered in cobwebs, and unsuitable for the storage of food. He noted that the bread supplied by the in-house bakery was anything but appetising. In October of the same year, Dr McCabe reported that a newly appointed Resident Manager had plans for many improvements, including installation of a new kitchen unit, new sanitary annex with showers and a new heating system, as well as resurfacing the yard.

- 12.165** By the time of the Visitation in February 1956, many renovations and improvements had been made to the boys' kitchen, bathrooms, dining hall, school rooms and workshops. New equipment was introduced to the kitchen and an immersion heater installed. Improvements were again acknowledged in the Report of 1957, particularly to the dormitories and kitchen.
- 12.166** The 1958 Visitation Report noted that hot water was now available in the dormitories and that the boys had baths every fortnight.
- 12.167** Major repair works took place during the early 1960s, which saw a new block constructed housing a dormitory and bathroom facilities. The primary school building was updated and new furniture purchased. A central heating system was installed.
- 12.168** Fr Henry Moore, who wrote a critical report on Artane in the early 1960, was complimentary about Salthill. He said that he had visited a number of industrial schools at that time, including Salthill. He knew the Manager in Salthill, as they had been raised in the same orphanage:
- Now, albeit it was a very small school in comparison to Artane, I was very impressed by his management and by the way he treated the boys. They looked very well, they were very well dressed and I was quite happy with my experience there ... I thought Salthill was more civilised and more happier.*
- 12.169** A more critical approach was adopted by the Visitor in 1967, who noted:
- The boys here range from infants to young men at work in the town or attending the technical school. All perforce are treated alike – young and old. The same type of discipline is used from the time he enters the school until he leaves it. Older boys resent this. None of the men with the exception of the Superior has any special training for this work. This is acknowledged by the staff and lamented. Each child is a problem and requires special treatment – perhaps individual would be a better word than special – until he becomes stabilised.: The young Brothers know little or nothing about the previous history of their boys – there are no record cards available.
- 12.170** He thought that, once the boys reached the age of 12, they should be transferred to Artane. The Visitor did not agree with the writer of the previous year's Visitation Report that the Brothers were doing a good job in Salthill. However, he did not blame the staff, as they were doing the best they could with the resources they had at their disposal. He criticised the frequent change in staff, as just when they had established a relationship with the boys, invariably they would be moved on. He added:
- Perhaps we put too much stress on academic training – lessons in hygiene in personal cleanliness – in care of clothes – in polishing of shoes – in using of laces in their shoes – in combing of hair of walking without slouching are all of great importance for these boys. I thought the boys were badly clad and untidy. If we were inspected by an outside authority we would not be pleased with the report ... We need two things for this school 1) more money 2) more trained staff. We need a few nuns more so than in Artane – the boys here seem more helpless.
- 12.171** Six years later, little seemed to have changed.
- 12.172** In 1973, the Visitor was extremely condemnatory of the School. He noted that the boys in Salthill were generally more disturbed than the boys in Letterfrack and that, by comparison, the School was understaffed. This was a disturbing comparison because Letterfrack was operated as a junior remand home for boys who had committed criminal offences. Both the age and the number of staff were concerns in this regard. He noted, 'The lack of female assistance is apparent as well

as the need for such evidenced by the way the boys flock around the assistant cook when she is cleaning around the home’.

12.173 He expressed concern at the fate of boys leaving the School:

The traditional practice has been to place the boys in ‘digs’ when they become apprentices, but recently this has not worked out satisfactorily. For some reason, possibly because more disturbed boys are being admitted, they are not emotionally prepared for such independence and rather startling reactions have occurred when they have been so placed. Consequently more of them are remaining at the home and the problem of how to deal with them is becoming acute. For any boy, of course, to be sent into the world on his own with no family or friends at the age of 15 and with very little earning ability can be a shattering experience and perhaps the policy needs to be reconsidered.

12.174 The Brother noted the plan to instigate a group home system with the 50 boys in residence and welcomed this initiative. He was critical of the lack of recreational facilities available for the boys, watching TV being the main pastime.

12.175 He feared that ‘The present policy would seem to be to let [the School] run on (or perhaps run down) with a view to its ultimate demise’.

12.176 He warned that:

The present situation whereby the boys end up after ten years with us frightened, immature, resentful with little prospect for their self support is unfair both to them and to the Brothers concerned as well as harmful to the good name of the Congregation.

12.177 The Visitor proposed a number of recommendations for the future sustainability of the School which included:

- i. that a suitable Brother be appointed to accept responsibility for the Senior boys ... His main duties would be to assist them in the transition from institutional to normal social life, to teach them the social graces e.g. behaviour at social affairs (none of the apprentices can now attend a dance – they must be in by 10pm) to support them in their apprenticeship difficulties, to help them to accept personal responsibility for their life as they enter the adult world. Such a Brother therefore should not have the institutional mentality or be engrossed in the child-care approach. An example of a suitable person is Brother ... presently studying at the hostel though it would hardly be fair to interfere with his studies at the present time ...
- ii. that the plans proposed by the Manager of renovating the former infirmary as a group home for the apprentices is approved in principle. However, the visitor felt that, if this plan of providing a separate home is accepted, it should be done thoroughly and not on a patch-work basis since a large factor in the success of making these boys self-respecting and socially acceptable will be the home environment in which they find themselves and of which they can be proud. Hot and cold water, central heating, suitable and adequate showering facilities and pleasant rooms for sleeping and recreation are important even though they will obviously be rather expensive.
- iii. that the further plans of the Manager for dividing the boys into groups with their own home-areas be examined sympathetically.
- iv. that the assistant cook (or other lady) be employed to take care of the dormitory of the younger boys and of their clothing. In general the bed linen of the boys

is not changed frequently enough, they get changes of underclothing only once a week.

- v. that a suitable 'dig' be rented by the school and used to train the apprentices in social behaviour. This could be done by placing each apprentice there for a two or three-week period and making arrangements with the landlady for reports on their behaviour. Since the boys would know that they would be shortly returning to the Home, they would not experience the feeling of panic at the prospect as they do now and they would not be completely on their own.
- vi. that financial arrangements be made to assist the apprentices in their digs until their income is adequate for their own support ...
- vii. ... Perhaps the greatest need of the boys is to achieve some sense of individuality, the very nature of an institution militates against this.

12.178 The remainder of the Visitation Reports for the 1970s noted the changing face of the School. A group home-style system was put in place and female staff hired. The type of boy resident in the School also subtly changed over time so that, by the late 1970s, it mainly provided shelter for boys from broken homes who had emotional or psychological needs.

12.179 The problems were still acute, however, and two groups of local people were sufficiently concerned to write letters setting out their concerns.

Letters of concern

12.180 Following the publication of the Kennedy Report in 1970, the Secretary of the Galway Godparents Association wrote to the Department of Education on 9th January 1971 about two industrial schools, including St Joseph's, Salthill, in which the organisation had taken particular interest. She described the work the Association was doing:

The Committee of our Association organised classes in Art, Crafts, Music, Physical Education, Games & Elocution in both ... & St. Josephs. The classes were conducted by qualified teachers who gave their time free of charge & our Association bore all expenses for equipment & materials. The classes were a remarkable success and the children were benefiting immensely from them.

12.181 Regarding Salthill, the Association made three complaints:

The Manager of St. Joseph's is elderly and has no training in Child Care. He was appointed to his present post in August 1970 and it is his first experience of working in an Industrial School. Since his appointment he has discouraged the Godparent idea and has refused any additional Godparents, even though many of the boys have no family to take them out for regular visits. We get the impression that he is unaware of the great difficulties which the boys face when they leave the institution – serious difficulties which we are coming across continuously. The boys in primary school do not go out to school. St. Josephs is an all male institution ... We fully agree with the Reports' Assessment of the disadvantage of this sex segregation.

There is no question of any of the children in ... St. Josephs ... being educated to the ultimate of their capacity. There is a crying need ... for specialised teaching and provision for third level education.

After Care is simply non-existent. ... boys are unable to find suitable digs, are unable to manage in flats and have no place to go for holidays or days off, no one to care for them if they are sick or unemployed. Their extreme loneliness often drives them to do the very things for which they are branded. Not alone is there a need for pre-release Hostels and trained social workers & After Care agents but that these trained people should be working

with the children during the years prior to their discharge, thus being well-acquainted with them & gaining their confidence.

12.182 The letter went on:

We feel that there is no justification for the continued existence of either ... or St Josephs' in their present form. The damage being done to the children in both institutions can only be halted by an immediate change in the system.

12.183 In the summer of 1972, a representative of the Godparents Association wrote, on its behalf, to the Provincial Council expressing deep concern for the boys in Salthill. She did not elaborate on what these concerns were, but requested a meeting with members of the Council to discuss the problems. She received short shrift from the Council, who informed her in no uncertain terms that they saw little purpose in convening such a meeting and suggested that she discuss any issues with the Resident Manager who, she was assured, would be 'very sympathetic and accommodating'. The true sentiments of the Provincial Council to the approach by the Association were reflected in an undated memorandum which stated:

They wrote a highly critical and uncomplimentary letter to the Galway Advertiser about the Nuns in Lenaboy. Are in the bad books of the Bishop. Went to the Minister. Are interfering and seek notoriety.

12.184 The Christian Brothers were quite happy to dismiss the Association rather than seek elaboration on the substance of their concerns.

12.185 A year later, the Irish Countrywomen's Association wrote a strong report to the Department of Education, calling for urgent action to deal with the plight of children in industrial schools. They identified the key aim of childcare as being to prevent family breakdown and saw residential care as a last resort. They were particularly critical of the single-sex policy that operated in Galway, which led to the inevitable break-up of families:

We have witnessed the heartbreak of these deprived children on arrival at the institutions; the added heartbreak when they are separated, brothers from sisters. Our own doctors have treated the children for lice, scabies and contagious impetigo and are willing to bear testimony to this.

12.186 They were also critical of the aftercare provided in Galway:

Many of the boys leave at sixteen with only a very poor primary education and go from one menial job to another. It is not unusual for one boy to have been in nine jobs in the space of two years.

For some time there has been a pattern of boys from St Josephs sleeping out because they have nowhere to go. Some boys who have left Galway within the past three years are now in Limerick jail. What becomes of those who emigrate?

Reminiscences of a former Manager

12.187 Conditions in Salthill in 1973 were described by a former manager, Br Ames,³² who took up office in that year. He described his experiences there in an interview he gave for Congregation purposes. When he arrived in August 1973, there were about 47 boys in the School. He found that there was no trust with the older boys but it was possible to communicate with the younger ones. There was some bullying going on by the bigger boys, and they were able to intimidate the younger ones from relating to the Brothers. He said the boys were violent and cruel.

³² This is a pseudonym.

- 12.188** It was clear to Br Ames that big changes had to be made, and he decided that the place should be changed into residential homes. He stated that he failed to get funding for the work from the Department of Education and so went to the bank and borrowed £15,000. The Department of Education discovery, however, indicated that, in 1974, 'The Home was remodelled interiorly at a cost of £8,000 £6,000 of a grant was given by the Dep. of Education'.
- 12.189** Br Ames said that he and his colleagues tried different schemes, and eventually installed 15 bedrooms with living/dining areas attached, so as to replicate a family environment as far as possible.
- 12.190** Other changes were made whereby staff were increased and engaged full-time in care work rather than having to teach. Older boys who were going out to work used the School as a residential facility to help them with the transition from institutional life to that in the outside world. The other boys went out to school instead of being taught in the Institution. They were able to make friends and acquaintances outside, and sometimes visitors came back to the School. Members of a family could live together in one unit. If a parent visited, he or she could be welcomed and treated with respect.
- 12.191** The whole system, in short, was organised on civilised and sensitive lines, with a view to making the lives of the boys as close to normal as possible. Br Ames acknowledged that what he did could not have been achieved with larger numbers, but he did point out that another Brother had had considerable success in Artane when he reduced the number of boys in a unit to 30.
- 12.192** Br Ames was proud of his achievements in Salthill. The need for change was driven by the rejection by society generally of the institutionalised childcare that had been the hallmark of Christian Brother involvement in this area. As was clear from the letters quoted above, thinking had moved on and regimes such as Salthill were no longer acceptable.
- 12.193** According to Br Ames, the results were remarkable. The boys were happier. Their behaviour in the Institution improved enormously. They were more sociable. They were more comfortable than before in dealing with animals, which Br Ames had begun to introduce into the School. Relations with the staff were greatly improved, and there was much less friction between the different groups of boys.
- 12.194** Br Ames and Br Burcet were also responsible for introducing professional childcare workers and male and female house parents in the Institution. They adopted modern methods to meet the different needs of the children. The Brothers revitalised the Managers' Association, which brought together the Resident Managers from all industrial schools and reformatories in the country, using it to meet regularly and to discuss the work that they were doing with the children in their care. Br Ames worked on a draft Charter of Rights for children in care. The Association organised an international conference that was held in Ireland in 1979.
- 12.195** The development of the thinking of the Brothers in this School showed what could have been achieved in other industrial schools under their care. By the time these changes were brought about, Artane, Letterfrack, Tralee, Carriglea and Glin had all been closed. Only Salthill remained, and the need for control of the system by the Congregation was gone.
- 12.196** The impact of this professional approach to the work in Salthill was reflected in the 1974 Visitation Report, which was entirely different in tone from those that had preceded it. In particular, the Visitor noted the effect of Br Burcet's arrival:

His [Br Burcet's] coming to St Joseph's last August has been a tremendous boon and blessing. He is the Manager's guide, philosopher and friend in creating an improved atmosphere of care and relationship between the children and the Brothers. His Kilkenny

Course in Child Care has brought a new dimension and an added empathy to his work and, slowly but surely, the communication barriers are being removed, the children are becoming much more friendly, open and amenable and are relating much better with one another and with the staff.

12.197 The Visitor remarked:

The ending of 'the old order', to which Remi was accustomed for so long, has caused him some upset and paradoxically this may well be a blessing in disguise for him. He is now doing a much more taxing round of duty than was his wont for quite some years and despite his overt yearning for the good old days when boys were made toe the line in quasi-military fashion one senses that deep down he is slowly and reluctantly coming to appreciate that the new approach has something to recommen it.

12.198 It was difficult to completely remove the decades of institutionalisation that had operated in Salthill. In 1978, Mr Graham Granville noted in an Inspection Report for the Department of Education that, despite the group home units, the nature of the accommodation made for a very institutional feel, lacking in a homely atmosphere. He complimented the staff on their efforts despite the obstacles. He reiterated his concerns in his Inspection Reports of the early 1980s. He found many facilities requiring modernisation and saw the construction of new custom-made group homes as the way forward.

Education

12.199 The Visitation Reports touched on this aspect of the work of the Institution throughout the four decades that an internal primary school operated in Salthill. In general, the Visitor seemed satisfied with the standard of education provided in the 1940s, although from year to year a particular Visitor voiced a concern.

12.200 In 1940, a Visitor remarked, 'The boys are on the whole docile and easily managed and show average intelligence in class'.

12.201 The payment of salaries to the internal national school teachers saw the number of Brothers assigned to the School increase by two, and a marked improvement in the standard of education was noted in 1941.

12.202 However, the 1943 Visitation Report was critical of the standard of education in the higher classes. The Visitor found that the boys in 3^d, 4th and 5th standards were 'quite unable to read the lessons in our Readers which are in use' and he cautioned that 'if proper steps are not taken some of these boys may leave the school in a semi-illiterate condition'.

12.203 The 1958 Report offered what was probably the explanation for the poor standard in the senior classes. It observed that the teacher in charge of infants and first standard was not efficient. The Visitor noted:

He is partially paralysed and his writing on Blackboard is nearly illegible for an adult to read and hence it must make no impression on the boys of the age group he has. I examined these boys in Christian Doctrine, English Reading, and tables. It could not be said that the boys were hopeless but they were certainly retarded for boys 7 years of age. It would also seem that the poor teaching they get in this class tells on the whole Primary School. According to age groups they would all be retarded by one year.

12.204 He recommended that the teacher be asked to retire, even if this meant that the Brothers had to supplement the difference in his pension due to his early retirement.

- 12.205** In March 1959, the Visitor noted that the teacher mentioned in the 1958 Report was still in the School: 'The poor man is physically unfit to take charge and teach boys'. As he was a registered teacher, the Brothers had difficulty removing him. The Visitor believed that the boys' schooling got off to a bad start under this man's tutelage.
- 12.206** During the Visitation of March 1961, the Principal pointed out that on average, one-third of boys in each class were below the normal standard and said that the majority of boys who fell into this category came from County Homes. The Visitor noted that the Brothers had still not succeeded in getting rid of the teacher in charge of the younger boys..
- 12.207** In 1973, due to dwindling numbers, the boys were transferred to the local primary school.
- 12.208** It is difficult to see how a teacher with the disabilities as outlined above could have given the boys in Salthill any kind of basic education. He was listed as a teacher in the School for 25 years.
- 12.209** In their 1972 report to the Department of Education, the Irish Countrywomen's Association were critical of the education offered in Salthill:
- 2.6 We recognise that education is one of the most important formative influences on the children with whom we are concerned, whether they are deprived or delinquent. All children in Residential Care or otherwise in care, should be educated to the ultimate of their capacities ... In the past five years no boy in St Joseph's, Salthill ... has got either Intermediate or Leaving Certificate. As far as we know, no child ever got this far ...

Contact with home

- 12.210** Although contact with families was recognised as essential as far back as 1936 when the Cussen Report was published, Salthill, like many other industrial schools, was reluctant to allow children home for the full period recommended by the Department, which had been extended to 31 days in 1943.
- 12.211** In 1944, the Resident Manager was asked to explain why 126 children out of the School population of 207 had not been allowed home during the Summer. The Resident Manager expressed his view that:
- I believe the homes were unsuitable but one does not like saying so to a boy. Even though parental unsuitability is cited in only 17% of committals, in my opinion a much higher percentage could be got under this heading but guards³³ and NSPCC inspectors often, or sometimes, when they are sure of a committal, take proceedings under a less obnoxious heading such as School attendance.
- 12.212** There was no evidence that the Resident Manager made any enquiries about the home situation of the boys, but the letter quoted above indicated a reluctance to encourage parental contact.
- 12.213** It was not until 1959 that efforts were made to ensure that all boys spent time in an ordinary home environment. An appeal for holiday homes was made in the local Catholic newspapers, and families came forward and took the boys for five weeks during the summer. From then onwards, all of the boys were sent on holidays either to their own family or to a host family.

Christian Brothers' submissions

- 12.214** The Brothers relied on Dr McCabe's reports in defending the School from criticism. While they acknowledged her adverse comments on such matters as clothing and dental care, they contended that the 'individual reports from Dr McCabe are uniformly good stating that the school

³³ This is a reference to the Gardaí.

is well managed, that the Resident Manager is kind and has the interests of the boys at heart'. They concluded that the 'standard of care provided in St Joseph's Salthill from the documentations furnished shows that it was continually high. Faults and deficiencies were pointed out where they arose and were quickly rectified'.

- 12.215** The Submissions did not comment on the very different assessments in their own Visitation Reports. It is to the credit of the Congregation that their inspection system gave rise to such candid appraisals. These reports by senior members of the Congregation, which were compiled for internal use, cannot be ignored. Where they conflict with more neutral Department observations, they are to be preferred in point of accuracy and specificity.

Analysis

- 12.216** When the Visitation Reports are compared with the Department of Education Inspection Reports, it is clear that the Visitors' criticisms were much more severe than any corresponding comments by Dr McCabe.
- 12.217** The 1943 Visitation Report was scathing. The Visitor criticised most aspects of the Institution and, in particular, the filth of the School. He concluded that, should a Department Inspector conduct an unannounced visit to the School, their report would surely be damning. Dr McCabe did inspect the School three months later but the Brothers had little to fear. Her report was not in any way as critical as the Visitation Report for the same year.
- 12.218** Dr McCabe made repeated criticisms of the boys' clothing, particularly during the 1940s, to no avail. She had no suggestions or recommendations to make when the Superior explained that he had difficulty in obtaining supplies.
- 12.219** In 1967, a thorough and critical Report was written following the Visitation. The Visitor stated that he did not agree with the writer of the previous year's Report that the Brothers were doing a good job in Salthill. In short, he believed that Salthill was unsuitable, particularly for the older boys. He felt that a more personalised and childcare-focused approach should be adopted and was critical of the fact that little was known by the staff of the individual backgrounds of the boys. He remarked that, should an outside authority inspect the School, the Brothers might not be happy with the contents of any consequential report. However, less than a year previously, Dr Lysaght had conducted an in-depth inspection of the School on behalf of the Department, which was complimentary of all aspects of the School. This demonstrates a different focus by the Department in their reporting procedure.
- 12.220** The Visitation Reports were often critical of the standard of education and the quality of trades training available in the School.
- 12.221** The Brothers acknowledged that the trades taught met the needs of the School and did not cater well for the needs of the boys after they left the Institution. The Brothers also acknowledged that there was a stigma attaching to the industrial school boy after he left the School, although little seems to have been done to address this.
- 12.222** Dr McCabe often commented in general terms that improvements were made without identifying any particular deficiency in preceding Reports. Her Reports appear more cursory than probing. Where criticisms are noted, there are often no corresponding suggestions for how conditions might be improved.

General conclusions

12.223

1. The Visitation Reports described Salthill in the early years as dirty, cold and unhealthy. The boys' refectory was shabby, the buildings dilapidated, the dormitories unsuitable, the pantry damp and with cobwebs and the boys' kitchen outdated. Improvements were made over the years but many of these problems persisted. Washing facilities were grossly inadequate for most of the time. The boys' clothes were severely criticised. Their bedclothes were dirty and insufficient.
2. There was little recreation for the boys and an absence of enthusiasm or capacity on the part of the Brothers to arrange for pastimes or amusements for them.
3. Training was substandard and very restricted, and the workshops were unhealthy and actually dangerous for a time.
4. The education provided was substandard. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, management knew that there was a teacher in the School who could not write legibly on a blackboard and who was responsible for the whole primary school being retarded by a full year. Although this man was only identified in 1958 by a Visitor, he had been on the staff of the School for nearly 20 years at this time. In a vital area of care within the specialist remit of the Brothers, this gross inadequacy was permitted to continue.
5. Two Visitors in the late 1960s and early 1970s, identified the inadequacies of the care given to the children. They were able to understand the needs of children and the failure of this Institution to meet these needs.
6. When change came, it came slowly and laboriously, and an improvement in one area was often not accompanied by betterment in others.
7. It is not easy to understand how the Departmental Inspector could have been satisfied with conditions in the Institution when what was described by the Visitors was so clearly inadequate.
8. In regard to physical abuse, the documents contain a record of general complaints about violent behaviour by Brothers as well as cases that occurred in Salthill. One Brother who was found to have engaged in harsh and cruel treatment of boys in Letterfrack was again the subject of complaints of severity towards children in Salthill. Another Brother was found to be repeatedly guilty of excessive harshness in schools to which he was assigned after his service in Salthill. A further Brother was warned by the Superior General about his conduct towards boys and it was said of yet another that he should not be put in charge of boys.
9. Concerns were raised about three Brothers in regard to sexual abuse while they were in Salthill. In none of the cases was the abuse addressed other than as a practical problem for the Congregation. In the case of one Brother, there is documentary evidence of serious abuse of young boys continuing for over 20 years after his transfer from Salthill.