

Publication of certain material from the Murphy Report

This document includes the remaining material from the *Report of The Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin* (The Murphy Report) previously redacted on foot of a direction from the High Court in accordance with the provisions of section 38 of the Commissions of Investigation Act, 2004.

The material which was previously redacted has been underlined for ease of reference.

12 July, 2013

Previously redacted material from Chapter 20 of the Murphy Report

Introduction

20.1 The first formal complaint of child sexual abuse against Fr Patrick McCabe⁶⁵ was made to the Archdiocese of Dublin in January 1977. The complaint was made by a 14 year old boy who was at boarding school outside the Archdiocese. The complaint was of a sexual assault carried out in the priest's car in the school grounds.

20.2 At the time of the complaint Fr McCabe was 41 years old and had been a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin for 16 years. His elder brother, Fr Phelim McCabe⁶⁶, was also a priest of the Archdiocese and had been a classmate in Clonliffe of Archbishop Dermot Ryan.

Pro-Cathedral, 1971 - 1978

20.3 Fr Patrick McCabe served in a number of parishes and was a curate in the Pro-Cathedral at the time of the first formal complaint.

20.4 The Commission has received information from non-Church sources alleging that he sexually abused at least one altar boy prior to this complaint being received. In very recent years, two men have come forward to both the Church and the Gardaí complaining of having been singled out, groomed and sexually assaulted, in one instance to the extent of buggery, by him in the presbytery and the altar boys' changing rooms during his time as curate in the Pro-Cathedral.

20.5 Initially Fr McCabe lived in the main presbytery attached to the Pro-Cathedral. He shared this house with the Diocesan Administrator and other priests. Later he moved into a presbytery where he had his own self-contained accommodation. While there he installed an oratory on the ground floor at the back of the house. During his time in the Pro-Cathedral, Fr McCabe was in charge of the altar boys, a task which he had also performed

⁶⁵ Another priest of the same name was also working in the Archdiocese of Dublin. He was the parish priest in Corduff in the late 1970s and was parish priest in Enniskerry during the 1980s and 1990s. He is not to be confused with the Fr Patrick McCabe described here.

⁶⁶ It is important to emphasise that Fr Phelim McCabe was held in very high regard by all the bishops and priests of the Archdiocese. He was shocked by his brother's problems. He was helpful to his brother but he cannot be held in any way responsible for the manner in which the Archdiocese covered up his brother's activities and prevaricated in dealing with him.

in his previous parishes. The Pro-Cathedral is the diocesan Church. Because of the volume and complexity of services in the Pro-Cathedral, it needed a large number of altar boys and those selected tended to stay on for longer than most altar boys did in other parishes. Fr McCabe held prayer meetings with altar boys in the oratory which he had installed and boys frequently visited him in the presbytery

20.6 A former altar boy from the Pro-Cathedral gave the Commission the following description of Fr McCabe's activities with altar boys:

"I suppose there were about 20 of us as altar boys, and I don't think it's exaggerated to say that for the most part we loved Fr McCabe. He just seemed to be a great priest, very interested in young people - this all sounds very sinister looking back now - whereas the other priests - there were some priests we liked, some we didn't. He organised games. He organised holidays. And I suppose a lot of boys who were there would have been from the inner city. I lived in the Pro-Cathedral Parish at the time. ... a lot of the kids would never have had a holiday and most people around there wouldn't have had a car.

Fr. McCabe kept his connection to Eadestown⁶⁷ where he seemed to be very friendly with many families there, and often on Sundays he'd take a combination of the altar boys and some of the local kids from the parish beagling - I presume you know what beagling is, running after an unfortunate hare with hounds. But it was great exercise. It was getting into the country for kids who some of them would never have been out of the city before.

So he was in charge of the altar boys, as I said, and I suppose there would have been a group of us who were older than the younger ones and I never was aware at that time of anything untoward. He certainly was never in any way inappropriate in his behaviour towards me. I have asked one of my brothers and apart from now looking back, as I look back as an adult, I would say that he spent an inappropriate amount of his time with children most definitely ... But to us as boys it seemed, it really seemed wonderful actually...

My memory is, and he'd do it, people would get a turn at going beagling so he was very fair in that way. But I remember in our house

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A parish in which he had earlier been a curate.

it would mean having early lunch on Sunday and being in a rush to get out by maybe 1:00 o'clock down to the beagling, which was always around Punchestown, Eadestown. Maybe five or six children, they were children that would probably be from about eight or nine to maybe 16. The beagling would happen and then it would be back to some of his former parishioners' houses, a change of clothes and I'd say now that he imposed on some of those people to feed all these kids from the city. So that's what it was, that's my memory of it...

I would have been on one holiday in Kerry, which would have been his first from the Pro-Cathedral, his first to organise. So that was probably 1972. He had an arrangement with ...there was a farm ...near Tralee. A lady there [...] and she had, I think it was a bungalow on her farm and she rented it out as a holiday home.

Paddy McCabe would have had a committee of people from Palmerstown. He was in Palmerstown in a previous appointment and there was [...] a married couple...There was somebody else [...] from Palmerstown and I can't remember his first name. And they would have helped - they would have accompanied and they would have run the kind of catering side of the holiday. I think it was for a week and I don't know how many years but Fr McCabe would have done that over a number of years... Fr McCabe always had kind of somewhere outside the Pro-Cathedral to [go to]; at one stage he had a caravan, at another stage he had a trailer tent."

- 20.7 The same witness recalled a number of incidents some of which were reported to him by others and which in hindsight struck him as strange or odd.
- " at one stage a number of the boys, I think it was to Brittas Bay they went, and it was around the time when streaking was fairly common at football matches... Fr. McCabe said at midnight come on let's have a midnight streak. But, again, that was it and none of the boys at the time paid too much attention to it."*

- 20.8 He spoke of another occasion when his brother and his brother's friend were on holiday with Fr McCabe:

"they would have been probably 12 or 13 at the time, they shared a room and after they went to bed, they left the light on and they were

talking and messing. And he said just at one stage they saw Fr McCabe looking in the window and wondered how long he had been there... he just thought that that was a bit kind of weird.

Then there was another time when I think it was a group of them together and Fr McCabe started to wrestle with them and he thought that there was something just not quite right about it. But it didn't go any - it was some kind of wrestling or tickling or something."

First formal complaint, January 1977

20.9 As already stated, the first formal complaint was made in January 1977. Fr McCabe discovered from a woman whom he knew slightly that her son was at a boarding school. He went to the school and introduced himself to the boy as a friend of the family. He invited the boy to sit into his car for a chat. The boy was in his car for almost an hour. Afterwards the boy arrived late to the study hall in a distressed condition. He told his dean that he had just had a visit from a priest who had sexually assaulted him. Later on that evening, the boy was questioned about the matter by his headmaster. Some years later, in 1987, (see below) the boy complained that during the course of that interview he was sexually interfered with by the headmaster, a man since convicted of multiple instances of sexual assault on boys.

20.10 The school reported the complaint to the Archdiocese. The head of the religious order which ran the school met Archbishop Ryan. Archbishop Ryan asked Canon Ardle McMahon to carry out a preliminary inquiry. Canon McMahon interviewed the headmaster who gave him the background to the alleged sexual assault and told him that he had assured the mother of the boy that the matter was being taken care of. The headmaster gave Canon McMahon a letter sent by Fr McCabe to the boy after the event. Canon McMahon then interviewed the boy and reported as follows:

"MEETING WITH [the boy]

[The boy], a boy of about 14, with good looks, gave a direct, forthright account of the incident, with intelligence and sensitivity.

[The boy], last Saturday week, was told by a boy that his father was there to see him. Fr. McCabe was not showing his clerical collar, and the boy assumed it was [his father]. Outside stood a man beside a red car- a DAF- whom [the boy] felt was a priest, even though he was not wearing a collar.

Do you know me? The priest asked. I am Fr McCabe from the Pro-Cathedral, and I visited your home yesterday. I remember you three years ago-let us discuss it in the car. Once in the car the priest locked the doors, and [the boy] had a presentiment of danger, yet, so excited had Fr. McCabe become that [the boy] felt there was no hope of escape. The priest asked the boy if he did not remember a little joke he had told him three years ago: what do ships do when they dock? They tie up-and with that Fr McCabe raised his tie. [The boy] insisted that he did not know Fr. McCabe.

It was after 5.p.m. The priest then moved over and lay on the boy for about half an hour and kissed him. He then exposed himself, and asked the boy to tickle him. That was all that happened. [The boy] went on: he then asked me to recline my seat in the car, but I insisted I should have to get back to study. Fr. McCabe: Perhaps I have been too intimate (or we have been too intimate). Anyhow, if you want any money or advice, contact me in the Pro-Cathedral or in the Social Centre. He then allowed [the boy] to leave the car, and go to the study hall. [The boy] went on to say that he had received a letter from Fr. McCabe, which he had handed up to [the headmaster]. I thanked [the boy] for his report.

Recommendation

There is substantial evidence of a well founded complaint that Fr. McCabe misbehaved in his relationship with [the boy]. The Headmaster confirmed that [the boy] was a good boy, not given to histrionics, coming from a very good family. I rarely have heard evidence given so ably, such as was given by this boy.

Fr. McCabe's letter confirms that it was he who met [the boy], and is a very strong indication of his desire to meet [the boy] again. It is sad to see this unbalanced emotionalism clothed in religious terms, a phenomenon I have encountered once before. I would recommend that the enquiry be taken up with Fr. McCabe."

20.11 A short time later Canon McMahon interviewed Fr McCabe. Canon McMahon's account of that interview is as follows:

"I saw Fr. McCabe in the Parochial House at 17.20. He told me that he had seen [the boy's] mother on the 14th January, and that she had told him of the disturbed condition of her son, who had spoken of taking his own life. Fr. McCabe called in to [the school] on the 15th thinking to help him. When the boy got into the car he behaved strangely, and had in fact lain on him, kissing him, and putting his tongue in Fr.'s mouth. This shocked him as such a thing he had never experienced before. He had asked the boy to sit back and tell him of his frustrations. Fr. McCabe blamed himself for allowing this incident to develop. When he reached home he realised he needed advice, and consulted two Directors, a Spiritual Director, and a medical one, a psychiatrist I gathered. He was asked if he were under pressure. The Pro-Cathedral led to pressure, as several of the priests were ill; the housekeeping situation was wretched. He was a member of a Fraternity of Priests and had an oratory put in the presbytery. He had much to do with young people and clubs and brought boys on a farm holiday, and nothing like this had ever happened. He was convinced [the boy] needed help. Should he contact [the boy's] mother? I told him that would be very unwise, and also that he should not visit [the school] again. To this he agreed. He denied that he had locked the door of the car, and had lain on the boy.

Evaluation

The evidence of [the boy] seems to me to be closer to the truth, because Fr. McCabe's statement regarding [the boy's] mother is at variance with the version given by the Headmaster of [the school]. The Headmaster reported that [the boy's mother] told him she had simply mentioned to Fr. McCabe that her sons was (sic) in [school], casually saying that "if he were passing that way" he might like to see him. Fr. McCabe said [the boy's mother] had asked him to help her son in regard to his disturbed condition.

Yet, it is the evidence of one witness against the only other witness in regard to what happened in the car. And Fr. McCabe never for a moment denied that an incident had taken place. He also acknowledged that he was to blame in part for what had taken place.

Moreover Fr. McCabe at once sought the help of two advisers to help him understand what he had done.

Recommendation

Fr. McCabe could be asked to give up his specialised youth work interest, at least for the present?"

20.12 Canon MacMahon wrote to the Archbishop to tell him: "I saw our friend this evening, who received the findings with an expression of regret for any embarrassment caused".

20.13 There the matter ended. Nothing further was done. Fr McCabe was not asked to identify the psychiatrist whom he claimed to have attended, let alone asked to provide a medical report as to his findings. No inquiries, discreet or otherwise, were made to find out if this was in fact an isolated incident or part of a pattern of behaviour. No one, apart from Canon McMahon and Archbishop Ryan, knew or was told of the incident so there was no possibility of monitoring Fr McCabe's behaviour.

Second complaint, 1978

20.14 The following year, 1978, there was another complaint. This complaint was handled on behalf of the Archdiocese by Bishop James Kavanagh. The only evidence available to the Commission is Bishop Kavanagh's handwritten memo of his interview with the young complainant.

20.15 The memo records that the young boy came from another parish to take part in the Easter ceremonies as an altar server. He was abused while taking part in practice for the ceremonies. The boy described how he was separated from his friends and brought to the priest's room. The abuse followed a very similar pattern to that which occurred to the first complainant.

20.16 Afterwards, Fr McCabe invited the boy to be an altar boy in the Pro-Cathedral. He told him about hunting and catching hares and rabbits with beagle hounds. He took his photograph and his contact details. All the boy's friends had left the church by the time he left the priest's room and he went back to school alone.

20.17 It is not clear how this matter came to the notice of the Archdiocese but it is likely that the boy reported the incident to someone in his school. There is much in the boy's account which was capable of independent verification:

- the fact of his attendance on the particular day in the Pro-Cathedral;
- his late and lone return to his school;
- his presence in Fr McCabe's private quarters;
- the piece of paper on which Fr McCabe noted his details;
- the taking of his photograph.

There is no evidence that any such inquiries were undertaken. Indeed the documents suggest that Fr McCabe was not even questioned about the matter at that time. The boy's account was forwarded to Archbishop Ryan by Bishop Kavanagh with the comment, *"I presume we can have a word about this sometime"*.

Third complaint, 1978

20.18 The third complaint came to the Archdiocese by a somewhat circuitous route. In late 1977, a woman phoned Dr Maurice Reidy, a former staff member of Clonliffe College, and told him that an unnamed priest had sexually assaulted her six-year-old son. Dr Reidy's recollection, when asked about the matter a year after the complaint was made, was that her complaint was that the priest had lain with her son and there was heavy breathing. Dr Reidy's explanation for his failure to do anything about the complaint at the time he received it was that he had reservations about the woman's capability as a witness. She was, in his estimation, nervous, highly strung, and very innocent of sexual matters for a married woman. He told the Archdiocese in November 1978 that he advised the woman not to let the priest into her home