

HIA REF:

Witness Name:

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 – 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SISTER [REDACTED] SR 147

I Sister [REDACTED] SR 147 will say as follows –

1. I was born on the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Ireland. I am the [REDACTED] children born to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
2. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED] During those times I was either collecting, in child care or in laundry.
4. As I was in Derry many times, I could not say for sure when the incident in question took place.
5. I do remember that the incident took place on the first floor with only me present at the time. I cannot accurately remember what I was doing or where I was going but my recollection is that I was the only person in the area other than S[REDACTED] SR 59 and [REDACTED] SND 451. Again I cannot be accurate as to which period of time in I was in Derry but I believe the child, [REDACTED] SND 451, would have been around [REDACTED] years old but that is just a guess on my part. I do not know what led up to the incident. I recall [REDACTED] SND 451 could be a naughty child at times. My memory is that she would not have been the best behaved. I find it difficult to describe the actual incident as words like "hit", "strike" or so on would suggest a degree of force or violence which is not accurate. I think rap or tap is a more accurate word. I cannot be sure if S[REDACTED] SR 59 rapped [REDACTED] SND 451 with the keys or with her knuckle with the keys in her hand. I recall the incident and the keys but not very clearly. I do not believe [REDACTED] SND 451 was crying or distressed at the incident. The incident did not distress me as there was nothing very severe about it. I do not know the aftermath of the incident but continued about my business.
6. I did not say anything to Sister [REDACTED] SR 59 at the time and have never really thought of it until this present Inquiry when we were all thinking of the times in Derry and incidents which we may have seen. In regard to whom I reported it to I really cannot say it was reported. I did not think then that it was a serious matter. As I look back now I do not recall it as an assault on the child and my memory of S[REDACTED] SR 59 generally is that she was not aggressive with any of the children.
7. As I cannot be accurate as to which period of my time in Derry this occurred during I am unsure which Superior was there at the time. I do not recall all the Superiors I had in Derry but I do recall Sister [REDACTED] SR 127 RIP and Sister [REDACTED] SR 125. There were a few Superior changes during my time in Derry and I cannot say for sure.

8. Everytime I left Derry, I was transferred by my Major Superiors. This was common to be moved by the Superiors. Of all the houses I spent time in I look back most fondly at my times in Derry. The people of Derry were always so supportive of the sisters and I always liked my time there.
9. I have applied my full knowledge in regards to this incident and co-operate fully with the Inquiry. In regards to the statement made by me on 23rd July (paragraph 3), this is how I recall the incident.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed Sister **SR 147**

Dated 24/1/2014

HIA REF:

Witness Name:

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SISTER BRENDA McCALL

I Sister Brenda McCall will say as follows –

1. In response to the inquiries made by the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry in a letter of the 21st May 2013, the Sisters would wish to put on record a number of responses.
2. The Sisters were involved in running a number of institutions across Ireland during their time. In Northern Ireland, the Sisters were involved in six different institutions. There were two in Derry, Termonbacca and Bishop Street, one in Portadown, and three in Belfast. Of the three in Belfast, two were operated entirely by the Sisters, Nazareth House and Nazareth Lodge, and one was owned by the Diocese of Down and Connor but was managed and maintained by the Sisters at St. Joseph's Babies' Home.
3. Each house would have been run on a semi-autonomous basis with the superior in each house being responsible for the house. Whilst these houses were on a semi-autonomous operation, the congregation would have ensured that all houses were run within the ethos of the Sisters of Nazareth.
4. There were regular visitations, referred to in the earlier statement provided by the Sisters, where a senior member of the Congregation would visit and speak with the Sisters and look at all aspects of the operation including the religious observance, as well as the management and maintenance of the Homes.
5. In discussions with the Sisters, and from experience, some of the superiors would have been stricter than others and may have placed different emphasis on different aspects of the running of the House, the Congregation and religious observance. There is, therefore, no standard response which would cover exactly how each House was run at any particular time.
6. A general daily routine for the Sisters would have depended on their role or duties within the Congregation. Some would have been based entirely in the convent; involved in daily prayer and also in making charitable collections upon which the Congregation relied heavily in order to provide for the Institutions being run by them.

occasions the standard of the care provided to the children may not have reached an acceptable level. There are instances when a particular Sister may not have acted in an appropriate way or when the children were not protected as well as the Sisters would have wished.

15. One of the main elements which has to be accepted is that the Sisters' general policy of no physical punishment of children was not implemented. There are instances where children were the subject of a physical assault and this is not acceptable when the care of children is to be considered.
16. Unfortunately the passage of time means that many of the Sisters who may have been involved in the care have died and therefore cannot be approached to give their information. Others are ill and are also unable to assist because their memories are not what would be required to give responses to some of these allegations.
17. One of the Sisters has recalled an incident where she saw a child being 'rapped' on the head by a Sister. This Sister was using a bunch of keys in her hand when she struck the child. The incident was immediately reported to the Superior. The Sister cannot recall the identity of the Sister who had rapped the child on the head with keys nor can she recall what led to the child being dealt with in this way or what steps were subsequently taken by the Superior. She can, however, recall that she did report this incident immediately as she did not consider this to be an acceptable way to proceed.
18. On a number of occasions recently, and in the not too distant past, the police have asked to speak to a number of Sisters in light of some of the allegations which have been made. The police investigations were initially on a case by case basis but have now been co-ordinated under 'Operation Charwell'. On every occasion in which the police have asked to interview a Sister, arrangements have been made and the Sister has made herself available to be interviewed. The allegations in these individual cases are consistent with the general nature of the allegations made to this Inquiry.
19. What is accepted is that there were occasions when a Sister has let her frustrations overcome her self-control and has acted in an inappropriate manner. The exact circumstances why or when any of these incidents occurred cannot be dealt with in a very wide ranging way and will have to be looked at separately.
20. The Sisters themselves accept that the responsibilities they took on were taken on in a voluntary way and therefore they cannot, and do not, seek to use this as an explanation or excuse for any misconduct.
21. The Sisters had a long working day and dealt with a large number of children in each of their individual units. Many of the children themselves would have been from troubled backgrounds and had issues to deal with.

HIA REF:

Witness Name:

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SISTER BRENDA McCALL

1. I, Sister Brenda McCall will say as follows –
2. This is the third statement provided by me to the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, at the request of the Inquiry to clarify certain information provided in my previous statements.

Bed wetting

3. The Inquiry has sought clarification in regard to the Sisters' understanding of bed wetting incidents and how attitudes altered or changed through the years. Clarification is sought on what advice the Sisters received in respect of this, when that advice was received, from whom that advice was received.
4. To the best of my knowledge and from the information available to me, there was no one piece of information or advice that changed or altered the understanding of bedwetting. Sisters would have been trained in the latter years and therefore would have a better knowledge and understanding of bedwetting.
5. Throughout the periods in which the Sisters provided care to young people and more recently to the elderly, they maintained a close working relationship with the relevant statutory agencies and local medical practitioners. The Sisters would always have spoken to their colleagues from the statutory agencies, inspectors (whether it be children's home inspectors or the education inspectors of any of the schools in which the Sisters worked), or more laterally, in regard to the provision of care to the elderly.
6. ~~Over time, information was passed to the Sisters via statutory agencies, doctors attending at the Homes and from other visitors to the Homes like charitable organisations such as St. Vincent de Paul. The information obtained by Sisters would have developed throughout this time by speaking with these particular agencies, doctors and visitors.~~
7. There is no one incident or contact that any Sister can specifically address with me. A number of the Sisters have spoken of waking children who were known to wet the bed when the Sisters were going to bed, to try to encourage those

15. When the Sisters now consider the staffing provision of those days, they are aware that it was inadequate. They accept the failings in regard to staffing at that time. The Sisters at that time would have relied heavily on recommendations from the annual inspections which took place. None of the Sisters have recalled any instance or any report in which the situation of the understaffing was raised with them. Had the issue of understaffing been raised it would have led to discussions about increased funding and provision of care staff within the Homes. Such discussions would have been held directly with the relevant supporting agencies such as social services, the education departments or health departments and may well have resulted in additional care and staffing being provided. As it was the Sisters could not have funded the additional staffing on the income they had at the time.

Concessions or admissions by the Sisters

17. It is difficult for any one person speaking on behalf of the entire Congregation to accept, or reject, any allegation which has been made against the Congregation or individual Sisters. Many of the recent allegations have been made against Sisters who have died or who are medically unable to consider or comment upon any of the allegations. It would be unfair of the Sisters to make a finding against any particular Sister when the allegation cannot properly be investigated nor can that Sister respond to these allegations. This is not to say that the Sisters reject any of the allegations made, merely that it is not appropriate for them to make a finding against any particular individual.
18. In regard to certain incidents the Sisters have accepted that there was a description of an incident where a Sister has mentioned one of her fellow Sisters striking a child on the head with a bunch of keys. The Sisters have previously stated that this was not considered acceptable behaviour nor is it deemed appropriate or considered reasonable chastisement. Having considered the Inquiry's request, the Sisters have followed up this statement to clarify the comments made by Sister SR 147. Sister SR 147 is currently in [REDACTED] Sister SR 147 would have been in Derry from the [REDACTED] period, when she was responsible for collections and generally assisting with work within the Home. She was not specifically involved with the children. She was in Nazareth house, Bishop Street on a number of occasions. Sister SR 147 has stated that she saw this happen on only one occasion. Sister SR 147 recalls that Sister SR 59 hit SND 451 on the head while she had a set of keys in her hand as opposed to hitting her with the keys. She recalls SND 451 because she was in the choir and had [REDACTED] hair.
19. The Sisters do recall allegations made against a former employee SND 38. The Sisters accepted at the time of the allegations that they could have been true and the matter was appropriately handled. Mr. SND 38 was [REDACTED]. The police were informed and the matter investigated by them.



Sisters of Nazareth

Nazareth House
169-175 Hammersmith Road
Hammersmith, London W6 8DB

23 July 2013

Dear Sister Anna Maria

Thank you for your letter received. I will try to help you as much as I can.

I went to Derry in [redacted] or [redacted] to do the city collecting with Sister [redacted] SR 164. It was during this time that the troubles started in Derry. Times were tough in Derry. I was expected to go and help make beds in the two dormitories, also to clean the bathrooms, and sweep and mop the dormitories before I went out.

I lived in fear of the Superior who was quite hard, never bid us the time of day or ask us if we had had a good day at the collecting when we came in. When I came home from the collecting I had to get the refectory ready for supper. Once you had a blue apron on you were a great Sister of Nazareth.

In Derry I did witness a Sister being hard on the children. Sister would crack the children on their heads with a set of keys. I also witnessed a Sister slap a disable lady across the face while she was make a pot of tea. I did report this to a senior Sister.

I left Derry in [redacted] to do the Baby training in [redacted]. After I completed my training I was changed to [redacted] to the babies where I worked with Sister [redacted]. I enjoyed my work there.

In [redacted] I was changed to [redacted] to work with the toddlers. I never saw the outside of the gate of that house. The community room was always locked, so it was the church or your employment! The Superior was quite strict.

In [redacted] I was changed back to Derry to do the city collecting with Sister [redacted] SR 165. We had another hard Superior! We came home one evening to be told that the Superior had been changed; there were no tears shed! We got a lovely Superior, full of compassion, with time to talk to us.

In Derry I did the laundry in the morning and also when the girls came home from school. I was house mother to the group, fixing their tea etc. Sister [redacted] SR 18 was over all in charge on the [redacted] floor. They were nice children and did not give any trouble.

In [redacted] I worked in the [redacted] with Sister [redacted] and also helped Sister [redacted] SR 47 with a group of children for a short time.

I was sent back to Derry for a short time to work with the elderly in [redacted]. Sister [redacted] SR 91 was the [redacted].

Sister I am not sure of all the dates are exact. I hope this information will be of some use to you.

Please let me know if I can be of any more assistance

God bless

Love,

Sister [redacted] SR 147

PRIVATE

12. One day in [REDACTED] myself [REDACTED] SND 162 HIA 105 [REDACTED] (deceased) and [REDACTED] SND 174 were playing in a workman's hut in the playground. They said 'let's go' HIA 169 and they took most of my clothes off. They were carrying on [REDACTED] SND 170 telephoned [REDACTED] SR 9 and told her. When we got back to the home [REDACTED] SR 9 lined us up along the corridor. She grabbed me by the hair and banged my head off a wooden ledge above the lockers. My head was bleeding and I still have a scar on my hairline from this incident. I was distraught at the time. [REDACTED] SR 9 then wiped the blood off me but her face was red with anger [REDACTED] SR 18 witnessed this incident.

13. I had my nose broken twice, once by [REDACTED] SR 9 and once by [REDACTED] SR 59. When I was about [REDACTED] years old [REDACTED] SR 9 broke my nose by hitting my head off internal doors in Nazareth House. When I was [REDACTED] years old [REDACTED] SR 59 hit my head and face off a pebble dashed wall in the yard at Nazareth House. I was not given medical treatment on either occasion. I knew my nose was broken because of the severe bleeding, swelling and nose bleeds. I do not remember what I had done on either occasion. I truly believed they just hated me. I think it was because I was not like my sister [REDACTED] who was very intelligent and whom [REDACTED] SR 9 loved. [REDACTED] was in Nazareth House also but she is [REDACTED] years older than me. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She was intelligent and I think was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I think she [REDACTED] and she became a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She came back to Nazareth House for the holidays [REDACTED] SR 9 and [REDACTED] SR 59 would also walk up behind us and hit us on the head with their keys. They would come up behind you and hit you with the big, heavy keys and say "what are you doing here?". We were obviously somewhere that we should not have been although I do not remember being told not to be there.

14. I was in the choir and we would travel around Northern Ireland winning every festival we entered. This meant that everyone in Derry loved [REDACTED] SR 9 [REDACTED] SR 59 and [REDACTED] SR 52. It was therefore difficult for anyone to believe that they were abusing us behind the scenes.

RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 49**

Page 2 of 13

picked up on including teachers. I know now but at the time I believed I was a very hurt child and couldn't express my anger. I would like to start my hurtful story from the age of [redacted] years old when I entered Nazareth House as a new girl. I began my first morning with a wet bed. **SR 59** **SR 59** would wake us all up. I was scared and embarrassed and knew I was in big trouble. I was made strip my bed by **SR 59** after a few knuckle punches by her on my head and raced down the corridor with my sheets where all wet the beds (as we were called) had to take our sheets to the first bath which had partitions. I always remember my nightie (a bi/nylon) long to my feet with long sleeves soaked right up my back in which I was told it was the badness coming out in me. **SR 59** would say were you out in your boat last night. At first I didn't know what she meant but as time went on I realised she was being sarcastic. I also watched **SR 59** pull my sister **SND 102** by the hair and kick her; this was quite normal behaviour in my eyes of the way **SR 59** behaved. I sometimes thought she hated being a nun, but had no other say or choice in the matter. I was given a cloth with Jeyes Fluid to wipe my heavy brown rubber sheet as they used in them days. It was the early [redacted] I was then to get washed and put my clothes on for breakfast, where I was reminded I'd wet the bed whilst at the table when the senior pouring the tea told me I can't have any because I wet the bed, other girls at the table began to laugh at me. After breakfast we all went to tend to our duties. My duty was to clean the toilets nearest the chapel, although they were used by the school, those who lived in the home, and those who attended the school from the city, which were labelled the outsiders, it was approximately 8 30 when we all started our duties. I had to carry a metal bucket full of scalding hot water, a cloth and scrubbing brush and set to work in each toilet, if a toilet was blocked, with excrement, I had to put my bare hands down and carry the excrement to another toilet to make it flush away, sometimes this was done whilst the nuns on duty either **SR 59** **SR 9**

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	HIA 49
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	