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HIA REF: 334

Witness Name: HIA 334

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 334

I, HIA 334 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Coleraine. My mother was called [REDACTED]. She was a single mother and she had me when she was eighteen. My father was a protestant from Belfast. My grandmother told my mother that she was not to marry a protestant. I believe I spent a few months with my mother in a workhouse in Coleraine. My mother was then sent off to England and I was put into care. I was placed in Nazareth House in Bishop Street for two years and then I was recommended to Termonbacca by SR 89 from Nazareth House.

St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca (30/8/1943 – 29/8/1947)

2. I was placed in St Joseph's Home in Termonbacca on 30th August 1943. I was in Termonbacca from when I was two years old until I was six years old. I do not remember anything about my time in Termonbacca.
3. I was never told I was going to Australia. My Child Migration Form was signed by SR 81 the Mother Superior of Termonbacca, and it is dated 19th December 1946. I have a medical certificate dated 16th July 1947, but I do

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not remember having a medical. I sailed on 29th August 1947 on the SS Asturias from Southampton. On the ship we were never allowed on the deck because we were too small. I don't remember anything about the journey.

4. We arrived in Fremantle on 22nd September 1947. I remember we had our photo taken. Once we got off the ship, about eight to ten of the boys were taken by van to Castledare Boys Home.

Castledare (1947 – 1952)

5. I arrived in Castledare when I was six years old. When we arrived in Castledare from Fremantle we were told to strip off and we had to hand over our clothes which were tweed suits. We never saw those clothes again. We were given a shirt and a pair of shorts to wear. We had no underwear or shoes. In the winter we had a jumper which was very thin.
6. Irish nuns worked in the kitchen in the home and did the mending, but the Brothers gave them a hard time and eventually got rid of them. I think they went to New Zealand.
7. If you wet the bed during the night, the Brothers put you outside in a quad where it was cold. You were made to kneel on the concrete floor. Then the Brothers would get your wet sheet and throw it over you and then they put the hose on you.
8. There was physical and sexual abuse going on in Castledare. **BAU 9** hit the back of my feet with the fan belt from a car. I spent two days in the infirmary. He was a sadist. He kept the fan belt on the belt around his waist and used it to beat us with, as well as his fists.
9. I was frightened to get out of bed as **BAU 9** used to walk around at night, picking boys out of bed and taking them to his room and so I wet the bed often. I was sexually abused by **BAU 9** in Castledare.

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10. I stayed in Castledare for five years.

Clontarf Boys Town (1952 – 1957)

11. When I was eleven I was moved to Clontarf. There were about 250 boys there, and one dozen Brothers. I think there were also Polish nuns and they stayed in their own convent. I stayed in Clontarf for five years. For the last two years I was taken out of school and I was made to work on the farm. When I left school I couldn't even read or write. One day **BAU 8** hit me with a stick and I went to hit him back and **BAU 6** the Headmaster, hit me on the head and knocked me out. I had to spend the night in the infirmary. After this I was taken out of school.
12. **BAU 9** was the worst Brother. He physically abused me. He used his fists and a fan belt when he beat me, time and time again. He was a molester. **BAU 9** was also a teacher in Castledare and then he was transferred to Clontarf. **BAU 9** beat me in the classroom as well as in the home. One time he hit me so much I fell down on the floor, and while I was on the floor he kept hitting me.
13. **BAU 9** sexually abused me. When I fought him off he beat me with his belt instead. I saw **BAU 9** sexually abuse other boys. He was a predator. There were a few other Brothers like him. **BAU 12** was another molester. The two of them beat me with their fists in the dormitory, and I ran away and jumped on the fence and I got cut on the barbed wire. I sneaked back into the dormitory at night and got into the bed beside mine which was empty. I heard the two Brothers come in looking for me but my bed was empty. The next day they found out I was in the other bed and they beat me for running away. **BAU 10** was a lay Brother and he wasn't too bad. He worked on the farm. He was the only decent one we had.

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14. When I worked on the farm at the age of fifteen, I got up at 5 o'clock to bring the cows up to milk and feed the pigs. After breakfast I looked after the poultry and then I worked in the bakery until 3pm. In the evening I did the same routine all over again. I used to work twelve hours a day, six days a week and eight hours on a Sunday. The Brothers used to pay me five shillings a week for working eighty hours a week. But I never received the money. It was put in a little book and if you did something wrong it was scrubbed off. So after two years of work I got £6. We were cheap labour in Australia. We were children sent out to work.
15. Clontarf was very religious. The Brothers were hypocrites. We had benediction and the rosary and we had to go to confession. The priest would tell the Brothers what we said in confession. So when I was fourteen I stopped going to confession because I never trusted the priest.
16. We had very pale skin so when we took our shirts off we were burnt, as we had no protection against the sun. In order to teach us how to swim the Brothers threw us into the river and sometimes we nearly drowned so we learnt how to swim very quickly. We didn't have a child's life in care.
17. When I was about fifteen a Brother from Melbourne came to the home. The Brother asked **BAU 6** who was also known as **BAU 6** why I wasn't in school. He said it was because I was disruptive. **BAU 6** was a cruel mongrel. He was physically and sexually abusive. I told this Brother from Melbourne how **BAU 9** was abusing other boys. Consequently **BAU 9** got removed. Unfortunately he was moved to another school and abused boys there. They tried to prosecute him but the case was adjourned and he died before the hearing date. I believe that they shouldn't have had men looking after young boys.
18. The Brothers tried to get me to work on a farm when I left, but I didn't want to as it was a seven day a week job. **BAU 10** got me a job as a baker in **BAU 10** near Perth. I didn't like it but it was better than working on a farm. I did my apprenticeship there. I lived in various boarding houses for five years.

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19. When I turned twenty one I did not receive a letter from the Welfare Department stating that I was no longer under their guardianship nor did I receive any money from the Welfare Department which other boys received on their twenty first birthday.

Life after care

20. After I finished my apprenticeship as a baker, I worked as a cook for an oil company in the desert. That is where I met my wife [REDACTED]. We have two sons called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and a daughter called [REDACTED] after my mother. We also have five grandchildren. We eventually moved to Perth where we have stayed. I was a baker until I retired about twelve years ago.
21. We were brainwashed in the homes into thinking that cuddling was a sin and so I never cuddled my children. I couldn't as I didn't know how to show affection. I was never shown any love or affection as a child. It is different now as I am older and I find it easy to cuddle my grandchildren. I enjoy a good relationship with my children and we are close.
22. Every second Thursday, my wife and I cook for boys from the home who never married. By that time of the month their pension would usually have ran out so we give them a good meal and send them home with another three course dinner. These boys have been coming to our house for quite a few years. We also have yearly reunions with the boys from Tardun, Clontarf, Castledare and Bindoon. Usually about two to three hundred boys attend.
23. I have been back to Ireland four times. In 1994, with the assistance of the Child Migrants Trust, I found out my mother was living in Yorkshire in England and that she was called [REDACTED] even though her proper name was [REDACTED]. I wrote to her and we exchanged correspondence. She married shortly after coming to England and she never told her husband, or seven children, about my existence.

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24. I met her for the first time in 1996 when she was in her seventies. My mother was frightened when I first got in contact as she knew I would be delving into the past and wanting to know more about my family. She didn't want me to go back to Ireland but I was determined to find out where I came from. I was worried how her children would react but we get on well and they have been very good. Five of my half siblings are still alive. My half brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have visited me in Australia in the last two years. My mother died in 2003. When I was in Ireland in 1996 I visited Termonbacca and Nazareth House in Bishop Street. I asked **SR 2** in Nazareth House for information about my family and she gave me a piece of paper with my mother's name and that was all the information she said she had.
25. I visited Ireland again in 2000 and met my cousins for the first time. My mother was one of sixteen children. Only my [REDACTED] is still alive but I have plenty of cousins. It was great to meet them. I was also back in 2007 and 2011. Three of the trips were paid for by the British Government, the Christian Brothers and I think by the Catholic Migration Association.
26. Years later I found out from my cousin [REDACTED] that my [REDACTED] who was my mother's sister, had telephoned Nazareth House in Belfast to find out where I was. The nuns told her that I was 'adopted out to a nice family in Ireland'. However at that time I was already in Australia. [REDACTED] also said he asked the nuns in Belfast for information and they told him he wasn't a relation and they couldn't help him even though he is my cousin.
27. I obtained a copy of my birth certificate when I was getting married in 1967 however I never had one as a child. About four or five years ago the Welfare Department wrote to me and forwarded letters relating to me as a child, including my certificate of migration.
28. I received \$45,000 AUD from the Australian Redress Scheme and \$60,000 AUD from a civil claim taken against the Christian Brothers.

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29. Since I was moved to Australia as a child I have always had the feeling of loneliness – that I had people who I belonged to in Ireland and I was taken away from them. I had a loss of identity. I was deprived of having a relationship with my family.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 334** _____

Dated 22-10-2013 .