

# A RESTORATIVE RESPONSE TO THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN PERPETRATED BY JOSEPH MARMION SJ:



Painting by Eilis de Faoite 'When you're a boy'. Image used with the kind permission of the artist.

Written by Catherine O'Connell and Barbara Walshe

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## **A RESTORATIVE RESPONSE TO THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN PERPETRATED BY JOSEPH MARMION SJ:**

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### **CAUTION**

**THIS DOCUMENT, PARTICULARLY CHAPTER 2 CONTAINS EXPLICIT EXAMPLES OF ABUSE PERPETRATED BY JOSEPH MARMION. THESE EXTRACTS CAN MAKE FOR DIFFICULT READING AND MAY CAUSE UPSET, SO PLEASE BE MINDFUL OF YOURSELF WHEN CHOOSING TO READ THEM.**

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*“When someone breaks their own silence, that person becomes like a candle to other people... .... and then I know I’m not alone.” (Salbi, 2015)*

To those who were abused by Joseph Marmion: we thank you for sharing your truth with us and engaging with us since April 2021.

We have never experienced what you have experienced, we do not walk in your shoes. But we heard you.

We listened to you as deeply as we could and tried to comprehend the widespread impact of the abuse on your lives, your hopes, and your possibilities. We heard your courage, your honesty, your concern for your classmates, and indeed for your former teachers, in this process. We thank you for sharing your experience with members of the Jesuit Order as part of this restorative process. In compiling this report, we strive to do justice to what you have told us and the trust you placed in us.

To the Jesuits who engaged in this process: we thank you for being willing to talk to us and for sharing your experiences of Joseph Marmion, your experience of being a Jesuit, and how what has happened has impacted you and the Jesuit Order. We thank you for your willingness to listen to past pupils as they spoke of the harm done by a member of your Order, and your commitment and actions to do what you could to help repair the harm, recognising that what was done cannot ever be undone or made right. We thank you for meeting our need for independence despite funding our work. We particularly wish to acknowledge the leadership of the former Provincial Leonard Moloney for his strength and resilience over the past two years.

To the past pupils and the Jesuits who formed the Jesuit Steering Group and the Past Pupils Steering Group, we thank you for your dedicated hard work and time on behalf of those who were harmed and for engaging with each other via the Joint Steering Group to further the Past Pupils’ Agenda to meet their needs.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Safeguarding Officer, Saoirse Fox, who supported this process, and we thank her for her insight and wisdom.

Barbara Walshe and Catherine O’Connell August 2023

### BACKGROUND TO THE WORK

This process began as a result of the efforts of Donal Ballance, a former pupil of the Jesuit-run Belvedere College. He had been abused by priest and former teacher Fr Joseph Marmion SJ, now deceased, while attending that school. For over two years, Donal had engaged with the Jesuit Order in Ireland, asking them to publicly name Joseph Marmion for his abuse of children whilst under their care (see Appendix 1 pg. 100).

On 2 March 2021, the Jesuits [made a public statement naming Joseph Marmion SJ](#) as someone who had abused boys sexually, emotionally, and physically during his time in Belvedere College. Subsequently, it became known that he had also abused children while teaching in Clongowes Wood College, Kildare, and Crescent College<sup>1</sup> in Limerick. His time in those three schools spans from 1962 to 1978. His removal from the staff of Belvedere College in 1978 followed disclosures of sexual abuse during a school trip to Vienna in 1977.

The publication of the public statement by the Jesuits commenced a series of testimonies by past pupils in the media in which they shared their experiences of abuse by Joseph Marmion more than four decades ago. Within a fortnight of the statement and resulting media coverage, more than 40 past pupils who had been harmed by Joseph Marmion came forward to the Jesuit Safeguarding Officer. As part of her engagement with them, she asked two core questions: What happened? What do you think needs to happen now?

The following themes emerged:

- **The need to understand and make sense of what happened:** this was the strongest theme. Past pupil after past pupil spoke of their desire for answers, a need to understand, their desire for truth, transparency, accountability and for their experiences to be heard.
- **The need for learnings from the past to emerge so that similar things would not happen again:** the need to make known what happened and how it happened so that the Society can understand and learn what mistakes must be avoided to help ensure this never happens again.
- **Spaces to talk and 'collective solidarity':** these words were used collectively by a number of the impacted past pupils in relation to what they wanted to happen going forward. Some also said they wanted to be able to talk to the Jesuits and have their experiences acknowledged.
- **Desire for compensation and redress.**
- **The need for the Jesuit Order to act:** the need to 'step up to the plate' first and 'turn the mirror on themselves'.

A Jesuit planning group was developed which included the Provincial and the Safeguarding Office. The Safeguarding Officer had undergone training in restorative justice (RJ) with Australian Restorative Justice pioneer and expert Terry O'Connell<sup>2</sup>, which was co-facilitated by the authors of this report, Catherine O'Connell, and Barbara Walshe. She identified a strong correlation between what past pupils said they

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<sup>1</sup> At that point in time Crescent College was not a Comprehensive School and was in a different location.

<sup>2</sup> Terry O'Connell developed a process and the use of a series of restorative questions in 1991 that are now used by the restorative movement throughout the world. He began his work with young offenders when a member of the police force in Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia. Terry's influence internationally has resulted in a significant expansion of the 'restorative paradigm'. Terry has now evolved the process as a universal relational practice framework with application in everyday life. <https://restorative.org.au/profile/terry-oconnell>

wanted, and the values, principles, and possibilities of undertaking a restorative approach to respond to the abuse. She also identified a need to have authentic, vulnerable engagement by Jesuits in the process.

On submission of a proposal, the Jesuit Order engaged both Catherine O'Connell and Barbara Walshe as independent restorative practitioners. The Jesuits also committed to engage in this restorative process with past pupils in order to address the harm caused, insofar as it was possible.

The independent restorative practitioners made themselves available to speak with, and/or meet with, those who were harmed while at the Jesuit schools, to learn about their experience of the harm caused to them and the repercussions of that harm over their lives. As part of the restorative process, the independent restorative practitioners also facilitated contact and engagement pupil-to-pupil, Jesuit-to-Jesuit and between past pupils and Jesuits, for those who wished to engage in that way. As a result of these engagements between the facilitators and past pupils, those who were harmed began to meet each other, self-organise, and engage in discussions. Through this, a 'Past Pupils Agenda' emerged in September 2021. This included seeking answers to outstanding questions, therapeutic supports, restitution, outreach, and face-to-face engagements with members of the Order, should they wish.

As well as engaging in the restorative process, the Jesuit Order committed to investigate Joseph Marmion's life and career. This entailed examining their own archives and records and interviewing relevant Jesuits. A document called '*Joseph Marmion: The Jesuit Response*' was produced in July 2021<sup>3</sup> and distributed to all past pupils. The document was offered as a starting point to which other information and voices could be added as the restorative process evolved.

## WHY DOCUMENT THIS PROCESS?

As we engaged in this work with past pupils and the Jesuit Order we became convinced that the process needed to be documented for several reasons.

It was important that past pupils' experiences and stories were heard and made visible to themselves and to each other and to the Jesuit Order.

It was important that the Jesuits experiences and thoughts on what happened were made visible to themselves and to each other and to the past pupils.

We believed that the process undertaken over two years and the learnings from it could be valuable for other restoratively based processes where harm has occurred.

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<sup>3</sup> In March 2021, the Jesuit Order published a statement acknowledging that Joseph Marmion had abused boys sexually, emotionally, and physically between 1969 to 1978 in Belvedere College where he was teaching. As a result of the responses expressed by past pupils, it became apparent and is noted that Joseph Marmion abused boys in each of the schools, Crescent College Limerick and Clongowes Wood College Clane, between 1959 and 1978. Following this the Jesuit Order committed that they would go back into their archives, find out all that was known about Joseph Marmion since he entered the Order and talk to Jesuits who knew him at that time. Through this, *Joseph Marmion: The Jesuit Response* was produced and sent to past pupils on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Further questions and gaps arose from that response which were part of the restorative process that took place over two years and are outlined in this document. *Joseph Marmion: The Jesuit Response* is also for brevity sometimes referred to as '*The Jesuit Response*' (2021)

## METHODOLOGY OF A RESTORATIVE APPROACH

A restorative approach means understanding the extent, nature and impact of the harm caused, the context within which it occurred, and the possibility of repair and/or healing for past pupils.

It emphasises the importance of engaging with, and giving voice to, people who have not been heard, acknowledged, or experienced any accountability for what happened to them. A restorative approach equally stresses the importance for those who have responsibility for the harm to be held to account and to be able to respond in a meaningful and authentic way to those who have been harmed (Chapman, 2012).

### A TRAUMA-FOCUSED RESTORATIVE APPROACH

The reality of child sexual, physical and/or psychological abuse causes trauma (which stems from the Greek word meaning 'wound').

*"The trauma or unhealed wound caused by child abuse is not what happens to a child, but what happens inside of you because of what happened to you." (Maté 2022)*

Trauma can drive behaviour, often unconsciously. It travels like an underground river. Those impacted often avoid the pain from the original wound through work, perfectionism, relationships, addictions, and anything that numbs the pain of the 'wound' (Maté & Maté 2022). Many adverse outcomes on adult physical, mental and emotional health are linked with the trauma of childhood abuse (Springer et al., 2003).

As a result of the abuse, children often experience intimidation, stigmatisation, and humiliation which can often result in feelings of isolation, helplessness, shame, and self-blame. Children are often silenced by the abuse: they are deprived of the language to name what happened and often the societal permission to report it (Brody, 2022). Silence is often directly related to the shame absorbed unconsciously by those who were abused (Braithwaite, 2003).

A restorative approach assists people to break that silence. While restorative thinking is not therapy, its outcomes can be therapeutic because it is guided by a number of key principles:

- It recognises the dignity and uniqueness of each person.
- It recognises that people are expert in their own lives.
- People want to make sense and meaning out of what happened to them.
- People can then explore what matters most to them.

Accountability is important to past pupils. This includes acknowledging the harm that has been done, taking responsibility for the harm, trying to make up for the harm where possible and recognising that undoing the harm is often impossible. An authentic apology, restitution, meeting the Order, or a combination of these, were all reported as helpful by the impacted past pupils.

A restorative approach asks questions such as:

- What was the harm, who caused it, and why did it happen?
- What were, and are, the impacts of the harm done, at the time, later, and now?
- Who else was impacted by what happened, and in what way?
- Who is responsible for the harm, and in what way?
- What needs to happen to enable those harmed to deal with it in the best possible way, given that what happened can never be undone?
- How can one ensure that this harm does not occur again?



## THE PROCESS

To date, as the independent restorative practitioners and facilitators for this work, we have spoken to, or heard from, 62 past pupils who were impacted by Joseph Marmion when they were children. Close to 80% were from Belvedere College, with the remaining 20% from Clongowes Wood College, County Kildare, and Crescent College in Limerick city.

Many wanted to share what happened to them, their experience of Joseph Marmion and his effect on their lives. Some gave their account in writing and did not want any further contact. Other engagements took the form of face-to-face, online and telephone meetings, and email exchanges. Lasting 1 – 1.5 hours, each of these meetings required us to listen deeply, noting the themes and issues raised by each participant we spoke to, or heard from.

We invited groups of past pupils to meet online with us on three occasions. After these meetings, the past pupils themselves began to meet online and formulated their own strategies and plans for engagement with the Jesuits. A Past Pupils Steering Group was established to progress their agenda.

In the initial months, we spoke to 27 Jesuits about their experiences of Joseph Marmion as a colleague, a community member, and as a teacher and mentor of children. More than half of those we spoke to had lived in community with him, taught alongside him, or both. We asked them about their thoughts on what has emerged since March 2021. We also asked what it was like to hear of the immediate and long-term impacts of the abuses inflicted on the pupils – abuses that took place when they were living and working in the same place, at the same time. A Jesuit Steering Group was formed to respond to the past pupils' agenda. We facilitated meetings with both groups individually, and a further four joint meetings to progress the agenda.

In November 2021, we met with 51 Jesuits at a 3-day gathering designed to enable reflection on the '*Jesuit Response*' document and the testimonies of past pupils. This meeting also focused on what the Jesuit Order needed to do to respond to the harm done. We continued this conversation on 26 August 2022 with a cohort of Jesuits who came together specially to address issues for them as an Order.

- July 2021 to December 2022: 18 meetings between individual past pupils and individual Jesuits.
- December 2021: two meetings between Jesuits and past pupils: one with former Provincials and past pupils, and one with former headmaster Noel Barber<sup>4</sup> and past pupils.
- September 2022: In addition to the facilitated meetings that took place, there was a further meeting between past pupils and the principals of five Jesuit schools: Clongowes Wood College, Belvedere College, Coláiste Iognáid, Crescent College Comprehensive and Gonzaga College. The focus was to facilitate a discussion about the change in school culture that has occurred and what still needed to be done to ensure that current pupils receive the best possible care towards their wellbeing, growth, and development. Six past pupils who had been abused, the Director of Jesuit Education, and the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, were in attendance.
- December 2022: We facilitated a meeting between the Provincial, the Safeguarding Officer and two past pupils to explore the safeguards needed to ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) could not be a site for grooming and abuse<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Fr Noel Barber was the headmaster in Belvedere College in 1977 when the abuse of boys attending the college was first discovered. He was responsible for the removal of Joseph Marmion from the school.

<sup>5</sup> The word 'confession' appears throughout this document. In most places where it is used, this word refers to the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation, which is the sacrament/ritual through which a person (the sinner) confesses instances

## THE ROLE OF THE RESTORATIVE FACILITATORS

As independent restorative practitioners and facilitators in this work, our role is to work with people who have been harmed and those responsible for the harm who choose to engage with us. Our aim is to assist those central to the harm to find a way of understanding what happened, the impact of what happened, and what needs to be done so that those who experienced the harm can manage the rest of their lives in the best way possible.

We are not neutral to the harm that has happened. Nor are we investigators. The principles of voluntariness, engagement, inclusivity, fair processes, safety, and multi-partiality are paramount to our role. In many circumstances, we are ‘guides on the side’ enabling people to find their own truth.

## LAYOUT OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is divided into sections that outline the restorative process engaged in since March 2021. It does not contain information that may have been received through the work of the Safeguarding office, or information gleaned through other means.

Chapter 2 outlines the experiences of the past pupils, how they and others were impacted, what questions they have or had, and what they want or need to manage what happened to them in the best way possible.

Chapter 3 is an account of engagement with Jesuits<sup>6</sup> who knew Joseph Marmion, how they have been impacted by what happened and what they think should happen in order to help repair the harm.

Chapter 4 discusses how the Jesuits were impacted and have been dealing with events since March 2021 - in particular, the testimonies of past pupils about their experiences of abuse by Joseph Marmion and its impact on them. It tracks the experiences of Jesuits responding to accusations of failing to address the issues decades earlier and of being unwilling to address cultural factors which enabled the abuse to go unnoticed for so long. It outlines the thoughts of those who were present in the schools at the time of the abuse, about what needs to happen next to address the harm done, and to ensure it cannot happen again.

Chapter 5 outlines the joint engagement process that took place between Jesuits and past pupils both at individual and group level. It discusses the extent to which the process that ensued has managed, or is managing, to assist them in that way.

Chapter 6 describes the rationale behind the restorative process utilised and how this process enabled and interacted with other processes initiated by past pupils who self-organised. It charts the different elements that enabled the progression of the past pupils’ agenda in collaboration with the Jesuit Order. These included: facilitated group meetings with past pupils, the development of a self-organising Past Pupils Steering Group, the facilitation of Jesuit meetings and of joint past pupil-Jesuit meetings.

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of sins they have committed to a priest who, as the Church’s ordained representative before God, imparts God’s forgiveness for those sins to the person confessing them. During the past pupils’ school days, confession was the term ordinarily used by the boys to refer to instances of their experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a term which would have been unfamiliar to the boys back then. They would simply say, ‘I went to confession’. Some past pupils related their experiences of Joseph Marmion using the privacy and the one-to-one setting of confession as the occasion and opportunity to abuse boys (sexually, emotionally, and psychologically).

<sup>6</sup> There are 96 Jesuits belonging to the Irish Province (2023). Of those, 10 live abroad, and 30 are living in structured, supported, nursing care environments

Chapter 7 outlines how past pupils who were abused by Joseph Marmion experienced the restorative process. It discusses the outcomes and what differences this process made to them.

Chapter 8, similarly, is a reflective evaluation of how the Jesuits who took part in the restorative process experienced the process and the differences it made to them.

Reflective evaluations are also an important element for restorative practitioners as they help us, and others, to be of greater assistance to people impacted by serious harm.

Chapter 9 is the facilitators' reflection of the restorative process as it developed and how the experiences documented within it mirror findings in research on trauma, abuse, and restorative practice/justice.

There are three appendices to this document. The first is an open letter from a past pupil to the Jesuits in the Irish Province. The second is a response by a Jesuit to the open letter from a past pupil. The third is an acknowledgment and apology from Leonard Moloney SJ in July 2022.

## LANGUAGE AND ORIENTATION

This document uses the words that past pupils, witnesses, and Jesuits used to describe Joseph Marmion, the impact he had on them, and their more recent experiences of trying to manage what has emerged since March 2021.

Of note, some quotes are 'composites', where more than one person described a similar experience. As meetings were not recorded, not all quotes are verbatim but instead aim to capture the spirit of the voices and experiences of both past pupils and Jesuits at the centre of the harm.

At the request of past pupils who experienced abuse by Joseph Marmion, the term 'victim' is not used by the authors of this report. The terms: *past pupil*, *past pupils/people who were abused/harmed*, *past pupils who experienced abuse/harm*, *children and people* are used.

Throughout this account, we use the term Jesuit Order or Order, or Jesuits to refer to Jesuit priests and brothers in Ireland rather than other terms also used such as, The Society of Jesus, or 'the Society'. The term *Jesuit community* is usually reserved for the *local* Jesuit community which is where Jesuits live and work together every day. The term *scholastic* is also used periodically throughout the document and refers to a Jesuit in training (and on probation) between the years he takes First vows and takes Final vows. This period is normally about 15-17 years long.

## CHAPTER 2 – EXPERIENCES OF PAST PUPILS

*“It was so visible to us. Yet he hid in plain sight.”*

Joseph Marmion taught in three schools, Clongowes College (1962–1965), Crescent College (1960–1962, 1965-1969) and Belvedere College (1969-1978), before being removed in 1978<sup>7</sup>. The subjects he taught included French, German and English, though he didn't teach all three at each school. He also engaged in high profile operatic productions in both Crescent College and Belvedere College. While each past pupil who participates in this process had their own unique perspective on what happened and their own story to tell, both similar and diverging themes emerged of their experiences of Joseph Marmion.

### WHO WAS JOSEPH MARMION?

Many past pupils and witnesses of Joseph Marmion described him as clever, witty, talented, entertaining, charismatic, an 'accomplished musician and linguist', with a 'formidable intellect'. They also spoke of his anger and propensity for violence, cruelty, manipulation, malevolence, volatility, sadism and evil.

Most past pupils spoke of an atmosphere of 'menace' around Joseph Marmion. Many of those who said that they weren't affected by him deeply felt an air of unease, unpredictability, and a need to hide and 'stay small, to stay out of harm's way' when in his presence.

Past pupils also said that he could be irreverent, entertaining, 'slagging off' the other teachers and making jokes, but 'you never knew when it could be flipped ... that level of constant uncertainty of the next 5 minutes.'

One past pupil describes his experience of Joseph Marmion:

*“His determination to be the cock of the walk knew no bounds: a smaller kid was physically up ended in class to shake his pockets empty of the rice for his peashooter, fellow members of the teaching staff were given effeminate nicknames, boys were instructed to beat one another up to maintain order in his classroom, rules were wilfully defied. A true chaos maker, he went his own way, and he had his own way.”*

Other past pupils deeply admired him and were glad to be in his presence. He had a way of making people feel special and some, as students, felt drawn to him 'like a moth to a flame' even if they were at the same time fearful and uncertain.

*“He seemed unassailable, and his behaviour seemed to go unchallenged. He had a way of making you feel he had a special regard for you, although you knew that regard could be switched off like a lightbulb, so that in a moment you could become the butt of his cruel derision. That was his genius, an alchemy of charm and threat. He was the most cynical individual I have ever known. He was also a true sociopath who was happy to destroy friendships, engender fear, divide and conquer, dominate, mock, and demean. Like so many of his type, he hid in plain sight.”*

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<sup>7</sup> Additional information on his time in colleges spans 1959-1978 (1962 is when he went to Clongowes Wood College as Prefect of Studies). Also, his regency was in Clongowes Wood College (1951-52) and Crescent (1952-1954). (Regency is a period of full-time apostolic work after a scholastic's philosophy studies and before he commences theology studies. Regency usually lasted three years and usually took place in a Jesuit school).

Another past pupil said of Joseph Marmion:

*"He was an extraordinarily frustrated man. There was something wrong with him and he was deeply angry. He was very, very intelligent with carefully contrived grooming strategies."*

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Since the public acknowledgment of the abuse of past pupils in three Jesuit schools by Joseph Marmion SJ, 62 people who were abused by him have come forward to the restorative facilitators and others have come forward to the Past Pupils Steering Group and/or the Jesuit Safeguarding Officer. What is remarkable is the variety of manifestations of abuse that he engaged in, which included physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual violence in multiple forms. We spoke to, and communicated with, past pupils from the three schools who described elements of all the forms of violence noted above.

Though Joseph Marmion's shortest time was spent in Clongowes Wood College (1962-1965), his impact while there was significant. A number of past pupils described the public humiliation and violence boys suffered and witnessed which, they said, 'scarred them for life' and upset 'the balance of minds' of some students.

The abuses described included extreme physical punishment, sexual grooming, wrongful accusation, and expulsion, or the threat of expulsion, which had a devastating impact on boys and their families.

*"I write to confirm that he was a nasty piece of work, who caused me physical and emotional harm. I welcome this process by the province."*

*"My recollection of Clongowes was of a place where love and kindness did not exist. I wonder if the mood created by Marmion helped to make Clongowes such an unfriendly place then."*

*"Of course, I realise some of this might be a reflection of how I am as an individual. I certainly was not sporty. I was quiet and shy. I believe others who played rugby and other sports have a different picture of Clongowes."*

One past pupil from Clongowes recounted his experience of being sexually abused on frequent occasions and the impact that had on his life:

*"He called me in and asked me questions which I knew was him asking me if I was gay or not. I said I didn't know. He said when you masturbate do you think about boys or girls. I said I didn't know, and he said there's one way to find out and then he masturbated me. That first time it was an out of body experience, like I was looking down at what was happening to me."*

*"You could be sent for punishment when your academic work was not adequate. We went in one at a time for corporal punishment. He would always put me at the back of the queue and when I went in, he would masturbate me and say, 'this is better than punishment isn't it?' Now I think he was like a pseudo friend. I didn't question it then; you did what you were told. It was a different time."*

*"He lost interest in me when I came back for the next year and my voice was broken. I think I was too old then. I had many problems with my sexuality from leaving school on and have had to live with it all my life."*

This past pupil who was sexually abused by Joseph Marmion told us how he had gone on to abuse others. He said this allowed him to have a degree of sympathy and understanding for the priest.

*"The only thing I can think is that what happened to me arrested my sexual development and trapped me. There have been huge repercussions and I have had enormous losses in my life as a result. I have a certain amount of sympathy for him because, like me, his development had also been arrested, but in spite of the damage caused I forgive him."*

Past pupils of Crescent College also described being impacted by both intimidation and sexual violence.

*"The atmosphere of intimidation was pervasive. Other teachers were cross but didn't instil fear the way Joseph Marmion did."*

The largest number of people we spoke to were from Belvedere College, which we attribute in part to it being Joseph Marmion's most recent school posting. Past pupils and others also suggest that Joseph Marmion's range of abusive behaviours escalated and got increasingly out of control over time which culminated in his being 'found out' by current pupils of the school in 1977.

### PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Past pupils from all three schools describe intimidation, physical and psychological abuse by Joseph Marmion.

*"Three weeks before my leaving, he banned me from all classes and confined me to the study. No other priest knew about it. I went to a lay teacher, and he guided me towards a solution."*

*"One problem was that there was nowhere to turn for help. Parents generally could not believe that a priest could be so evil. Also, the Jesuits were no use. They must have known what was going on and clearly did nothing."*

*"The day I left, I felt a huge weight off my shoulders, I vowed never to see anyone [from the school] again."*

They described an atmosphere of turmoil, terror and chaos generated by his large physical presence and of 'never knowing' with any degree of certainty how he would behave in the classroom at any moment, and for any length of time. Others described an atmosphere that was 'exhilarating and exciting' which could 'instantly deteriorate into violence [verbal or physical] very quickly, encouraged on by him'. Control was gained through fear, violence, humiliation, and denigration of students.

*"I went in at 12 years of age. He was the Form Master for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year French. I witnessed people being kicked and terrified. He identified our weaknesses and exploited them."*

Past pupils described being targeted by him, that he could take an 'intense dislike' to them, and they described being attacked physically, psychologically, and emotionally sometimes every day for weeks, months, or even years. They described the relentlessness of the abuse, and the hopelessness and loneliness of 'no escape' and nowhere to turn. They also spoke of the constant anxiety and fear, the relief that 'it's not you this time, but real fear that you will be next'. One past pupil remembered trying to keep himself 'small' and 'invisible' to avoid attention.

*"The threat of humiliation was a constant and with the benefit of hindsight I can only imagine the subliminal stress that was exerted on us all being in the presence of such abject evil. I look back on the experience as a daily blight."*

Past pupils described the types of punishment they experienced for not understanding a lesson or answering questions correctly.

*"In class one day, as a punishment for not understanding something, he made me stand at the top of the class with my hand out and my tongue out. He explained after a while that that would be my job when I left school. I would stand outside post offices for people to wet their stamps and tip me a few coins... I couldn't wait to get out of Belvedere and once I left, I never wanted to return. I never went to any of the dinners or events."*

*"You had to put your nose on the blackboard, and he made to stand on your tippy toes. If your heels went down, you got beaten on the back of the legs."*

## SETTING PUPIL AGAINST PUPIL

Past pupils described Joseph Marmion as engaging in his own 'private experiments.' For example, he would ask them to choose between getting a 'deadener' in the arm themselves or giving a 'deadener' to the person beside them. One student spoke of losing a friendship that he really wanted to develop because of this.

Past pupils shared how Joseph Marmion encouraged them to ridicule or demean each other. He also incited violence towards individual students, telling them to 'get him'. He told his pupils that he was preparing them for life.

*"I find it hard to sum him up. He was physically abusive but in a devious way. He would get others to do his dirty work. His motto was that life was tough, school was a preparation for life... he would then shrug his shoulders and make your life miserable."*

Another past pupil recalled the terror of Joseph Marmion coming towards him and how he rolled into a foetal position to protect himself, while being beaten by his classmates, at Marmion's instigation.

Some past pupils suggested that the ripple effect of the violence in the classroom legitimised the violence that students used on each other. They now question whether there was more violence than 'normal' because of the way they were 'coached' in the classroom. A number of past pupils who were subjected to violence from other past pupils expressed difficulty in subsequently meeting them online during the restorative process as though 'nothing had happened'.

## SEXUAL ABUSE AND GROOMING OF CHILDREN

Past pupils noted several locations where the sexual abuse took place. In Crescent College, a past pupil described being abused in the 'changing rooms', which were types of sheds beside the athletics pitch. He described being in shorts and on his own in the sheds. Joseph Marmion then 'taught' him how to do stretching exercises by physically bending down and moving the boy's leg and bending it, whilst moving his hands towards, and touching, his groin.

A past pupil from Clongowes Wood College described how he was brought into a private meeting with Joseph Marmion:

*"He said 'do you know the facts of life?' I said, 'yes' and he said, 'not according to (name of another pupil)'. He led me down to his office, gave me a threepenny bar of Cadbury's chocolate and sat me in this leather chair facing a screen. He was behind me, and he went through a series of slides of scantily clad people standing around a swimming pool. He asked me 'do you know what this is for, and do you know what that is for (pointing at body parts)?' He asked me 'do you have any questions?' I said no and ran out of the chair."*

The pupil recounted that he didn't take the chocolate and thinks now that perhaps that was a good thing.



Another past pupil from Clongowes Wood College emotionally described being brought to Joseph Marmion's private room when he was 14 years old:

*"He said that I had to read out erotic passages in a book over and over again while he sat behind his desk in front of me. I couldn't look up and I couldn't look at him, I was terrified."*

Past pupils in Belvedere College were also sexually abused in several locations including empty classrooms, the costume fitting room in 'number 9', Joseph Marmion's bedroom, and whilst on school trips to Vienna.

### **COSTUME FITTING, SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, & CONFESSION - PREDATORY OPPORTUNITIES**

Past pupils described their experiences of sexual molestation and abuse which took place during the 'fitting of costumes' for rehearsals of the school operettas, and more specifically in the fitting out of boys for the female roles. This involved young boys having to strip naked in front of Joseph Marmion. They had to put on tights or sometimes Joseph Marmion would put the tights on the students himself.

One past pupil declined the offer to have the tights put on as he told Joseph Marmion that he knew how to do it himself:

*"He ordered me to strip naked and made me wear women's tights. During the costume fitting, he also grappled with me, under the guise of showing me a self-defence manoeuvre. The manoeuvre involved pressing back on the base of the nose, requiring me to arch my back as he held me up."*

Another past pupil described his experience of costume-fitting for the opera. He remembered having to take off his clothes and sit on a bench as Marmion asked him about sex, girls and where he got his information from. He answered that his parents had told him all about that – a response he believed saved him from further interference.

*"I was 12 years old and in first year, a new boy and was very scared of him."*

A number of past pupils spoke of being warned to stay out of Joseph Marmion's way. One past pupil wrote:

*"There was also a discussion (amongst pupils) around the fact that...(Fr Marmion) was prone to ask boys in the confessional about whether they masturbated and to then probe further details. The advised response to this from older pupils was 'I don't know what you mean Father, but I'll have to ask my mammy or daddy what that is.'"*

Past pupils described having to report for 'spiritual direction' or 'confession' on a regular basis where they were often told to undress and, whilst sitting or standing naked, would be questioned, and lectured about masturbation, genital cleanliness, and sin. At times these rituals were part of the 'costume-fitting' exercise, at other times, they were stand-alone rituals.

*"In September 1975, we started having confessions during school hours with a 50-year-old Fr Marmion. He had significant authority over us because he was our form master and contributed to our school reports. During this time, he called me out from other classes to meet him for confessions. I had no choice. No adult queried his authority. During confession, the primary thing on his mind was my sexual thoughts and deeds. The mechanism used to legitimise sexual inquiry was the examination of conscience. This involved asking me to recount 'impure thoughts', sexual experiences, and sexual behaviours (e.g., masturbation). This and other information gained in confession was used as a lever of power over me. I think he may have developed some kind of addiction to the ritual itself. His abuse also normalised bullying and humiliation in the class." Declan Fitzgerald (Belvedere past pupil)*



Other past pupils said the following:

*"He crammed into the desk beside me [in an empty classroom, for confession] and asked, 'Do you play with yourself?' In French and German classes, I was terrified by him." (Richard Lynch Belvedere 1980)*

*"Firstly, his role as spiritual director afforded him the opportunity to interview us privately in an adjoining empty classroom. I still remember how he arranged it so that his prey (us!) would be pressed against the wall while he would sit on the same school bench and interrogate us as to any impure thought I might have had."*

*"He took me to his room in the Jesuit's residence for an extended and inappropriate interrogation of my sexual habits and thoughts, all under the guise of a private confession."*

## VIENNA - A LOCATION FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Over several years, Joseph Marmion organised an annual summer school trip to Vienna with around 20 boys averaging 13-16 years of age. The trip was organised so that the pupils could study and learn German and be immersed in Austrian culture. Joseph Marmion and the pupils stayed in the Kolpinghaus, where meals and classes were held. During classes, which were held in the morning, Joseph Marmion and an Austrian man would teach German. Pupils were then free to explore Vienna in the afternoon and were encouraged to return for mass in the evening which was followed by dinner. Pupils were also free after dinner. Some past pupils spoke of being invited to dine alone with Joseph Marmion and go to an 'operetta' afterwards.

Joseph Marmion's room/quarters in the Kolpinghaus was the site of multiple forms of sexual abuse. Past pupils noted a difference between the abuse they experienced in Vienna compared to the abuse at school. They spoke of being 'masturbated,' 'bathed' and 'examined'. Many abuses took place under the guise of dealing with the suspected 'sickness' of a pupil.

*"Vienna seemed a bit different. It seemed to go further and was more genitally focused (than Belvedere)."*

*"In 1977, in Vienna, I was invited to his room; my pyjama bottoms were taken down and I had to cough. My temperature was taken rectally with a thermometer. (Richard Lynch, Belvedere, 1980)*

*"While on a school trip to Vienna, Austria, he took me to a fancy restaurant meal (where I had my first glasses of wine), a theatre show, and then back to his room at the Kolpinghaus Meidling. There, under the guise of a 'medical exam', he pulled down my pants, touched my penis (retracting the foreskin), inserted a rectal thermometer in my anus, and fondled my buttocks. He also inquired about my sexual experience to date [limited to masturbation]."*

*"He sexually abused me was when I was in Vienna - he insisted that I got into the bath, and he massaged me - never any penetration."*

*"I was twice prey to Joseph Marmion's perverse sexual predation: once in the form of the now notorious fitting sessions prior to the Strauss operettas, and once on my first trip to Vienna when he had me strip naked to search for a supposed rash he had first identified on my arm. He always operated as if what he was doing was the most natural thing in the world. He was in charge. You did as you were told."*

*"The thing is, don't get sick! If you got sick, you got brought to his room. Was I brought to his room, examined, and masturbated? Yes."*

## GROOMING OF CHILDREN

Past pupils recounted their experience of being a 'favourite', 'chosen' or 'special' which they have since described as 'grooming'.

*"He would let people know you were special - a guy a few years ahead of me told me that he had a list of his favourite boys. He was one and I was another one."*

*"In some cases, we laughed about it in embarrassment as children and we were so proud to be in his personal orbit. Walking down the corridor and being delighted to have a secret little wink from him that he made you think was just for you, a quick pat on the backside if he got the chance. Small things that alluded to the fact that you were chosen! What for? we never knew, but to keep us silent for sure. And the private masses on a Sunday where he said Mass for us in the private chapel in the house. We loved it. Part of being with him."*

Past pupils described being managed and 'kept close' though they were no longer as favourite as some others.

*"I fell out of his direct orbit at about 14/15 when my voice broke."*

*"He was clever and manipulative and was able to 'keep you in' long after he had no further use for you. You wanted him to see you. I can still smell him."*

1977 was the last Belvedere College trip to Vienna led by Joseph Marmion. During this process, two past pupils explained that shortly after the tour returned home, it became known that Joseph Marmion had been abusing children. One pupil, who had been in Vienna in 1976, learned from a student friend about alarming behaviour on Marmion's part towards at least one other pupil. The pupil relayed this to his father who set a chain of events in motion that led to the headmaster interviewing several students to validate the reports of sexual abuse. This resulted in Joseph Marmion being removed as head of the opera in 1977 and removed from the school in 1978.

Riocard Ó Tiarnaigh, a past pupil of Belvedere College who asked to be named in this document, recounted that in Autumn 1977 he heard from his peers of the very problematic behaviour on the part of Joseph Marmion in Vienna. He told his father, a teacher in the school, who in turn - exercising due care for the pupils - alerted the headmaster. The headmaster has no recollection of such a meeting but accepts that it must have occurred.

## THE IMPACT OF ABUSE: THEN & INTO ADULTHOOD

### FEAR, TERROR, MENACE

Past pupils described the air of fear and menace that pervaded around Joseph Marmion. Even pupils who were not targeted by him described the uneasiness and fear they felt in the pit of their stomachs.

*"I carried a wounded pig on my back. The turmoil, chaos and malevolence were etched into your soul. It wrapped around us, penetrated us, we couldn't fight it."*

*"I remember four of us carrying something over in the junior school and we arrived in the room, and we were told to wait outside until we were called in - and we were called in individually. Suddenly, I found myself standing in this room that had a bed and empty wine or beer bottles all over the place. I suddenly realised, I'm on my own, there's a bed in the room, the other three were gone. I felt just sheer terror. I thought how the hell am I in this position again. He started asking me was I afraid of him and what was I afraid of. I told him that I was scared stiff and that was it basically."*

*"I had to make my way up every two or three weeks - go through more or less an interrogation (about sexual habits, cleanliness etc.) I was around 13. It went on for quite a while - at least through one year, possibly going into a second year. There was a menace and fear that was unlike anyone else; even I think other teachers felt it."*

## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS – MEETING JOSEPH MARMION AS ADULTS

Past pupils spoke of the long-lasting impact that the abuse had on them into their adult lives. They described their shock and terror later in life of accidentally seeing Joseph Marmion on the street, in the hospital, at an airport. Many describe feelings of panic, disgust, anger and upset. They describe self-criticism and self-loathing that they didn't challenge him at the time.

One man who had been subjected to physical and psychological abuse by Joseph Marmion described a most painful and traumatic time in his life when his partner was terminally ill in St Vincent's Hospital. She asked Fr Joseph Marmion, who was the Hospital Chaplain, for absolution. He said that he could only give absolution if she promised to stop 'living in sin' with her partner. This devastated the couple's remaining time together and the past pupil cannot comprehend how any priest could deny a dying woman peace of mind and heart.

One past pupil, on seeing Joseph Marmion walking in Drumcondra, describes his urge to get out of his car and physically or verbally accost him and was ashamed of himself afterwards that he didn't.

Another past pupil described a vivid memory he had of driving down Dame Street and seeing Joseph Marmion walking along the pavement:

*"I had an almost unbearable urge to drive up on the pavement and knock him down with my car.... I assure you this would have been a very foreign urge for me to have as I am meek and mild."*

Another past pupil described the following incident:

*"About four or five years after leaving school, I entered a lift in Vincent's Hospital only to see that it was occupied by Marmion. My body drained of all its energy... he was still impacting me."*

*"I remember walking into him with a friend at 17. Me and my friend ran down a lane with fright and fear. We were just running as fast as we could."*

*"I wake up at nights even still where I could see his face. He was on TV a number of years ago and I just remember when I saw him, I could smell his breath so much and it was bad breath. I can still smell this bad breath you know, that's how much of an effect it had."*

*"Did it impact on me in any way? When I was driving up and heard his name on the news it had an instant impact... I was anxious about seeing his face if the sound of his name had that impact. When I saw his face, I had mixed feelings. So, there he is - and also actually he looks a sorry figure."*

## VICARIOUS TRAUMA THROUGH WITNESSING AND 'SURVIVORS' GUILT'

Past pupils spoke of being shocked and traumatised on witnessing the violence, and emotional and psychological abuse being inflicted on others in their class and in their presence. We have heard from several past pupils about incidents of severe violence being inflicted on certain students that impacts them to this day.

Past pupils spoke of one child in music class who was very badly beaten by Joseph Marmion. They describe the severity and the shock and terror that went with witnessing the violence inflicted on him. He died as

an adult after a long illness. His brother noted that over the years many medical staff asked whether he had had a head injury as a child.

Other past pupils describe how witnessing others was even more difficult than what happened to them.

*"I found the hardest part of it all is... someone else was very badly beaten - that's the one I have most difficulty with. (Name) was just a shy, nerdy kind of fella. Marmion took a dislike to him from day one and he was always picking on him. One day Marmion said something to him, and he said something back. Whatever happened it clicked something in him. He ripped the desks apart and he just laid into him. None of us would have been able to take him on. None of us were able to do anything about it, we would have been scared. It happened in front of our eyes."*

A number of past pupils expressed distress at 'allowing' the abuse of others to go on though they themselves were children without any power.

*"He humiliated people in the things he used to make people do and we let it happen and we were only young boys, but we actually let it happen! We hadn't got the strength because we were so young, and he was so overpowering so... (if he) said 'give him a box,' you gave him a box. It's really hard but we never took it any further. Maybe if we had been more vocal but you're afraid you won't be believed."*

Many past pupils expressed guilt and pain at not being able to protect others.

*"I discovered that what really bothered me was not the burden that I had described to you; it was as I saw it. It was that I had failed to protect one boy and he tried to reach out to me as a much older boy - so I felt absolutely terrible about it."*

This past pupil from Clongowes describes the traumatic impact of witnessing other pupils being abused:

*"Being boys, we had to pretend that we were strong and could take a beating without blubbing. But two boys who struggled academically in this class were beaten every week. It was not enough for Marmion to beat them, he also revelled in humiliating them as they invariably cried and Marmion obviously derived huge enjoyment from humiliating them in front of everybody. It also served the purpose of striking fear into the rest of us, as we all knew we could be next."*

One past pupil described a situation where Joseph Marmion encouraged him to go on the Vienna trip when a child at school. Joseph Marmion told him that two of his peers were considering going and if he went that would be the 'clincher'.

*"Maybe Marmion was just grooming me, and this was just a tactic he used with all those he wanted to travel. I'll never know but I can say that four decades on, he had the power to mess with my head in terms of guilt, misguided or not. As I say, it was guilt about this interaction that prompted me to reconnect with a past, that for other reasons, had been closed like a crypt."*

Another past pupil wrote about his efforts as an adult to ensure that Joseph Marmion never had access to children. Some years after finishing school he hired a private detective to investigate whether Joseph Marmion had any access to children or not.

## **POWERLESSNESS, SILENCE AND SHAME**

Those that we spoke to who were abused by Joseph Marmion physically, psychologically and/or sexually have described a myriad of impacts on them both as children and as they went through their adult lives. They described the public humiliation and shaming that happened in the classroom. They described the impact of being 'targeted' by a powerful person with no place to hide in full view of others. They described no way out of the situation.

*"The thing that really gets me is the injustice of it. If I didn't do my exercise or anything like that, I'd understand. The thing was that I tried my best with my exercises. I put my head down and worked but it didn't make any difference at all."*

With regard to sexual abuse, past pupils described the shame, fear, and confusion after they were abused in private by Joseph Marmion. Even though they felt that 'the dogs in the street knew what was happening', the majority of pupils didn't tell anyone themselves.

One past pupil, when a student, told a fellow student what happened the day he was abused. The friend articulated that the past pupil would be blamed and would probably have to leave the school. A small number of pupils told us that, as adults, they had shared with others that they had been abused. However, most past pupils did not disclose what happened to them until March 2021 and afterwards. Some we have spoken to have chosen to continue to keep it private and have not disclosed their experiences to their family and friends.

*"I knew what was going on was wrong on some level but I kind of almost didn't know why it was wrong. You're trying to be a well-behaved kid, so you just follow along with the order. So, this is what the priest says, well then, okay, he's supposed to be in charge and although I was mortified, I never talked to any of the other kids about it."*

A past pupil who had gone through the costume-fitting measuring ritual and questioning about masturbation and cleanliness while just in tights described feeling "uneasy, cringing, and embarrassed. I never told anyone".

One past pupil described coming down the stairs and being asked by his classmates if he was naked. He said "no, it didn't happen to me".

Another past pupil said:

*"Collectively we knew he was bad news - you'd talk about it without wanting to fess up."*

Past pupils spoke about feeling 'dirty,' 'powerless,' 'ashamed,' knowing that 'something had happened that was not right', but they had neither the language nor ability to explain what was happening to their classmates, parents, or teachers.

*"Boys at that age get unwanted erections and he didn't touch me but just the way he looked at me. It was just horrible. You were completely numb and powerless. I had no sense of my own sexuality, but this made me feel dirty, ashamed, that there's something wrong going on here, but I didn't know what. I wouldn't have even had the words to talk about what happened. There was no language, yet this person had this power over me to do this and to make me feel like this."*

One past pupil experienced physical abuse, costume-fitting, and six months of 'spiritual direction' during which he had to be naked in front of Joseph Marmion whilst discussing masturbation and cleanliness. He spoke of the impacts on him:

*"I did this for nearly 6 months - times I wouldn't be able to sleep - Monday mornings going through my so called 'spiritual guidance'. On a Sunday night before the Mondays, I was in tears, I dreaded it so much. Then I actually stopped the operas and everything but unfortunately when I got into 5th year, he made life hell. I struggled with Belvedere after that."*

Another past pupil described his experience:

*"I was in the opera in 2nd year. We all knew, you had to take your clothes off. I was trembling head to foot, he was sitting on his throne, higher than me. I had to put tights on, he brushed against the crotch and heard your problems, rubbed the inside of my leg. A voice inside said, 'You shouldn't be doing that'. I had to sit on his knee. I felt naked and vulnerable sitting on his knee. I wouldn't have wanted my mother to see me naked like that. When we came down from being in the room, no one admitted to being naked although we all had to go through that."*

Another past pupil commented:

*"How can that be confession? You're dressed up in a pair of tights and nothing on - you shouldn't be there - very sad - the long-term effect it had on me and how I comport myself."*

Past pupils described trying to deal with the confusion of feelings and how they changed over time.

*"He was like a god to me for my first two years in Belvedere, despite the molestation. Everything he did seemed heroic... the disregard for authority, the irreverence toward his peers, the 7-minute masses, the astounding musical talent... two or three years later I loathed him and feared him greatly. But I stayed in his opera because somehow, in some weird way, I needed to be in his aura, despite my reciprocally sullen and toxic relationship with him."*

Another past pupil described how as a child in school he felt special and protected but only later realised how it had impacted his life:

*"He was the most accessible of the priests (in Belvedere). Then, I felt desired, whole, complete, and a sense of belonging... until the day I left school, he was very much the father figure in my life. Afterwards I was very messed up and I never felt whole. I hated priests and thought all priests had issues. He was clever, manipulative, clever enough for that to continue unnoticed."*

Another past pupil had experienced molestation and was asked about masturbation by Joseph Marmion:

*"I confessed, and he abused me; then gave me absolution... I remember the lightness with which I walked down the stairs of the Junior School from his bedroom. I was elated that I had been forgiven and not destined for hell for masturbating! Only now do I realize how deeply I was deceived. His abuse of me remained buried in that "confession box" till his name became public and I heard others' stories in the media."*

Some past pupils thought that their naivety saved them from more sinister abuse.

*"I had no idea what he was talking about, I was a late developer. That saved me I believe. I saw him looking at me and realising I didn't know what he was talking about. He left me alone after that."*

## **NOWHERE TO HIDE AND NOBODY NOTICED**

Past pupils referred to the reverence for religious orders and the privileged place they held in society at that time. Back then, a child would not dream of complaining about a priest. Nor did they feel that they could go to their parents. They felt they had nowhere to go.

*"It's the use of that privilege that there was just nowhere to go. There wasn't a notion at all of really complaining to your teacher or to your parents and the religious were very powerful very pietistic. There was no escape."*

*"I ended up doing the usual tights - with sponges. He then started talking about sexual intercourse and he asked me what my parents had told me. Then I ran off across the yard downstairs back into the classroom and was berated for disturbing the class. It just compounded everything - I walked into this*



*class needing someone to say it's okay, you're all right here and he (the teacher) berated me. I developed a deep hatred for that teacher. I wondered did he know what was going on - did he have any sense himself?"*

One past pupil described the impact of being in daily contact with Joseph Marmion and the atmosphere of 'high alert' to danger. He also described how that impact rippled into his homelife:

*"The sense for me at any rate was that you were in this alone. That sense extended to family. After one parent teacher meeting, Marmion mentioned in class the next day about how he had talked to my mother and that he had decided that I was a 'street angel and house devil'. I said nothing at the time, but I remember reading my mother the riot act that night when I got home. The unspoken sub-text was that she had opened the door to engagement that had drawn Marmion's attention to me. The over-reaction on my part was sideways frustration that she didn't have the psychic powers to understand what we were dealing with and that, in this case, loose lips could have catastrophic consequences for me."*

One past pupil described trying to get away through applying for a scholarship abroad but because he couldn't speak about what happened to his parents, they decided he was needed at home, and he wasn't able to leave.

#### CHILDREN PROTECTING THEIR PARENTS

Many of the past pupils who spoke to us talked about the exceptional sacrifices that their parents made to send them to Jesuit schools. They spoke of their parents' hopes and dreams for them which for some meant giving them what they had never received themselves: the best education they could get for them.

*"I didn't complain about it this time, I didn't even tell my parents. I never did because they were so proud of me going to Belvedere and like they're very humble people. It was beyond their pay grade to send me to Belvedere so they just had to make a lot of sacrifices to send me there and I couldn't tell them that this was going on."*

#### ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

*"In the Jesuit Response, one of the priests said he had to get away from Belvedere because of the toxic atmosphere; was there no thought for 'gosh should I be leaving those children to him (Joseph Marmion)?"*

A number of past pupils spoke of their loss of religion and their unease in the presence of people from religious orders as a result of their treatment at school.

*"The abuse I suffered deprived me of a normal relationship with God."*

*"What should have been a positive experience was to me a very, very, negative one. I couldn't wait to get out of the country. If I'm in the presence of a religious person, priest, or nun, I become very uncomfortable and vacate the area. I think probably my anger with the system was that, in the long run, I'd been sold a pup! These people who were pontificating about how we should be, were doing far worse than anything we could think of doing."*

Past pupils talked about the lost opportunities that could have saved them decades of pain and allowed them to get help earlier.

*"What annoyed me about the Jesuits is that they hid him until now and all the things that happened in the intervening years - and the call from the bishops to open their books and the Jesuits said nothing*

*and they knew this - this for me isn't something that happened 40 years ago, the Jesuits were doing it, [hiding him] until now. It meant that I might have got help, 20 or 30 or 40 years ago."*

*"I think they're all complicit by doing nothing and keeping the head down. I don't have much respect for them. I believe they came forward because a gun was put to their heads."*

## RELATIONSHIPS, SELF-WORTH, SEXUALITY AND DEPRESSION

In their adult lives, many past pupils described the impacts that the abuse had on their image of themselves, their self-worth and self-confidence. They spoke about their relationships with others, with themselves and with children. They described an inability to trust others, and that their relationship with authority had changed.

*"It had an effect on my relationships and my relationships with girls. It undermined my relationship with my first wife, it was terrible for her. It's very hard to undo that. Subconsciously deep down it has an effect on you."*

*"He made me a very insecure person. He made me feel dirty. I couldn't speak to a girl or a woman. I came out of school painfully shy. There was such a big difference between the guy who came into this school and the guy who came out 7 years later. I've had very dark times in my life. I was an angry man."*

*"There are times it really clouded everything for years and years and I just got on with life. I got married very young trying to see if that would help. That marriage didn't work, and I ended up divorced. It never left me."*

*"When my last relationship broke up, I thought to myself 'she's better off without me'. That is what this has done to me. It took away my chances of a good loving relationship."*

Some past pupils spoke about how their relationships with their children was impacted and that they weren't able to parent their children as well as they should have.

*"If I'd have been a better more confident person, I'd have been able to help my children better."*

Some past pupils spoke about a strong fear that they would possibly harm a child in their care. To one past pupil, if someone he trusted and initially adored could abuse him in that way, why could he [the past pupil] not do the same?

*"I had this enormous, irrational, and unfounded fear that I would sexually abuse a child. Because I was sexually abused by a paedophile (who I adored initially), I thought that I too would go on to abuse children. It took years of therapy for me to realise how unfounded that was... he caused me to doubt myself in the most malignant, offensive, and destructive way. I think that has been my loss in life, where there has been so much wonderful gain."*

*"I hated being gay. I was gay but that was also confused with what happened to me which conflated being gay with being a paedophile."*

Many men spoke to us about their experiences of depression and low self-esteem.

*"I have always sought approval from people, especially men. All my life I've been looking for it. The pattern of my life has been low self-esteem, drifting from job to job, no belief in myself."*

*"I've squirrelled myself away. My confidence is terrible. I found it hard to survive."*



*"I had no self-confidence after school. All my life I avoided confrontation. I always knew there was something in the background and I am permanently close to tears. When I walked out the gates at the end of 6th year, I never wanted to ever go back there again or meet anyone from there. I am never too far away from being upset."*

*"A thing came up about trauma in early childhood resulting in people becoming people pleasers. That named me to a tee. I think I've spent the last four plus decades of my life trying to please. I don't think anyone has ever really liked me because I don't think I've ever liked myself. I've just sort of fixed things for people."*

Some past pupils spoke about using alcohol and drugs to self-medicate and a number described contemplating and/or attempting suicide.

*"I did try to take my own life. I had taken an overdose and they got me to hospital I was doing crazy working hours, drinking more than I should. I just wasn't coping."*

*"My life has been a train crash; I've thought so little of myself. I've had problems with drinking and drugs, and I wonder how much of that was me and how much of it was what happened to me? Would I have been different if I hadn't been abused by that man?"*

*"I attempted to take my own life. I hadn't addressed this. I realised how much he took away from me and I know it even more now when I look at my grandchild who is the same age as I was then. I look at him and think, how could anyone do that?"*

## WHERE ARE THOSE WHO WERE HURT NOW?

A number of past pupils talked about the impact of witnessing pupils being ritually and consistently punished, shamed, ridiculed, and physically abused in class by, or through, Joseph Marmion. Others expressed concern for those they knew were involved in the opera and trips to Vienna and wondered whether they too were past pupils who were also abused.

One man had a strong sense that his older brother, now sadly deceased, had also been badly hurt and abused by Joseph Marmion. Over time he suffered from alcoholism and the abuse of other substances and became unable to maintain or develop his career. He had great difficulty in developing and maintaining healthy relationships and engaged in self-neglect. He rarely visited the family home, to his mother's deep regret. When he died, he was alone in poor financial circumstances. His brother is convinced that he was sexually abused by Joseph Marmion. During the course of our work, we met a number of other people who wondered about this man's brother, as they also were sure that he had been abused as a past pupil. One Sunday afternoon, this group met with the deceased man's brother. They discussed his promise, his sunny disposition and what had been lost to him so inexplicably. His brother found this meeting to be very helpful in reconciling the brother he knew from childhood with the damaged man he became, burdened by past experiences.

## IT DIDN'T RUIN MY LIFE

A small number of past pupils told us that while their experiences were negative at the time, they think these had a limited impact on their lives. Some used humour to tell us their stories.

*"Joseph Marmion invited me to audition for the opera and this was done 'one-on-one' - not like in the movies. For some reason to test my singing prowess, he told me to take my shoes, trousers, and underwear off and to put on a pair of see-through tights instead... I'm glad that, as far as I know, my life has not been greatly affected by this."*

## IMPACT OF THE NAMING & THE PROCESS THAT ENSUED

The naming of Joseph Marmion as an abuser of children when he was in Jesuit schools impacted past pupils in various ways ranging from relief to a traumatic resurgence of buried pain and, as many described a mixture of these feelings which changed as they engaged in different processes.

For some, when the news broke and so many past pupils came forward, there was relief. They spoke of the relief they felt at the public acknowledgement by the Jesuit Order of the abuse. They also spoke of how meaningful the support of their peers was when they shared what happened to them.

*"I'm now talking to some of the guys after all these years of feeling alone. Now there's a 'band of brothers' and it feels good."*

Some past pupils had never told their families or children about what happened to them. The public naming of Joseph Marmion enabled them to speak out.

*"I've spoken to my daughter and my son. My daughter read the response and she said that she understands more about what I went through having read it."*

For others, it brought back the trauma and the pain that they had kept buried for decades.

*"The only reason I got in touch with you was to make sure that other people who came forward would be believed. To offer support to them. It's been bloody awful."*

*"It was a relief on the one hand when this came out and, on the other hand, I find it very difficult to listen to the radio to stories of abuse. It has affected my whole life. What did I do to deserve this? It has affected my work life and my mental health, and I have been in the care of mental health professionals for a long time. I have a lot of regard for the Jesuits."*

*"WhatsApp is quite a useful tool, but it can be quite invasive, and people are posting a lot of information and some guys are serial posters. If that would slow down, it would be easier."*

*"I think I've been more affected by reading the report and the stuff in the group. I'm getting really upset for the others. More so than for me, or that your man fondled my genitals."*

This past pupil largely forgot about the abuse after he left school until he read Tom Doorley's article in the Daily Mail while visiting his mother:

*"My wife looked over at me and said, 'is everything okay?' My mother said, 'Jesus, you had him, did he ever do anything to you?' And she had this terrible look on her face. I said no, I got away with it... She would have been at the operas – all the mothers were involved and helping out and they thought he was great."*

Another past pupil said:

*"On one level, its cathartic - it has been brushed aside for a long time. It's also uncomfortable to realise I was the victim of a sexual predator. I didn't tell my parents till many years later. My mother said [when the abuse became public] 'I always had worries about him'."*

This past pupil described his trauma and pain, which he managed until now through repression:

*"This has been terrible. I'm getting counselling. I wish I hadn't known about it. I was doing okay keeping it all below the surface and I was getting on with things. Now I can't function some days. I hope it gets better."*

Having dealt with what had happened years earlier, another past pupil described his shock at realising the impact the naming had on him as it triggered the whole thing again and was very difficult to keep an even keel.

## WHAT DO YOU WANT - WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NOW?

Some past pupils when asked what needed to happen next to try to repair the harm said that they didn't know yet. Some appreciated the chance to talk in private about what happened, and some really appreciated the peer support that they got from each other. Many past pupils spoke of the motto 'men for others', and we witnessed enormous care, support and protection offered by past pupils to each other. Some past pupils spoke of being cynical about the ability of the Jesuits to respond meaningfully to the abuse that happened to children when in their care.

*"You don't have much hope in this process. You believe that the Jesuits will clam up and that nothing will be done about it. He's been named and shamed. Now it's going to be an exercise in PR. What would make it really good would be if they would stand up and say what they knew... No paper records anywhere? That's the omerta thing."*

Some past pupils said that they were concerned that the former Belvedere College headmaster could be used as a 'scapegoat' and 'thrown under a bus' for what happened. Many said that they admired him as he was the one who ensured that Joseph Marmion was removed from the school. Rather than using one person to blame, they wanted the Jesuit Order to fully accept responsibility and to make amends.

Several specific needs were identified by past pupils which are noted below.

### TO BE BELIEVED AND HEARD

*"I want to be believed and heard."*

*"This is what I wanted, and this has been great. It's great for me to get this off my chest - great to be listened to by someone who understands and who doesn't judge."*

*"It's good to talk and good to know that someone is taking something on board. I'm encouraged by the approach being taken by Leonard Moloney. I'll recommend that any of my own classmates will meet with you."*

### MEANINGFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM THE JESUITS

*"What I want is that someone does take notice of what went on."*

*"Don't pretend to come clean unless you're willing to come clean... A robust process would be forward-looking. Imagine a process that ended up with a 15-point blueprint for ensuring any suspicion of harm or danger to a child was reported and evaluated."*

*"I don't want to hang anyone out to dry, I want the truth. I want a compassionate acknowledgment that the people in charge knew, and that they chose to ignore what they knew."*

One victim from Clongowes said:

*"There is a strong need for accountability to be accepted not only by the Jesuits, but also by the Church at large worldwide who really promoted cover-ups by way of omerta and transfers to more exploitation."*

## TO GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*"I would like to ask what the culture was back then. There were others who had strange habits and strange behaviours, which back then were maybe not considered to be odd or out of the norm."*

*"I would like to see some sort of deeper ownership. Who knew what, and when did they know it?"*

## LEARNING FROM THE PAST TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE

*"For me, a key purpose of this process is to learn how he apparently was 'hiding in plain sight'. This must require powerful psychological blinkers to be worn by other adults. So, we need to learn (1) how his visible controlling behaviours (public bullying, ritual humiliations, intimidation, summoning pupils to his room) were not called out by any adults, and (2) how up to 1977, his superiors continued to afford him so many predatory opportunities (confessional role, musical role, acting in loco parentis in Vienna)."*

*"I want to be reassured that Jesuit schools, not just in Ireland but also abroad, have safeguarding measures in place for children and that they have a trusted person to go to if they feel bullied and/or threatened so that children will never have to go through what we had to go through."*

## A MEANINGFUL GESTURE - SOME FORM OF CLOSURE

Many past pupils spoke about what would be meaningful for them to help them to move on.

Some thought that Joseph Marmion should be 'defrocked' and no longer referred to as a Jesuit. Others thought that his remains should be removed from the Jesuit gravesite at Glasnevin Cemetery where he is buried. Still others noted that Joseph Marmion has family and that they are concerned about them through all of this.

*"Marmion's in my head all the time. Some form of closure is needed."*

*"They have a Caravaggio on permanent loan to the National Gallery. They could get a value on it and donate whatever the Caravaggio was worth to supporting abused children."*

*"My suggestion is for an open event at the National Gallery and that the Caravaggio that is on display there is rededicated on permanent loan in recognition of the abuses suffered by all children who were abused in this State."*

*"I would like them to acknowledge me personally, you know, to say we're sorry... I wouldn't mind standing face-to-face and getting somebody to look into my eyes... and just apologize to me. That's all I want; I'm not looking for reparation or anything mercenary. This is a genuine thing that has weighed on me all my life. An apology is all I want and acknowledgment from them that the way they handled the situation wasn't satisfactory."*

*"I would like there to be an open gathering to signify that this happened and that the Jesuits acknowledge what happened and their part in it. I would like this to be open in that it is not just for the victims to be with Jesuits, but for everyone who has an interest. I would like such an event, but I do not want to be identified as a victim. I don't want to be known as the man who was abused by Joe Marmion."*

## FINANCIAL RESTITUTION

Many past pupils acknowledged that there should be financial restitution to acknowledge the harm done to them as young children. Others expressed little interest in it. Some found difficulty in equating financial reimbursement with the level of harm done.

*“They have to say sorry. They have to help and pay. Even if they say they’re going to do something financially, how do you gauge this financially?”*

*“I think the Jesuits have to pay. I don’t like the notion of some form of tribunal where people will have to give evidence. A lot of people will say nothing and not show up. That will let the Jesuits off the hook. But they should pay. It’s the way the Jesuits can be hurt for what they’ve done. The only way they will see any pain. Remorse is cobblers.”*

*“I’d like to see school fees plus the rate of inflation being reimbursed to all victims and/or their families.”*

## PEER SUPPORT

The support of their peers in hearing each other had a profoundly cathartic and beneficial effect on many past pupils. From feeling alone and wondering if they were the only one, to finding a group of people who wanted to support each other, hear each other, and be able to be vulnerable in each other’s company, was immensely comforting.

Others found elements of the groups coming together sometimes draining and even overwhelming. They found it difficult to deal with the questions, the anger, and the constancy of the communication.

## TO FIND OTHER PAST PUPILS AND OFFER THEM HELP

*“Is there a process in place that tries to find everybody? We’ve lost a few guys over the years. I’d hate to think that they missed an opportunity that makes up for what they went through. Can’t help feeling that the ones that are most affected are ones that are not part of the process.”*

## TO THE PAST PUPILS

The above are segments of what those of you who were abused by Joseph Marmion shared with us. We have listened closely to experiences of the harm done to you at such a sensitive and vulnerable time of your lives when you were beginning the transition from childhood to adolescence.

You described how Joseph Marmion left an indelible mark on you and how he epitomised an authoritarianism that transgressed and shattered a number of adolescent boundaries: the abuse of power through bullying and violence in classrooms, encouraging the bullying of others by their peers, and a betrayal of innocence by plunging young boys into an adult world of sexuality before they were ready to enter that space. You describe how his actions corrupted the normal language of sexual touch and arousal, often under the guise of spiritual direction/guidance and confession, leading to confusion and shame.

You shared how hard it was to put into words what was being experienced at the time but knew instinctively that ‘something was not right’.

You described the powerlessness and having no place to turn and how alone you were. You described how this was often exacerbated by the culture of that time in society, the power of the religious orders, parental authority, and parental reverence of the Jesuits.

The examples of resistance, that were practiced by yourselves and your peers in attempts to counteract the abuse, stand out in chapter 2. Some of you tried to tell teachers about what was going on. Some told your parents and some parents, in turn, complained to different teachers about the bullying and abuse.

We heard how little was said about the sexual abuse and molestation suffered, even amongst yourselves. This situation persisted until the trip to Vienna in 1977 which was seen as a highwater mark.

For some of you, one of the hardest things to bear was the betrayal of your parents by the Jesuits in allowing harm to happen to their children. You spoke of the sacrifices your parents made, going without to ensure you got a good education. You talked about protecting them from what had happened to ensure they didn't feel any guilt or pain.

You shared how the harm done to you rippled across your lives which often led to never feeling whole or good enough and dealing with low self-esteem and guilt.

We also heard your sorrow of 'not doing more' for those you perceived as suffering more than you, and your anger and anguish at wrongdoing that was visible to you but remained a 'blind spot' for those in the schools entrusted by your parents to take care of you.

We heard you grappling with what happened to you during your school years, what is happening now for you since the public statement was issued by the Jesuits and these processes have come into being. We heard you talk about the impact of Joseph Marmion's abusive behaviour on you and how it has rippled out to affect your subsequent lives. We also heard the solidarity and support you have given each other during this process while acknowledging that many others who have suffered have not come forward at this point.

We also heard from many of you a strong appreciation of the education you received from the Jesuits and an appreciation of individual Jesuits who had a very positive impact on your values and lives. All of that was infused with disappointment at their inability to both stop the abuse and acknowledge that it happened earlier.

You described how the public acknowledgement of the abuse opened up an emotional channel which, for many, was the very first time you talked about what happened. You expressed your anger, rage, hurt, trauma and deep sadness at the violence, abuse, humiliation, and shame you suffered and how that has subsequently impacted on your lives.

We heard how searingly difficult this process has been for many of you, causing you to re-live and re-feel all that happened to you. Some have shared how overwhelming it has been to manage and that additional help was required at times.

You said that this must not happen again, anywhere, and that this process and your involvement in it must not have been for nothing.

## CHAPTER 3: MEETING WITH JESUITS

This chapter explores the Jesuits' experiences of Joseph Marmion as a member of their community. We hear the thoughts of the participating Jesuits on realising what happened, both as individuals and as a community, and what was needed to address the harm caused. The chapter also includes a letter by a Jesuit written to the facilitators in response to the public naming of Joseph Marmion and also in response to an open letter sent to all Jesuits in the province by Donal Ballance, who experienced abuse by Joseph Marmion. A further response to the open letter by another Jesuit is in Appendix 2.

Having engaged with a number of past pupils, we began to engage with members of the Jesuit Order to explore their understanding of what happened in the past. We purposely chose this as the second step in the process to ensure we could relay some of what we learned from past pupils to the Jesuits who agreed to speak with us.

Initially, we met with individual Jesuits who had either been in Belvedere College at the same time as Joseph Marmion, met him in other Jesuit schools, or lived with him in community.

One of the first meetings was with the Provincial and his consultors (those who advise and assist the Provincial). There, as facilitators, we recounted what we had learned from a number of past pupils, noting the common themes and issues, the nature and extent of the abuse perpetrated on the pupils, including sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological.

This was followed by a general invitation to Jesuits to meet with the independent restorative practitioners to discuss what happened and ask for their thoughts on what needed to happen next. Some of these earlier meetings did not have the benefit of the attending Jesuits hearing and reading what past pupils said, which led to less understanding of the impact of what happened to the pupils and how their lives had been so inextricably altered. They had received the open letter from the past pupil, noted above, which challenged the Jesuit Order to explore its culture and how it may have enabled the abuse to go on unchallenged for so long.

### JESUITS EARLIER EXPERIENCE OF JOSEPH MARMION

Many Jesuits that we spoke to described Joseph Marmion as witty, irreverent, hierarchical, authoritarian, and subversive. Some experienced immense kindness from him and spoke of him taking them 'under his wing'. They described him as a 'brilliant teacher' and musician. At the same time, he was also described as being very 'unpredictable', with people being 'wary' around him, and many reported an 'air of menace' in the community dining room when he was present.

These Jesuits knew Joseph Marmion at different periods in his life. A small number knew him as a teacher in Clongowes Wood College or Crescent College. Some had worked with him or lived in community with him in Belvedere College. Others knew him when he was subsequently living in Gardiner Street. The majority that we spoke to who knew him 'well' came from his time in Belvedere College.

*"Joe took me under his wing. I was invited to help him with the opera. I noticed nothing. Joe was a big character ... but he noticed I was in a vulnerable position. We used to gather after practices and rehearsals and have plenty of toast with butter and a chat, but I have no recollection of what the chat was about."*

*"I always kept him at a distance. I found him very cutting and there was no way I could see how I would befriend this man. Joe Marmion was a very bright man and very clever despite his many shortcomings."*

This Jesuit knew Joseph Marmion from both Belvedere College and Gardiner Street.



*"I used to visit Joe a few times - in Gardiner Street - and we'd have had a drink and a chat. I found Joe very negative in those years in Gardiner Street. I had to stop going, it became too hard."*

*"He was a friend, and I had a drink with him. He was a brilliant fellow, extraordinarily intelligent, a brilliant player, a polemicist. He had great ability. He had strength, he had kindness and he was also an extraordinary bully."*

## MEETING WITH A FRIEND OF JOSEPH MARMION

One man who was also a Jesuit priest and lived in the Belvedere community for a time talked about his friendship with Joseph Marmion that stretched over many years. He said that Joe Marmion was really kind to him at different times throughout his life and he regarded him as a good friend.

He said that he was completely shocked by the revelations of abuse committed by Joseph Marmion and was appalled and unaware of the sexual abuse perpetrated by him on boys in Jesuit schools. He described himself as terribly disappointed and upset and found it extremely difficult to reconcile the Joe Marmion spoken of and written of since March 2021 with the man he knew. He believed that Joseph Marmion suffered severely from depression and was on medication and had a dependence on alcohol and that he may have had bipolar disorder.

This priest wondered how he could have been so completely unaware of the abuse described seeing as it was done during school time, school term, and in Vienna. He said that he was very ashamed that boys in the care of the Jesuits had to go through such suffering and abuse.

## WHAT HAPPENED? THE BELVEDERE EXPERIENCE

Jesuits who lived in Belvedere College and met Joseph Marmion while there described a 'them and us' atmosphere in that community, at that time. Young Jesuits and scholastics describe a highly institutionalised and hierarchical culture that they found 'oppressive' and difficult to deal with.

*"The Belvedere community was highly institutionalised and hierarchical. There were some powerful and overpowering individuals including J. Marmion.... there was little sense of community. There was no warmth. Each did their own thing."*

One Jesuit, who said he challenged Joseph Marmion once, wonders if he should have been more assertive. He acknowledged how difficult a time it was for a young scholastic.

*"My experience of the community was very negative. I was struggling with everything. When I look back, it's so different in terms of community life to now. It was incredibly formalistic - very little communication - the younger group kept together. Joe was a person to steer clear of. Now I examine my conscience about that. When I look back on that, I knew he was a bullying personality. I had no power or influence. I just avoided it, I tried to survive."*

Another Jesuit describes how being a scholastic in Belvedere College, at the same time as Joseph Marmion was there, led to a focus on self-survival.

*"There was a dour and lifeless community ambience... The scholastics relied on each other for company and a social life. But either way it was a lonely, discouraging, and a dispiriting life and I knew I had to get out of there as quickly as possible. Against this backdrop, there's the infamous J. Marmion. I knew he was a force to be reckoned with and could be devastatingly caustic in his remarks. I had no idea he was a sexual predator, but I knew he had a reputation for being a heavyweight. I wasn't aware of any details about his classes... I was overwhelmed by my own pressures of trying to stay afloat in an alien environment."*



## THE IMPACT ON JESUITS

*"I believe that Joseph Marmion diminished all of us, religious and lay community alike. But the boys were his true victims."*

*"What hits me is the reputational damage to the Society that I love and that I gave my life to. I don't want to talk about that too much in the light of the terrible damage done to children."*

*"I'm experiencing sadness about what has happened to our institution."*

One Jesuit describes his incredulity about how the abuse could have happened without Jesuits knowing about it:

*"I say how could all this go on without anyone knowing about it. I suppose we experienced it but at such a diminished level. It was going on at such an appalling level in the classroom! In my wildest dreams, I couldn't imagine a Jesuit doing such things."*

## THE IMPACT OF A PAST PUPIL'S OPEN LETTER TO THE JESUITS

Many Jesuits were very impacted by the open letter written by a past pupil, Donal Ballance, who was the catalyst for naming Joseph Marmion and what subsequently unfolded. A minority were critical of the tone of the letter.

*"It felt a bit arrogant. I had been shocked, but when I saw the letter, I felt that it was hard to have sympathy for him [the past pupil]. I thought he should have had a much more balanced view."*

The more common reactions expressed intense shame, and a need to face up to the challenges expressed in the letter.

*"This letter was a huge shock to me and another challenge. The victim asked us to look at ourselves deeply and challenged us to ask how could we have allowed such abuse and suffering to be inflicted on the children we were charged with to protect and nurture. I wanted to run away, and I wanted to hide. I wanted to avoid his anger, but I couldn't because I heard something else when I was quiet. This person took the time to talk to us and he wanted us to consider what he said and to respond. I was so touched and humbled that he would still want to talk to us after all he had been through."*

*"This open letter is asking all of us, including me, to acknowledge and look deeply at how we have allowed greater harm to be done than the initial harm done by Joseph Marmion. We have to face it and avoid our natural inclination to protect our institution. If we don't, we will forever be hiding and stultified in our growth. This letter is telling us to respond deeply and honestly and face our fears."*

*"After this man's intervention it is now clear to me that we will remain frozen in the shame of what has happened unless the voice of those, who have endured the great harm, calls us to respond to what they have told us."*

## DEALING WITH 'UNHAPPY JESUITS'

Jesuits described being out of their depth in dealing with Joseph Marmion in a number of ways. They described being negligent and abdicating responsibility to whatever Provincial was in situ.

*"With reference to Joe, there was frustration in him, we were not equipped at all to deal with him."  
"I think - have we been negligent - was there stuff that I didn't pay attention to? You were inclined to say if something happened that the Provincial would look after it. So, to that extent there's negligence."*

*“How did we deal with unhappy people and what should we have done?”*

Others thought that the Jesuit Provincial of the time was also out of his depth.

*“The Jesuit superior at the time was weak, untrained, and out of his depth in the job. The Provincial was weak in this instance. Even by the standards of the 1970s, once the Vienna incident was verified, Marmion should never ever have been allowed to return to the classroom. I am shocked that someone who had so brutally violated the integrity of a young person, which everyone knew about, should have been allowed to take up his teaching duties. That disturbs me and undermines my own confidence in Jesuit leadership, which in any event is too in-house and unprofessional in some areas.”*

Others asked current Jesuits to acknowledge the role the Order played in exacerbating the harm, and many referred to the open letter from the past pupil to all Jesuits.

While many people spoke about the fairness, intellect, and care of the headmaster, some wished to hear his explanation in person and to ask questions of him. As is narrated in the following chapters, the headmaster willingly engaged in many question and answer sessions and meeting with past pupils who wished to speak to him.

### A LESSON IN HUMILITY

A number of Jesuits spoke about what happened being a lesson in humility for the Order. They talked about having had false beliefs that their house was ‘in order’ and that they may have been living with the unconscious assumption that they were ‘better than others’.

*“When push comes to shove, and this makes me angry - we did what everyone else did in the same way everyone else did and all our talk about discernment and respect was a lie. I hope in our future we will be a much humbler Society.”*

One Jesuit asked his colleagues whether the hierarchical culture and the pride of the Order had enabled what had happened to occur.

*“We had such pride in ourselves as priests. The image of a successful Jesuit is that of the landed gentry. We live in big houses. There was the notion that we were better priests than others. I wonder how much that self-image enabled that abuse of power. I have been a priest for 50 years, but I forget about that.”*

*The number of times I witnessed bullying not being dealt with and I didn't deal with it myself. I was afraid. The adoration we had for Provincials and superiors was not healthy.”*

### WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT?

One Jesuit described his experiences of a person who was impacted by sexual abuse in another diocese and who experienced extreme trauma when it was triggered by reports in the media. He worried about the distress caused to people who didn't want, or weren't ready, to come forward.

*“We're in dangerous territory - the whole danger when it keeps going out on the media - there are many people who have been abused that have their pain gouged out every time it's in the news. If I were to meet with victims, I'd hope that I'd be careful enough and honest enough.”*

One Jesuit regretted so much time focused on experiences of conscience rather than helping people negotiate their own experiences.

*"If we knew then what we know now, we should have been teaching young people to help them negotiate adolescence. We were helping them to examine their conscience rather than that."*

## BE HONEST WITH OURSELVES AND ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER

One Jesuit thought a good first step for Jesuits would be to meet and gather as a community to discuss accountability.

*"To me, restorative practice is saying this is what I know, and I should have done something. I'd be prepared to be a part of it. I think it would be useful for us Jesuits to hear each other and I'm sure that we won't agree. To support one another and exchange with one another could only help."*

Some of the Jesuits spoke about the need for the Jesuit Order to face up to what happened and be more honest with each other.

*"There's something about the victim's critique of our difficulty in being honest with each other in that open letter to us that we should look at. If problems such as alcoholism were properly addressed, where would we be?"*

*"The letter spoke as though we were married to each other. Not so. I've seen friendships that were not healthy. We need honesty. There are inevitable limits to that honesty."*

*"I felt the victim that wrote to us stretched us and asked us to go beyond what was comfortable for us to do. I felt a reluctance about it. He was asking us to talk about it. He asked us to face ourselves as a body. And to face our shortcomings and how they contributed to what happened."*

## UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED

One Jesuit described how the past pupil's letter challenged him to engage with what happened in a compassionate and focused way.

*"I'm imagining getting to know Joseph Marmion and having sympathy and compassion. I'm imagining wanting to hear it and take it in. I need to hear it for the victims and for us. And also, I need to represent Joseph Marmion for them. Joseph Marmion has made me a victim of myself. I think that's what the victim's letter is asking."*

*"Our spirituality became so individualistic that there is not enough sharing across our Society and community. We have not got the understanding about how much the hurt was."*

*"I understand the bullying. I was bullied myself. But I need to understand the hurt of the sexual abuse. We need to talk to each other and to talk to the victims."*

## MEET WITH IMPACTED PAST PUPILS

Most of the Jesuits we met explicitly said that they would like to meet with past pupils who had been harmed in the hope that it would help those that had been harmed to heal. They said that they'd meet in whatever way the past pupils would wish, either one-to-one or in groups.

*"I think I need to meet with [fellow] Jesuits, so I can talk and meet with victims, so I can hear."*

*"I don't know how this process is going to unfold but if it would be useful for me to meet some of those people [who had been harmed], I would want to do it."*

## MEETING WITH FORMER HEADMASTER

Much of this information is to be found in *Joseph Marmion: The Jesuit Response* (July 2021). However, our focus was to specifically explore the former headmaster's understanding of what happened, and his understanding of the impact of the abuse on past pupils then, and later in their lives.

The former headmaster told us that he was aware of the physical bullying that was prevalent, but he was not aware of the extent of it. He had no knowledge of any sexual abuse until he discovered what happened in 1977, and once he found out, he took immediate steps to stop it. He told us how he contacted the Provincial, where ultimate responsibility lay, and the decision was that Joseph Marmion would no longer be in charge of the Opera but was allowed to finish the school year from autumn 1977 to June 1978 and to teach his classes. The new coordinator of the Opera was Gerry Haugh, of whom past pupils spoke highly, with Joseph Marmion having a limited supporting role in which he had strict instructions as to what he could and could not do.

He described his sorrow at not dealing with what he did know about better: the physical, emotional, and psychological violence. He told us that he spoke at a reunion event some years ago where he publicly acknowledged the bullying that occurred. At that event, he said that he wished that the bullying of children in Jesuit care had not occurred and that he had done more about it at that time. He believed that what he said had been well received by the past pupils who were gathered for the reunion on the night.

We recounted stories that past pupils had told us about how their lives had changed as a result of the physical and the sexual abuse that was inflicted on them. He said he was very moved and very upset by that. He told us that he was willing to help past pupils in whatever way he could, by either meeting individuals or groups.

## LETTER FROM A JESUIT TO THE FACILITATORS

In April 2021, we received a letter from a Jesuit responding to the restorative proposals and, in particular, the open letter sent by a past pupil for all Jesuits in the Irish province to contemplate. In it he described his idea of what happened, and why it happened. He thought that the Jesuit formation process together with the culture of the time left Jesuits ill-equipped to deal with the emotional needs of young boys.

He wrote:

*"Their letter to the Jesuits is remarkable and articulates their serious and genuine complaint. These victims are looking for an understanding of their experience - why it happened at all and who is to blame. Further, they questioned the Jesuit role of leadership in the light of their failure to care for those who suffered at the hands of the Marmion factor. This failure over 50 years is systemic of a fault within the Order."*

*"I derived from their letters that the victims are held at a stage of development akin to grieving a loss... Their loss is expressed in anger and frustration and blame. Their loss is a loss of not having a normal youngster's development due to the interference of Marmion."*

He went on to describe how the role of authority held by Joseph Marmion was intertwined with the overall authority held by Jesuits and the parents of the pupils, as well as parental reverence for the Catholic Church and Jesuit Order. Given all that, he concluded that students had no power over anything and were also deprived of a normal relationship with God as a result of the abuse.

*"I suggest that they were manipulated into having a controlling image of authority, so their image of God gets caught up in all this. How could they find any expression of this vitiating experience of theirs?"*

*Did they have words to even describe it? Did they have any control over what was happening to them when they were at a most vulnerable adolescent level in any youngster's life?"*

Putting himself in the position of the people abused when they were children, he asked the following question:

*"How could a man of faith, leading a religious life of faith in God, and respected by all, behave like he did? And how could the Jesuit Order, also built on that faith, fail to acknowledge this for 50 years?"*

He spoke of how the Jesuits failed to pass on to students a core part of their own spirituality, one which would have helped them mature well.

*"Jesuits have a meaningful exercise that help people to discern what helps their development and what hinders it. The terrible irony is the Jesuits in Belvedere failed to pass on to the students in their care this exercise. They also failed to spot particular students badly needing this for growing up well, and Jesuits should have alerted the students to what helps them mature well and what does not. The Jesuit vocabulary for this is 'discernment'.*

*"I speak of an awareness of negative thinking and its opposite: positive thinking. In Jesuit vocabulary it is called desolation versus consolation. There are feelings (emotions of the heart) that go with desolation and a loss of energy. I mean loss of hope for the future, depression, loss of confidence in self and in others, loss of trust in others, even friends, turning in on oneself, a sense of self-blame, or worthlessness. At least some have had one outlet: anger rather than depression or being helpless."*

*"The opposite is true of positive thinking which energizes a person, self-confidence, acceptance of self, sterling hope, faith in self and in others, easy relationships with friends, trust in one's own decisions. Understanding and empathy and self-giving are all part of this scenario. I would bet my bottom dollar that those students fell into negative thoughts at the time and have continued to be bothered seriously in their lives but were not aware of why. Hence, they are stuck in their past and have struggled all their lives, lacking deep relationships of hope, trust and even self-giving. All because of the Marmion factor that blamed them and manipulated their sexuality. All because the Jesuits were not living out a vital dimension of general life which is discerning what leads to well-being [consolation] and what does not."*

He also spoke about how the emphasis on the intellect is often valued at the expense of emotion, and especially any link to sexuality.

*"Jesuits blocked their own emotions: The religious life tends to attract introvert, who failed to be aware of their emotions. They are intellectually oriented, rather than being aware of their own experience."*

*"Instead, they're into mostly controlling their experience and the emotions attached to it. They stayed at the intellectual level and were not in tune with anything else. This is still operative in some Jesuits who tend to over-control their emotional life, especially any link to sexuality. May I suggest that many Jesuits failed to be in touch with the level of experience therefore of their students and so failed to touch the emotional life of these students, failed to accompany them in their growth."*

He believed our role as Restorative Facilitators could help past pupils express and become aware of their feelings and negative thoughts and become aware of how these patterns have prevented well-being, both then and throughout their adult lives.

*"They are justified, their letter expresses their real experience but there is a time coming when they can put this experience aside and they can think more of their achievements and valid relationships and thus the more positive dimension of their lives. They have also alerted the Jesuits to the missing faith dimension of their lives, that is discernment."*

*"I have been trying in these pages not to excuse, but describe the background, the atmosphere of how they experience their lives in the framework of Jesuit education. It may give you a different way of interpreting a different meaning to their experience."*

## CHAPTER 4: THREE-DAY RESTORATIVE PROCESS WITH IRISH JESUITS

### INTRODUCTION

In October 2021, through discussion with the Restorative Facilitators, the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, invited all Jesuits under the Irish jurisdiction to gather for a day of facilitated dialogue with each other. The aim was to engage together with what had been happening since the naming of Joseph Marmion. *The Jesuit Response* (July 2021) and a series of anonymised past pupil testimonies, collected through the Past Pupil Steering Group, had been sent to all Jesuits in advance of this dialogue. An open letter from a past pupil Donal Ballance, challenging the culture of the Jesuits was also circulated. This included the following:

*“Something prevailed within your Order which prevented JM being exposed as a paedophile and therefore prevented victims from coming forward. I believe that it is not just the responsibility of the current Provincial to answer this question on your behalf, it is the responsibility of your entire community to answer it directly to victims.”*

Over 4, 5 and 6 November 2021, a different cohort of 51 Jesuits from across Ireland, with some coming from abroad, met each day to consider the impact of the abuse perpetrated by Joseph Marmion on past pupils, on themselves as Jesuits, and on the Order. The restorative process which was underway since April 2021 facilitated this daily space to encourage dialogue and deep listening, to consider the impact of the abuse and to discuss deficits and issues arising within the Jesuit Order as a result and the possibility for change. Leonard Moloney, the Provincial, following discussion with the facilitators and others, chose not to attend the morning sessions so that those present could speak freely and openly about their issues and concerns. He attended each afternoon and shared his experiences with, and listened to, his peers.

Overwhelmingly, the Jesuits present on these days expressed a strong sense of shame, sadness, anger, disbelief, guilt, and humiliation at the abuse perpetrated by Joseph Marmion. Many were distressed at the extent of the hurt borne by the past pupils and how, for many, it had a sustained long-term negative impact on their lives.

Many Jesuits present felt that what Joseph Marmion did, and its aftermath, represented a gross betrayal of everything they had stood for throughout their working and spiritual lives as they wrestled with questions as to why it had gone on for so long undetected and unacknowledged by their Society. While younger Jesuits struggled to identify with what had happened in a time before they were born, there was a strong sense that they felt responsible as members of the Jesuit Order to do whatever they could to try and meet past pupils’ needs.

Below is an outline of what we heard Jesuits say about their relationship with Joseph Marmion. It also notes how Jesuits have been impacted by the ‘naming’ of Joseph Marmion, the Liveline R.T.E.<sup>8</sup> coverage, the *Jesuit Response*, and the past pupils’ testimonies. Finally, this chapter also outlines the Jesuit view on what needs to happen going forward.

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<sup>8</sup> Liveline is an interview and dial in radio programme on the Irish national broadcasting service known as R.T.E. which discusses current issues of the day. It is open to anyone to dial in on RTE Radio 1’

## WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF JOSEPH MARMION?

Much of what the Jesuits told us in earlier encounters about their experience of Joseph Marmion was repeated over these three days (see chapter 3). A common theme was how wary people were of him and how they experienced his behaviour as bullying, intimidating and difficult.

*"He was not pleasant to be around... a devious controlling and cunning person."*

*"We had a visitor from Boston to the Society who said to me 'you are better off having Joe Marmion as your enemy than your friend'."*

*"None of us ever felt comfortable with him. You could see the psychological abuse. He mocked, he discredited."*

*"I used to visit him [Gardiner Street], things got so negative there, I stopped going."*

One Jesuit who visited Joseph Marmion in hospital when he was dying now understands more of his behaviour:

*"I called to him before he died. I found him facing the wall, lying there, not unconscious. He chose not to recognise me. When you hear this, you realise what was going on in his mind."*

A small number of Jesuits spoke about experiencing Joseph Marmion as their friend who had 'their back' in hard times. Others had positive experiences in their interaction with him.

*"I was taught by Joseph Marmion in Crescent. He was a good teacher. He gave me a love of literature and poetry. He was moody in class. He had black moods, but he never took it out on us. Perhaps they were his best years."*

*"I was with Joe in Gardiner Street. He helped me learn songs. It's very sad to hear. It's such a pity about him. He was such a good teacher, musician."*

For younger Jesuits, he was a historical figure that they had only become aware of.

## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN IMPACTED SINCE MARCH 2021 & BY READING THE PAST PUPILS' TESTIMONIES?

We asked the Jesuits who attended what it was like for them to read the testimonies of the past pupils and to reflect on its impact, and what needed to be addressed by the Order. In addition to the written testimonies which were collated by the Past Pupils Steering Group, those gathered also considered the interviews past pupils had given on the Liveline R.T.E Show and the contents of the open letter that was sent by one past pupil to all Jesuits.

*"I wish I were dead' - reading those testimonies was devastating. I was involved in the Jesuit Response, and I responded to the open letter sent by the victim. I said to the victim 'guilty as charged', there's no quibble about that."*

*"Reading the victims responses was overwhelming. Feelings of fear, terror, horror, and lack of control. The enormous suffering that was caused and the evil that went on."*

*"Since March, I listened to three days of stories. And one day I couldn't listen anymore. Again, the feeling of shame and terror is enormous."*



*“One of the most powerful things that happened in all this was the reading of the testimonies. We’ve read first-hand accounts over and over about the darkness.”*

*“Reading the accounts is ghastly. I was skimming through it. There was no end to it, I felt I went through a range of different emotion: sadness, fear, some of the comments undermined my identity. One victim said, ‘I never want to be in the same room as a priest’. To me that is devastating.”*

*“It was extremely hard reading the document. The amount of pain seems to have been extraordinary. Looking at the French [Church Abuse] (CIASE, 2021) situation, shame is the word that was used.”*

*“There are days I wish that it all went away. But that’s no good. How can we help them to heal themselves? After reading the victims responses, it brought home the horrific nature of what happened. I’ve been trying to get inside the shoes of the victims. Trying to feel what they felt it’s not easy, but I tried to do that.”*

*“I’m convinced that Joseph Marmion was a psychopath, more than a sexual abuser. He was sadistic, inciting students to attack each other, in terms of psychopathology.”*

*“When I was in Toronto in the 1980s, I heard a focus group speaking on sexual abuse, and I thought ‘this is going to come up in our Society’. I always thought this day would come.”*

## CHALLENGE TO IDENTITY

Some Jesuits described their struggle in reconciling how they are now being depicted and the insight that some gained through processing this struggle.

*“Reading the victims’ responses last week made me angry. I read things that aren’t true. I had to put it away and then later read it again without judgement. When I hear people doubting us and our motives now it upsets me. Why can’t they understand we’re trying to do our best? I then had a realisation. Why would they trust us for any reason at all?”*

*“Reading the victims’ response was devastating and it was hard to stay with it. I was brought up with a positive view of being a Jesuit. This brought about shame and guilt. But I realised shame and guilt are not helping me to listen to them. I need to hear them.”*

*“I knew Joe Marmion when I was in school. I know some survivors. I was happy to be away from Ireland when all this came out. I heard how upsetting it was. It was upsetting to talk about. The report was upsetting. It’s the first time an abuser was known to me.”*

*“For the last few months, the predominant feeling has been of sadness. Sad for those who suffered, sad for Joe. Reading about the survivors, I realised that I knew one of the people, now deceased, who was written about by his brother.”*

## TRIGGERING MEMORIES OF ABUSE

For some Jesuits, it brought back their own memories and experience of being physically and sexually abused.

*“I’m very familiar with abuse; it happened in my own school. There was a sexual predator and a bully who destroyed the life of somebody I knew. I became familiar at an early age of how destructive this can be. And it wasn’t regarded as damaging.”*

*“I was sexually abused as a young person myself. Anytime this happens, my own experience comes up. It’s easy for me to identify with the victims.”*

*"One consequence of my own abuse is that you're not surprised. What surprised me about Joseph Marmion was the ubiquity with which sexual abuse was mixed with bullying. And, how long it went on for."*

*"I went to the {non-Jesuit school}. One teacher was sadistic and physically abusive. It upset my parents. It was a lay teacher. I have huge anger about it. One chap would vomit waiting to go into class. Whenever I began to read this, it dragged it all up in me from when I was twelve."*

*"What really helped me was reading the testimonies. I focused a lot on the classroom stuff because I learned to be afraid of the people who were in authority over me. I can remember going to school in fear and tension. My parents would never have known this. When I read the stuff, I could relate to the guys."*

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Although many Jesuits had known Joseph Marmion and were aware of the physical bullying that was prevalent, many expressed a complete lack of awareness as to the sexual abuse and the scale of the physical bullying he undertook. Some expressed a fear of being held responsible for something they couldn't have known about (being too young) or because they never did know. Others reflected on the deviousness of abusers and their capacity to keep what they did hidden.

*"Given the profile of abusers they are often very devious, manipulative and can keep very hidden what they are doing."*

*"There was the broad issue of sexual abuse. I was equally shocked by his domination in some classes. Such an injurious thing for a boy. I used to hear stories that Joe was a great bully in class. That sense of dominance in class."*

*"I knew nothing about it."*

*"In our document we wrote that we're all responsible. That's not true. People didn't know about it."*

*"What goes on in me changes from day to day. Sometimes I'm more conscious. I didn't see or hear anything. I used to hear complaints of bullying, though sexual abuse was never mentioned. I've a fear of guilt being laid on me, which I feel I don't deserve."*

*"I never questioned or wondered why Joe Marmion was being moved from Belvedere. I should have known, I should have seen it from what I saw elsewhere, I didn't connect. I feel responsible personally, and I feel a corporate responsibility."*

*"After reading those stories, I had gratitude that I was not abused. My second reaction was one of shame. Not guilty, because I knew nothing about it. I had only met him occasionally. And I was grateful I wasn't involved. And I didn't know anything."*

One priest wondered how someone allowed Joseph Marmion to go to Crescent College from Clongowes Wood College.

*"In one situation when I was a student [at Crescent College], I saw that Joseph Marmion brought a boy downstairs and he was missing quite a while. I felt something was wrong. I was upset to read Joe came from Clongowes. We could have been spared it. It's terrible. A person was moved when it could have been prevented."*

*"I think it's important for us as Jesuits to realise how hurtful it has been and how it has marked the victims. I didn't notice kids being brought up to his room. I think if I did, I wouldn't have challenged him. Appalling that none of us did. I'm lost for what we can do."*

*"We must go to the place of mercy and realise our own idea that we are helpless here. We are not here to defend ourselves. We are here to give witness."*

*"Anything we do is only meaningful if we recognise we are powerless. We have to depend on God's grace. When I came into Belvedere, I felt this man was a bully. I stayed out of Joseph Marmion's reach. Some of my friends went on the tour... I was amazed at the extent of hurt and the amount of people affected by it. What is the way forward?"*

## THE CONTEXT AND CULTURE OF THE TIME

Some of the Jesuits at the gathering reflected on the importance of remembering the context of the time (1960s and 1970s): widespread corporal punishment in schools, the dominance of the Church and its influence over the State, a tolerance for autocratic and 'bullying' behaviour within the Jesuit environment and within society in general.

*"He was clearly a sadist. I wonder how it was not picked up. Yes, it was a bullying atmosphere."*

*"The impact of the reports of the lads/men was that it's unbelievable that this has happened. Our problem is that no one did anything about it. Our attitudes then were very different. It's hard to believe that physical punishment has now stopped at all levels. That's important to contemplate when trying to imagine what it must have been like for the lads who suffered."*

*"Sexual abuse was not on the agenda. I'm not condoning the culture. But it needs to be noted that I knew Joe Marmion in Gardner St. He was witty, quirky, brilliant, narcissistic, with grandiosities devaluing everyone else. Part of a group of anti-authoritarians. I saw no evidence of sexual abuse."*

*"I was shocked on one level; on another I was not surprised. It was a bullying culture. Joseph Marmion was the least of my worries. Just he was one of the bad ones. He was a bad example of the culture of bullying. You either joked, laughed or you didn't speak about it. What bothers me now? I know I had a moderately constructive and productive time."*

*"If we are looking for truth, we've got to understand what it was like in the 70s. Childhood sexual abuse was not understood. That can seem defensive or a distraction. Not all of us are guilty but we all have responsibility."*

*"One of the elements of the report was the horrific failure by the Church/State. My belief is that our culpability is societal. There is no national conversation on sexual abuse and a recognition that the vast majority of abuse takes place in homes."*

## INTERNAL CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Over the three days, the Jesuit culture, decision-making structures, and governance systems along with the type of leadership experienced, then and now, was spoken of; those present also grappled with how the abuse could have happened. They identified some of the elements that may have contributed to what happened, what has already changed and what else needs to change.

## INTERNAL CULTURE

Aspects of the internal culture of the Jesuit Order were discussed, reflected on and criticisms by past pupils about the culture were responded to. There was discussion about the paradox of the hierarchical nature of decision making alongside Jesuits' autonomy and freedom to do their own work.

Some said that the culture of the Order had changed hugely over the last forty years and was now much more open than previously.

Many referred to the open letter written by the past pupil to all Jesuits which asked them to look at, and question, their culture.

*"That open letter said the culture hasn't changed - I'd like to say to him - how do you know that? Formation is different, community life is much more fraternal. But our culture is not perfect. We are hesitant to move into spaces of affirmation, intimacy, and confrontation. We leave each other lots of space which is good but also not so good."*

*"There are issues about our culture that need to change and develop. I think that's not the root cause. The root cause is that you have people who are damaged and paedophiles who exist everywhere, including in our Society. Some of us may emerge as abusive. We need prevention and maybe a change of culture in being able to talk about 'those things.'"*

Others spoke about elements within the culture and governance that needed to be addressed. Respect for the privacy of individual Jesuits was sometimes negatively conflated with the need for confidentiality and secrecy in their pastoral work.

*"I'm not sure about the governance structures we inherited. I would agree with the comments on the Informationes<sup>9</sup>. I wasn't listened to. There was no discussion or feedback around what should happen to me. Somewhere around there I'd be willing to accept that change is necessary, particularly in how they [informationes] should have played a greater role in identifying Joseph Marmion."*

*"There is a culture of secrecy that needs to be addressed. The only thing I had heard in Gardiner St. was he was removed from the school because of physical abuse. When this came out, was I surprised? No, I was surprised that there weren't worse criticisms of us. It is much more nuanced than just this."*

*"It's good that it is coming out now. The letter the victim wrote was exceedingly difficult to read asking about our culture. What do we do now? How do we deal with stuff? All that stuff about safeguarding and reporting things is important. We need to face into the conflict."*

Another Jesuit spoke of cultural faults in the system, reflecting on a lack of due and fair process within the Order. He contrasted how Joseph Marmion was enabled to continue 'unchecked', despite what was known about him. Yet, in his own case, he was prevented from embarking on a course of study that had already been agreed with the Provincial. He was not given the opportunity to respond. He said that this decision had many implications for his apostolic service and reputation for some years afterwards, and also damaged his trust for a time in the Order he had committed his life to.

## ARE WE A FAMILY OR AN INSTITUTION?

There was recognition that 'belonging' was important. While it was important to have one's own external friends, it was difficult to describe the sense of belonging experienced in the community to others.

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<sup>9</sup> Informationes in the Jesuit Order is the gathering and use of information about Jesuits in training who are transitioning from one stage to the next, including Holy Orders, it is also used to identify candidates for leadership roles within the Order.

*"My Jesuit contemporaries were a great source of family, friendship and consolation."*

*"We have faults in our culture, in our structures but what we do have is a bonding and a sense of home which is impossible to describe to anyone else."*

They also discussed how perhaps Joseph Marmion never experienced the idea of family amongst the community.

*"As religious, we are taken away from family life. And if this doesn't become family, we have no other. And if this is just an institution and there is no warmth, then maybe Joseph Marmion's needs for affection were never met. If the Society is not behaving like a family, that's where some of the fault is."*

*"Reflecting on the structure of formation in the Province and the way communities lived... the way it was carried out was nearly inhuman: we lived more like soldiers in a barracks, carrying out our work, rather than like a community of colleagues and friends who were working together to bring about the Kingdom of God... there was secrecy about everything, from the house consults, to finances, to Province plans being generated, so it is quite hard to own the decisions that were made... there was so little involvement by many from that generation in those decisions."*

## INTELLECTUALISM

Celebration of the intellect to the detriment to emotional wellbeing of people was spoken of, along with the sense of the Order as a 'family', in an uneasy parallel with the Order as an 'institution'.

*"There's a sense of barrenness in our Society. We have more interests in intellect and facts and less in emotional development, emotional well-being, and emotional expression."*

*"This was a good day. It was amazing to hear us talk so openly; it's easier to speak intellectually."*

## RESPONSES OF YOUNGER JESUITS

Of the 51 Jesuits who attended, 5 were under 40 years of age. This cohort described their struggle to identify what had happened long before they were born and why it had happened.

*"Last year, current [Jesuit School] students were very critical about what the Jesuits did. It's unfortunate as our interactions with them were so good, yet the news shows us in such a bad light."*

One Jesuit commented that there could be further improvements towards the care of school children.

*"It's not the case that it's all over now. I've had to bring students to the [school] principal who have felt bullied by their teachers. As Jesuits, we're called to more than a quiet life. We definitely need to say what we see and raise our heads. Hopefully, we will get to help."*

*"I didn't know anything, or anyone involved as it was all before my time. I read reports in the Irish Times. It was strange though that the abuse scandal that was rife in the Church didn't seem to affect Jesuits. And yet now here we are. We are the same. I didn't think I'd feel the anxiety as much as I did. On one side, I'm disconnected and yet I'm involved."*

*"The Belvedere and the Society as it was described was awfully hard for me to comprehend versus the Society and the school I knew and know. It presents a vastly different world. I was thrown into this. And I've gone through a whole range of experiences, from anger to sadness, to fear, to incredible disappointment. Yes, disappointment with what he did. I met boys who were victims of abuse in the 2000s. But what shocks and deeply disappoints me more is what has failed to be done by the corporate*

*body and leadership in the aftermath. And the sense that some of our handling of this arises out of a sense of corporate superiority, maybe we were blind to our own plank.”*

*“I came across this through the Tom Doorley article. I had such shock. Only two of my years in the Society have been in Ireland. Tom asked people to retweet, to invite people to come forward. I did, though I didn't want to. That was one little step.”*

## COMPASSION FOR ABUSERS AS WELL AS PAST PUPILS

Some of the men present reflected on the ‘pariah status’ of abusers and the necessity to have compassion for them also. They outlined how real compassion would have noticed people who appeared unhappy or were having difficulties, and who were not able to fulfil the roles and practices that they had committed to. This would necessitate an active reflective response including discussion and the challenging and setting of parameters, which could potentially mean that someone would have to leave the Order.

*“He abused people as a Jesuit. Now our Society is a victim. Our work can be affected by what was done by one particular person and I'm sorry for that particular person too.”*

*“The culture of the time! I was saddened by it. I was saddened for us as a body. Even for Joe, who is past now, but is still part of that body. Even when we reflect on the effect he had on them [past pupils] and us, we are in touch with our own sin here, and it's important not to run away from it.”*

*“We owed Joe Marmion care and to help him face up to what he was doing, and maybe that would have required him to leave the Society as well.”*

*“I have huge empathy for those who were abused. I also have huge empathy for those who have abused. Lepers in our Society. Joe himself was sick in lots of ways. He was not confronted. He was not tied down. He was not helped. When I went as a teacher to Clongowes, I knew nothing about the sexual development of children.”*

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Jesuits present spoke of feeling shame and sorrow for the decisions made and deep compassion for those who suffered because of those decisions.

One who was in a leadership role many years after the abuse said:

*“I often wondered, what if we had acted as now. I'm ashamed when I look back. It's very painful. If we had intervened earlier a lot of what happened could have been avoided.”*

They also expressed compassion and empathy with those who did make wrong decisions at the time and had an awareness that they too could have made those same mistakes.

*“I see the names of people who did make decisions. Names of people I admired, yet decisions they made were truly awful. Yet, I know I'd have made those decisions myself.”*

*“Seeing Jesuits, I know named, and I probably would have done the same, considering the bullying culture in schools in the 70s. I had that and suffered through it. This is necessary and painful. This must happen. We have to lance the boil. We thought as Jesuits we had dodged the bullets.”*

*“There are questions that we need to ask ourselves: can we simply apologise that we were so unaware, and I wonder, is that the tip of the iceberg? The Vienna trip in August 1977, in no way was I suspicious! I thought, I would have heard, known. Especially in my role, you can have a lot of informal conversation.”*



*I feel very deflated, not desolate. It's a call to a realistic appraisal of the Society as it is seen from the outside."*

*"About the culture, safeguarding, training and being alert is important. Our radar is totally different now. When I look back to my days in Belvedere I hadn't the foggiest of these warning signals. We've heard desolating things, but I don't think we go away desolate, we must remember the important things we are doing."*

*"Did we protect the system? Yes. I've gone through depression. I've gone through anger at the decisions that weren't made. I've gone through anger with the people who don't take it seriously and don't respond."*

One person acknowledged the importance of leadership from Rome and the work that is being done to ensure the safeguarding of children globally.

*"Rome wants to take an active part in this. Also, in giving leadership, insisting on protocols for every Province, launching a global project on safeguarding which is mapping the situation around the world."*

## GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND THE ROLE OF CONSULTORS

The Jesuits discussed how decisions are made within the Order and how, at times, the hierarchical system puts enormous pressure and responsibility on one person. They discussed the role of the Jesuit Provincial's 'consultors' and how their lack of information aided a lack of knowledge across the system.

*"I question why the decision to come out on this was not made sooner? Our system of consultors and Provincial, the Province Consult, is not working properly."*

*"I was a consultor around a crucial time and Joe Marmion's name never came up as someone who had sexually abused."*

*"I was a consultor, so I know how it works. The Provincial makes the agenda, not the consultors... Our way of using Consultors is not good enough. Really, the buck stops with the Provincial and that's why we're here. There were six Provincials between then and now. This is now on this Provincial's watch."*

*"Whatever way our governance operated that this issue wasn't discussed needs to be looked at. Something needs to be changed. He should have been in jail. I couldn't read some of it. The most vulnerable in our care suffered. I hope we can find a way forward to make recompense."*

*"I'm trying to see, from the eyes of those outside, how those in administration could see nothing. It was humbling, humiliating, the damage done to us as a group is something we will have to accept."*

*"I'm put out by the way we dealt with all this. Given all the steps taken, it's hard to understand."*

## SPIRITUALITY AND FAITHFULNESS

*"I think spirituality needs to be looked at. Trying to translate Ignatian terms into the modern culture when so much has changed is hard."*

*"We didn't talk much about our spirituality today. I wonder what type of spirituality our victims think we have had. Something can be done to help us articulate the unavoidable suffering and make it redemptive. What we've been talking about on what's been going on is where the dynamic is."*

*"There's very little wisdom around spirituality and sexuality. Seeing as we're supposed to be experts, we need language to talk about it."*



## RESPONSES TO THE PROVINCIAL'S SHARING

During the afternoon session on each of the three days, the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, joined the attending Jesuits and spoke about his journey towards the statement in which Joseph Marmion was named as a Jesuit priest who had abused children attending Jesuit schools. He spoke of his decision not to accede to the request of a past pupil to name Joseph Marmion initially and his grave misgivings about embarking on such a journey. He spoke about the feelings of the Jesuits who thought that he should not take this step and of other Jesuits who helped him change his mind. These Jesuits asked him to see this past pupil in a different way, as an ally rather than as an 'enemy'. He also spoke about his journey since March 2021 and the impact of the naming on his person and his health.

The Jesuits present were very supportive of the Provincial and his decision to respond publicly to the allegations regarding Joseph Marmion. Those present felt that it was a large burden for one man and that there was a need to 'share the load'.

*"In doing what the Provincial did last March, I approved of it. Letting go of control is difficult, but good. In our house, in our small community, we had plenty of conversation. We have to be sensitive also because some people in my community don't want to talk to each other because of their own personal history."*

*"Hearing the Provincial speak make me realise how protected we are. The negativity we're going through is much more minor. My feeling is of intense gratitude to him."*

*"You (to Provincial) spoke of being unable to exercise control and power and here you're deprived of it. It could be the greatest grace where you're able to feel the powerlessness. I want to affirm you in what's going on and you're leading it."*

*"I'm moved by today and hearing you [the Provincial]. We are allowing ourselves to move into vulnerability. The fact that you shared all you did at this gathering will change us for the better."*

*"We need to appreciate boundaries, and not barriers. Appropriate boundaries weren't kept. It's important for us to keep good boundaries in our work and not barriers. Our experience here today has been an experience of a change of culture, particularly the Provincial talking to us about his experiences. That changes us, listening to him."*

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP REPAIR THE HARM?

Overwhelmingly, the Jesuits we met over those three days wanted to do what they could to help the past pupils. Many experienced gratitude as well as shame on reading the testimonies. They said that they would like to hear from past pupils directly, to listen deeply to them in order to understand how they could help and what would help their healing. They also addressed the cultural factors that could assist in ensuring this never happens again.

*"We need to look at how we can help the victims."*

*"When there's people out there who suffered, I think it's best that it comes to light. I have a feeling of wanting to be in solidarity and wanting to help and support those who have suffered."  
"I feel very differently at different times. I feel the need to meet some of these victims."*

*There are days where I wish it all went away but it won't. How can we help them to heal?"*

*"The change in culture is needed... There is an unwritten rule, don't complain especially about the use of power in the Jesuits and how it's administered. It all falls on one person."*

*Little by little I've understood there are people hurting and in my own mind I've got to find out who is hurting. I'm relieved that what happened is coming out and people get to say and voice what happened to them. It's hard to hear it. It's hard to live with it, but it is who we are and part of our reality as a body. It's important not to hide and not to run away."*

## **WHAT HAS THIS GATHERING BEEN LIKE AND WHAT MATTERS TO YOU NOW?**

Those who attended expressed the richness of being in dialogue with their peers across communities. Although Jesuits live in community, they said that they do not gather often to engage in cross-community dialogue similar to what they experienced in the restorative process. They expressed a need to engage with each other in cross community dialogue more to enable change to occur.

They also outlined what was striking them as important at the end of the day.

*"Today was therapeutic. We've already moved. About decisions and consequences, we must listen to the victims knowing we cannot give them all things they want."*

*"This is particularly good for us. If this process is Spirit-led, we can be sure it will come to a good end. ... you've done what you have to do, it's done. You don't know where it's going to go and what's going to happen."*

*"This cross-community gathering is very good. Unique."*

*"I have learned so much through these inter-community meetings. The gift for deep sharing. Hearing the Provincial changes us. It gives us a better understanding I think, and hope, that it will help you."*

*"Looking at our own culture. We need to see what it looks like in the eyes of others. These guys are doing us a favour. Even this, I have never heard us talking so openly and honestly before ever."*

*"Today was positive, 40 years ago, our culture was totally different. Someone said this is not the Society I entered. It's not. There is now greater openness. We started something today."*

*"This way of conversing today shows the need for dialogue and encounter that is there amongst ourselves, as well as between us and communities."*

*"What matters is supporting those in whatever way we can that have suffered abuse in our schools."*

*"As Jesuits, we're called to more than the quiet life. We definitely need to say what we see and raise our heads. Hopefully, we will get to help."*

*"Our governance and our organisational systems need attention."*

*"Key to exposing cultural blindness is having a variety of people as advisors: women, men, Jesuits, non-Jesuits, young and old."*

*"So appreciative of people working in child protection. It is so very important that there is independent oversight."*

*"We need to provide continued support for younger (Jesuit) men."*

*“Discernment is not just at the head level; it is at the emotional level also.”*

*“We Jesuits were introduced to the third degree of humility. You desire to be seen as a fool - a person of no consequence. The image of the Jesuits once proud, now is tarnished.”*

## SUMMARY

Overwhelmingly, the Jesuits present expressed a strong sense of shame, sadness, disbelief, guilt, and humiliation at the abuse perpetrated by Joseph Marmion. Many were distressed at the extent of the hurt borne by the past pupils and how it impacted their lives over many years.

The stories heard brought home the horror of the abuse by a man who was resident in the communities of many Jesuits during that time. While acknowledging that he was a bully and intimidating, there was also recognition that he was clever, talented and, on occasion, helpful. All reported never having suspected that he perpetrated sexual abuse.

Many expressed profound regret at the delay in reporting, recognising that help could have been given to past pupils earlier, and seriously questioned the failures of leadership and corporate governance.

For many Jesuits, the testimonies of the past pupils undermined their sense of themselves, their identity as Jesuits and the work that they did - many for over forty years. For younger Jesuits, who were grappling with the impact of historic abuse, their questions focused on how it managed to go on for such a long time unreported.

All the Jesuits present expressed their intention to do what they could to help those that were hurt while acknowledging their powerlessness to undo what happened. Some of the Jesuits who engaged in the process had experienced abuse themselves which, on reading the reports from the past pupils, reawakened their own trauma.

Many applauded the Provincial for his decision to ‘go public’ and for the opportunity to hear the impact on him and offer him their support. Many expressed a view that although this was painful and caused deep suffering to the Order, they were not unique among religious groups and that the subsequent resulting humiliation was deserved and could be beneficial to all of them in the long run.

It was clear that while community sharing was common amongst Jesuits, cross-community sharing was not. It was obvious over those three days that Jesuits were enriched by the sharing of their shame and grief, the sharing of the Provincial, and a sense of solidarity and intention to do what they could to help past pupils while also acknowledging that they could not undo what had happened.

Attention was drawn to the Spiritual Exercises and the “Third Degree of Humility” exercise, in the face of the hurt and pain of past pupils and their own humiliation as an Order. Many said that ‘it was good for them as a Society’ because they had seen themselves as being beyond the abuse that had happened in the Catholic Church but now, they were ‘just like the rest’.

## CHAPTER 5: RESTORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

From April 2021 to December 2022, we facilitated or enabled 18 meetings on a one-to-one basis between individual past pupils and individual Jesuits. We facilitated 8 group meetings between Jesuits and past pupils (including 3 Joint Steering Group meetings), 3 meetings with groups of past pupils online and 6 meetings with groups of Jesuits.

Below is an account of those meetings including some of the topics discussed.

### ONE-TO-ONE ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN JESUITS AND PAST PUPILS

Past pupils expressed a wish to speak directly to individual Jesuits about a range of issues of concern to them. Many of these meetings were held in-person while others took place via Zoom due to Covid19 regulations and to accommodate those who lived outside of Ireland. Each of the joint meetings were approximately 1.5 hours long.

#### PREPARATION FOR ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

Preparation for engagement in these meetings involved individual meetings with both participants separately. This was important for a number of reasons: it helped past pupils to clarify their questions, prepare for what they wanted to say, indicate to the facilitators what they might like to be reminded of and to help manage their expectations.

It helped the Jesuits who met with the past pupils to get an idea of what they wanted, or needed, from them and how they might be able to help. These private preparation meetings were usually under an hour, with the joint meetings lasting 1-2 hours. This preparation aimed to enable the most satisfactory conversation possible between both participants.

#### THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

The focus for these conversations was on space and time to speak freely and to listen deeply. It was also to ensure that the person who had experienced the harm, and carried it for so many years, got to say as much as they wanted to and ask the questions that they needed to. The participating Jesuit, as a representative of the Order under whose watch the harm took place, was asked to listen deeply and to respond as authentically and honestly as possible. While participants could express strong feelings, they had to respect the humanity and dignity of the other. The Chatham House Rule<sup>10</sup> was observed. The facilitators' role was to provide support to both parties, moderate the discussion if needed and remind the parties of questions they had planned to ask or things they wanted to say. Following each meeting, the facilitator undertook a follow-up call to check in with both participants, hear their experience of the meeting and ascertain if there were any further issues left unsaid.

#### WHAT MATTERED TO PAST PUPILS?

The substantive issues covered in the joint meetings included descriptions by the past pupils of the abuse they experienced by Joseph Marmion. It included the sexual abuse experienced in school where they were pupils, while on the Vienna trips, and the bullying, intimidation and violence inflicted on individuals in the classroom. One past pupil described his experience of confession and spiritual guidance being used as a source of grooming of children.

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<sup>10</sup> Under the Chatham House Rule, meeting participants are free to use the information received, but are not allowed to reveal the identity or affiliation of the speaker. It is designed to increase openness of discussion.

Another past pupil spoke of just surviving in school and trying to manage the bullying behaviour of Joseph Marmion. Others talked about the isolation, confusion and disruption to their lives that was caused because of the abuse. These meetings were often emotional for both past pupils and Jesuits. Past pupils expressed their anger, sorrow, and anguish at what they had experienced.

Feedback from those meetings with past pupils was largely positive. For some, it equalised the power relations from the time when they experienced themselves as powerless children in the face of an authority figure who had perpetrated abuse. For another who spoke to a member of the Order, it was the first time he had articulated what happened to him to anyone. Two spoke of their disappointment at incidents that were of great significance to them when they were in school and were not remembered by a former teacher in the same way. Most of those past pupils who met with a Jesuit that they knew found the meeting to be helpful, empowering, and healing.

## GROUP MEETINGS WITH PAST PUPILS AND JESUITS

In November 2021, a general invitation was sent out to all past pupils to ascertain if they would like to engage with three former Provincials to discuss key issues of concern with them. Nine past pupils responded and on 2 December 2021 they met with four Jesuits, (three former Jesuit Provincials and a former Jesuit consultor).

The purpose of this dialogue was to enable past pupils who were abused by Joseph Marmion to meet senior leaders of the Jesuit community to recount their experience of abuse, the impact on their lives and to gain further information on unanswered questions of interest to them.

### THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The circle process was used as a method of restorative engagement. This process places a strong focus on providing the space for people to speak freely, listen deeply and be listened to deeply. The conversation was facilitated with the use of a Talking Piece<sup>11</sup> - a helpful tool in facilitating groups, particularly when there are strong and/or quiet personalities present, as it allows everyone the time and space to speak.

The facilitators asked questions to everyone in the circle and the talking piece was used as a way to ensure that those who chose to speak to the question had the space to do so and would be listened to by all present. The questions asked were open-ended so as to encourage participants to talk and ask questions of their own about the topics that were important to them. Circle work with the talking piece was interspersed with more general discussion.

Overall, this use of the circle process encouraged expression of emotions whilst at the same time respecting the humanity and dignity of the others present. People were often asked to speak about the impact on them of the harm and what is important going forward.

It was explained that the Chatham House Rule was to be observed which meant that anyone at the meeting could speak later about the issues discussed but were not allowed to reveal or name any person who made a comment within the meeting.

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<sup>11</sup> A Talking Piece is an item for holding in one's hand while speaking. It is an ancient method of moderating conversations to enable the person holding it to speak authentically and the other participants to listen deeply with open minds and hearts to increase understanding.

## KEY ISSUES FOR PAST PUPILS

Some past pupils questioned how someone like Joseph Marmion was allowed to stay in the Jesuit Order. One asked how a 'deranged psychopath' was allowed to destroy lives and cause suicides and alcoholism. Past pupils strongly expressed incredulity and regret that so many opportunities to acknowledge the abuse suffered by past pupils in the 1990s and 2000s were missed and which could have made a significant difference to helping past pupils address their suffering earlier. Many expressed concern for the most vulnerable among them, especially those who had not come forward yet to avail of the supports that were being offered. All expressed a strong intention to do what they could to reach out to them.

Many expressed certainty that this abuse 'had to have been known' and questioned whether the Jesuits were protecting themselves, 'their family' and their institution despite relevant legislation and bishops' guidelines. Further incredulity was expressed that "*priests could not but observe a 45-year-old man bringing a 9-year-old child up to his bedroom*".

Past pupils questioned the need for more information on what had happened in 1977 in Vienna and its aftermath. Those present were shocked at the poor record-keeping in the Order and their inability to ensure that records were handed over from one Provincial to the next. Another past pupil wished to know what the Vatican and the Pope was doing about the sexual abuse perpetrated by priests, while another enquired as to the current formation process being undergone by priests joining the Order now.

Some past pupils were concerned that this abuse could be happening now in developing countries and wished to know what was being done globally to counteract that. Others expressed concern that confession and spiritual direction could be used to groom vulnerable young children. Many were concerned that what happened to them could not happen again and challenged the Order to examine its culture, which they perceived as enabling elements of this.

Others questioned the current processes and safeguards in place to prevent unsuitable people entering the priesthood. Concern was expressed for the abuse perpetrated and the need for clear and transparent accountability from the Order. Many stressed that they needed accountability from the Jesuits who knew something and could have done something, so that the Jesuits who knew nothing and couldn't have done anything could have their good names and reputations restored.

## KEY RESPONSES FROM JESUITS

All Jesuits present expressed a sense of sorrow, anger and betrayal at the abuse perpetrated by Joseph Marmion. They expressed profound regret and sorrow that it had happened to pupils while they were in the care of Jesuit schools. In response to the question as to why abuse remained hidden for so long, one Jesuit stated that 'like a lot of abusers and sexual abusers, Joe Marmion was excellent at hiding himself', that he was a 'bully and hard to confront' but that there was also a 'systems failure' within the Order.

When questioned whether the culture within the Order was at fault, one Jesuit responded that their culture encouraged non-interference in 'another's office'. This existed to respect individual privacy and discourage rumour within the Order. It was also suggested that this may have contributed to the blurring of the lines between privacy, confidentiality and secrecy thus causing confusion.

Another Jesuit suggested a lack of frankness in speaking directly to people and challenging poor behaviour which existed within the Order. The tendency was to avoid conflict. Another suggested that perhaps the Order didn't believe that the issue of abuse was relevant to them due to a Jesuit sense of exceptionalism. In response to the questions on current Jesuit formation, Jesuits reported that this had changed substantially and that there was now a better vetting of candidates. It was also acknowledged that there were very few men coming forward to join the Order.

They agreed that the system of handing on information from Provincial to Provincial was inadequate. They also explained that there was a reluctance on the part of the Vatican to accept the 1996 guidelines from the Irish Bishops and Religious which caused a delay in their implementation.

One of the Jesuits present described how a committee was established in 2001/2 by the then Irish Provincial to support the Jesuit priest who was in the role of Child Protection Delegate for the Irish Province.

The committee consisted of the Jesuit delegate and two professionals who had therapeutic and legal expertise. The committee was informally composed and was of a consultative and advisory nature. The Jesuit also said that when the complaint about Joseph Marmion came into the Jesuit office it was passed on to the committee in an anonymised format. On the committee's advice the complaint was reported to the civil authorities alongside other measures taken. The two professionals outline their experience of their work in more depth below<sup>12</sup>.

### THE MANAGEMENT OF CASES OF ABUSE IN ROME AND MORE GLOBALLY

A Jesuit stated that all Provinces have policies, protocols, and training. What all Provinces/ regions are being asked for is to regularly audit these standards in all their works in order to update/improve all three in the light of practice, context, and culture. Systems of accountability were described as crucial, along with a recognition that *"power without accountability facilitates all kinds of abuse."* We, the facilitators, sought further clarification from the Society of Jesus on safeguarding policy which is noted below<sup>13</sup>.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IRISH PROVINCE AND ROME

When asked by a past pupil why Rome did not intervene more forcefully when requested, a Jesuit replied that while the autonomy of local Provincials is respected, conversations can, and do, take place in private to discuss what should happen and how that Provincial is given relevant support. Systems of accountability were described as crucial, along with a recognition that 'power without accountability facilitates all kinds of abuse'.

A former consultant to the Provincial from 1974-1981 stated that he personally had known nothing of Joseph Marmion's sexual activity until very recently, and that the notion that 'we all knew' in the 1980s/1990s is just untrue, however incomprehensible. He said that he wrote a letter to the past pupil who had criticised

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<sup>12</sup> Cases brought before the committee were frequently anonymised for the purpose of the meetings and were referred to by numbers. Neither of the professionals ever heard the name of Joseph Marmion mentioned at any of their meetings. A review of records indicate that the number attached to the case of Joseph Marmion was No 9. At the time when case 9 was considered by the Committee, Joseph Marmion was deceased. On the advice of the committee a number of outreach pastoral actions were taken with the direct complainants, also with suggestions regarding other victims of whom the complainants were aware. The Delegate was also advised to inform the complainants that the matters they had brought to the Jesuits would be reported to the civil authorities regarding the priest, but that the names of the victims would not be given to the Gardaí if that was their preference. The records show that these recommendations were followed.

<sup>13</sup> The Society of Jesus have said that the promotion of a consistent culture of protection in all its works and institutions is key to its global mission. They said that, learning from the past and the suffering of victims, this work is understood as a work of justice and reconciliation and that the implementation of the three basic standards (safeguarding, having clear policies, regular training/ formation for all, and protocols to receive and deal with complaints) as key to the fulfilment of its mission statement. As stated in Universal Apostolic Preference No.2 (UAP2), *"We commit ourselves to help eliminate abuses inside and outside the Church, seeking to ensure that victims are heard and properly helped, that justice is done, and that harm is healed. This commitment includes the adoption of clear policies for the prevention of abuse, the ongoing formation of those who are committed to mission, and serious efforts to identify the social origins of abuse. In this way, we effectively promote a culture that safeguards all vulnerable persons, especially minors."*



the culture of the Order and admitted 'guilty as charged'. He also said that while the Jesuits did protect the abuser, they also tried to protect the good name of the Order, the school, the staff, and the parents.

He shared the past pupils' incomprehension that most people did not know of Joseph Marmion's abuse, but that he had witnessed the same phenomenon when working in Kilnacrott Abbey on the case of the paedophile, Fr Brendan Smyth. He had found it hard to understand how nobody 'knew' what Smyth was doing, though rumours abounded. He said that he himself would 'go to his grave in prayerful repentance, grieving at how the Order had failed so many pupils and damaged their lives.'

One former Provincial described visiting Jesuit communities to connect, support and listen to his Jesuit colleagues as part of his role. He stated that he had never met Joseph Marmion as part of those community visits and expressed puzzlement as to how that happened. He also stated that he 'didn't believe that even if I had met him, he would have confessed anything'.

## OPEN DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION

An open dialogue and discussion followed between Jesuits and those past pupils present on *'how could people not have known what was going on?'*

One of the past pupils suggested that one possible reason was that the information was too shocking to bring to conscious awareness and that it was repressed deeply to avoid knowing. He quoted the Canadian Jesuit philosopher, Bernard Lonergan, who used the image of blind spots that impede vision to describe unconscious bias (Cush, 2021). These blind spots can prevent people from seeing others and taking their needs into account.

Another spoke of the recent abuse documented by the Ciase Report (Ciase, 2021) relating to the French Church and suggested that the Church did not know how to read the weak signals of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults.

It was suggested by a past pupil that there were signals that Joseph Marmion sexually abused children. These were intermittent, even rare, but they existed. However, once known they were tucked away in secrecy, not passed on and repressed from memory without reference to the past pupils/survivors. Explaining why this happened, in his view, was central to accepting any Jesuit apology.

There was a recognition by those present that the Jesuits who engaged in this process represented a commitment 'to go the extra mile in establishing trust' with past pupils who had been hurt.

## MEETING BETWEEN PAST PUPILS AND FORMER HEADMASTER

In this meeting, past pupils outlined some of their experiences of Joseph Marmion. These included physical and psychological abuse and constant emotional humiliation. They spoke of witnessing others being targeted physically and psychologically. One past pupil spoke of a boy being so badly beaten that he was 'literally a pile of snot and tears'. Past pupils discussed the sites where abuse happened which included Joseph Marmion's bedroom and the fact that it seemed that *"Joseph Marmion had carte blanche to do as he pleased even though his cards had been marked in the 1940s."*

People spoke about Joseph Marmion sexually abusing them in Belvedere College in the costume-fitting rooms, in his bedroom, and in Vienna. They also spoke of 'confession' in school under the guise of a conversation about academic performance or spiritual direction.

One past pupil told the group that worse than the costume fitting was the manipulation and intimidation experienced by him from Joseph Marmion. His awareness of the extent of this grew as he grew older. Now

he feels disgust when he remembers the priest's inappropriate appealing to him as a child in school asking, *'Why aren't you talking to me?'*

Many present wished to understand how and who reported the abuse in Vienna in autumn 1977. One of the past pupils present remembered that he heard about the abuse in Vienna and told his father which started an investigation that resulted in the removal of Joseph Marmion from the opera, and eventually in 1978 from the school. The question of informing the Gardaí, the former headmaster said, did not arise at the time. It would have been the right thing to do, but it wasn't done. His superiors dealt with Joseph Marmion once he was sure that the school was, or would, be safe.

The former headmaster acknowledged that the extent of Joseph Marmion's behaviour was beyond anything he had ever imagined. In 2004, he said he attended a dinner at Belvedere College during which he apologised for not taking a stronger line with a certain teacher. He said even then, he didn't realise the number of children who had been abused nor the impact of the abuse on them.

### HOW COULD PEOPLE NOT KNOW?

It was suggested by some past pupils that there had been 'weak signals' and 'red flags' but these opportunities to know were missed because the Jesuits didn't want to know and there was a systemic bias against knowing. One past pupil said that it was too 'dissonant' for Jesuits to openly question and explore.

One past pupil said that, having taught children himself, he could accept that others may not be aware of the extent of Joseph Marmion's behaviour in the classroom because a teacher is on his/her own with the children in this space.

A past pupil said to the group and to the former headmaster that it would make a big difference to past pupils if there was true acknowledgment by the Jesuits that there had been opportunities to know (via the weak signals and flags) and to do something, and that all these opportunities were missed and avoided by them. The former headmaster responded that what was being said made a lot of sense.

When asked how many conversations were held between himself and other Jesuits about Joseph Marmion, the former headmaster replied, 'very few, if any'.

A past pupil asked, if no one knew, what was to stop further Provincials appointing Joseph Marmion to another school due to lack of knowledge? The former headmaster said that this would never have happened because he knew and would have intervened to ensure that Joseph Marmion would not ever be in a school again.

The former headmaster was asked what had changed for him since he took the actions that he did in 1977. He responded that he had 'changed completely' for a number of reasons. He said that:

- In the 1990s, he became aware of the impact that sexual and physical abuse had on children, both as children and into their adulthood.
- Finding out about the abuse of people he knew, rather than numbers or articles in a newspaper, brought it home to him on a deeper level.
- What he knows now about what happened to children in his care has made him deeply ashamed and extremely sad.
- He never fully realised the extent to which such abuse could affect people into their late adulthood until very recently.

## GROUP ENGAGEMENTS ON ISSUES OF SAFEGUARDING, CONFESSION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

While the main priority of both past pupils and Jesuits had been to address the immediate and ongoing concerns of past pupils, other long-term cultural issues emerged that several past pupils and Jesuits thought should be addressed. These included the cultural changes necessary to ensure that children of today would never have to experience what the children and adolescents in the 1960s and 1970s went through in Jesuit schools. They also included thoughts from Jesuits on how their own Order could be enriched. Two joint Jesuit-Past Pupil meetings were held in September and December on the topics of safeguarding, safety, and wellbeing of children, and of confession as a site of situational risk.

## MEETING OF PRINCIPALS OF JESUIT SCHOOLS IN IRELAND WITH PAST PUPILS

On 19 September 2022, by invitation, we facilitated a dialogue between five principals of Jesuit secondary schools<sup>14</sup> in Ireland, the Director of Jesuit Education and six past pupils who had been impacted by Joseph Marmion. The Provincial, Leonard Moloney, was also present. Past pupils wanted to know what was different about the Jesuit schools now in comparison to when they were at school. They wanted reassurance that children have ‘somewhere to go within the school and someone to trust if they felt under threat or unsafe’, unlike when they were in school as vulnerable children who were harmed with ‘nowhere to go, and no one to go to’.

One of the past pupils indicated that he saw the sacrament of confession as an opportunity for abusing that needed to be mitigated, as it had been a site of grooming and abuse and could be still. His concern was particularly for those who live in countries where there are more authoritarian, hierarchical structures with asymmetrical power dynamics at play.

## CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING AND BEING PROACTIVE

The principals explained the oversight process for each school’s Board of Management, including being subject to statutory inspections – which includes child protection inspections - by the Department of Education, and Tusla. These Boards are legally responsible for child safeguarding statements and risk assessments, while school management is responsible for the operation of these policies. Because of the legacy of historical abuse, the principals described Ireland as well ahead of many countries in Europe, such as France and Germany, in safeguarding children.

All principals present indicated that the well-being of students was now the top priority for all schools in the country. The principals welcomed the ‘Children First Act 2015 (Irish Statute Book 2015), as well as accompanying circulars and procedures, and the inspection regime which provided a strong legal and statutory framework for the rights and responsibilities which must be adhered to by those involved in education in Ireland today.

They said that current safeguarding policies and practices in their schools contain several elements to ensure cultures of respect, openness and transparency that challenge silence around bullying and harassment, and that encourages the reporting of bullying when seen or experienced (I.C.A.J.E., 2019). They spoke of Care Team meetings where vulnerable students receive additional attention and help. They said that classroom culture has changed, teacher training is different, and often teachers are not the sole adults in the classroom because of teaching assistants etc.

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<sup>14</sup> Crescent College Limerick, Coláiste Iognáid Galway, Clongowes Wood College Co. Kildare, Belvedere College Dublin and Gonzaga College Dublin.

The principals spoke of the 10 Global Identifiers of Jesuit Schools<sup>15</sup> that were published in 2019 as part of a new seminal document from Rome on Jesuit Education in the 21st Century.

### **KEY SUPPORTS FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN JESUIT SCHOOLS**

The principals also said that other supports for optimum safety and well-being of children are in place. They outlined the Jigsaw Programme which was designed to equip students with extra skills and access to email addresses to report bullying. They spoke of the mandatory Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) classes in all primary schools and in post-primary Junior Cycles.

They outlined how all schools are committed to tackling homophobic bullying and focus on proactive and positive discussions to educate. They said that the 'Stay Safe' Programmes in primary schools are aimed at empowering the child, that teachers are mentored: that there are drug programmes and Care Teams in place to look at more vulnerable students.

### **WHAT MATTERS NOW TO THE PRINCIPALS?**

All principals agreed that, today, the risk of abuse is predominately outside the school setting, particularly online, peer-to-peer and in the family. However, that is not to say that schools should not be always hyper-vigilant. They emphasised ownership of their history to create awareness that what happened in the past could happen again without that vigilance.

### **MEETING ON CONFESSION AS A PLACE OF SITUATIONAL RISK - 6 DECEMBER 2022**

Two past pupils who had experienced abuse by Joseph Marmion asked for a facilitated meeting with the Provincial, Leonard Moloney. The Safeguarding Officer was also present. The past pupils wished to address the systemic and situational risks that are present in the practices around the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) - a risk that they saw as quite hidden and therefore more dangerous.

For both, it was essential to highlight the fact that Joseph Marmion used confession as a site for controlling and abusing, and that the ritual of confession was still a situational opportunity in the western world, but particularly in countries where power dynamics were unequal. They also noted that the role of confession as a site of situational risk for sexual abuse has been under-researched. They asked the Jesuit Order to lead on advocating for change on this issue.

What was agreed at the end of the meeting was that the Provincial (in the remaining time that he had) would raise the idea of independent research into the role of confession as a site of situational and systemic risk. Consideration would also be given to involving third-party expertise from Ireland and the UK.

He said that he would include confession as part of potential independent research into what has been learned from the restorative processes that have been conducted over the last two years.

He also committed to ensuring that the topic of confession as a site for systemic and situational risk is included in the full historical narrative.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.educatemagis.org/documents/jesuit-schools-a-living-tradition-in-the-21st-century/>

## MARKING THE CHANGE: FACILITATED MEETING BETWEEN JESUITS - SEPTEMBER 2022

In August 2022, we invited all Jesuits from the Irish province to attend a day-long facilitated meeting on 26 September in Milltown Park. The aim was to explore what was different for the Jesuit community since the decision was made to name Joseph Marmion SJ as someone who had abused children while in the care of the Jesuits, and since the restorative processes had taken place. Together, with a core group of Jesuits, we planned the day which centred around discussing four broad themes:

- Theme 1: Management, governance, and collaborative leadership.
- Theme 2: Formation processes.
- Theme 3: Community living.
- Theme 4: Information-sharing regarding abuse and allegations.

Twenty-six Jesuits attended the meeting. The day began with a restorative question: how are you after all that had happened? The sessions that followed centred around exploring the four identified themes. The meeting came to a close with a final question: what, if anything, do you wish to share with past pupils/past pupils?

The Jesuit community present said they want to share what had been discussed at the meeting with past pupils. There was a strong wish to reassure those who had been harmed of Jesuit sincerity and concern, and let past pupils know that what has happened has changed them, their culture, and initiated actions. They wanted past pupils to know that they will not be forgotten, that steps will be taken to ensure this cannot happen again, and that they actively want to respond to the challenges that have been given to them.

### THEY SAID TO TELL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED THAT THEY HAD DISCUSSED:

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- How to improve and reform Jesuit management, governance, and decision-making processes.
- How to improve and reform the practices and processes around Jesuit formation so that people unsuitable for the role, and people needing support, are identified, and helped.
- How to improve their community life so that they are much more aware if someone is struggling and that they have stronger and deeper relationships with each other.
- How to manage people who have been accused and the information about them.

### SPECIFICALLY, THEY COMMIT THAT THEY WILL:

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- Review how they follow people in formation. They will revise how information is gathered and evaluated about Jesuits at each stage of their training. They will also explore how expert lay people can become involved when it is known that there is serious concern about the behaviour of a particular Jesuit.
- Ensure the lay Safeguarding Officer is included in any consultations about problematic behaviour of a Jesuit.
- Ensure proper written records of all consultations will be kept. This is very important when there is handover from the outgoing Provincial to the incoming Provincial.
- Ensure that individual consultants can raise issues of concern even if they are not on the agenda.
- Review how to be more inclusive around topics of concern to the Jesuit Order and the larger community.
- Review how they care for each other in community life and provide more opportunities for building community amongst each other.

Below are some of the comments made by the attending Jesuits in relation to what they would like the past pupils to know.

*"We want you to explain to them that this group is asking for forgiveness."*

*"I'd like survivors to know that we still want them to continue to contribute."*

*"We want them to know that if people are still hurting, we would be willing to listen."*

*"We want them to know that we are soul searching, pondering and sharing."*

*"We should communicate to them that in our hearts, despite our pain, at a profound level that we are grateful to them."*

*"We also want them to know that we are anxious to move on and learn from this."*

*"We would be interested in a gesture such as a gathering or a coming together."*

*"We want them to know that we are challenging our culture."*

## CHAPTER 6: MEETING NEEDS ARISING FROM THE HARM DONE TO PAST PUPILS

### ENGAGEMENT WITH PAST PUPILS AND WITH JESUITS

The first chapter of this document outlined the rationale for a restorative approach and how it came to happen. Over time we engaged with 62 past pupils either online, in person, or through email and phone. We engaged with many past pupils who experienced harm on a frequent basis.

We engaged with 55 Jesuits, either in person, online or via email. We met numbers of Jesuits together to discuss the impact of what happened, how they might respond to what they heard from past pupils in a meaningful way. This amounted to 6 group meetings, 4 one-day events, and 2 half-day events. This was in addition to meeting the Jesuit Steering Group to prepare for Joint Steering Group meetings.

The core of a restorative approach is respecting that people are experts in their own lives. As people attempted to make sense and meaning of what happened to them through individual meetings, in time they began to identify what mattered most to them. An initial and core part of this was giving voice to those who had not been heard. Using a relational lens, we encouraged people to talk about their experience, if they wished, and much of this is outlined in the previous chapters.

This chapter outlines how the restorative and other processes developed after a number of these one-on-one meetings with past pupils and Jesuits. It shows how they interacted to allow an action-focused plan to be brought to fruition to meet the needs of those who had been harmed so grievously. Regular updates were sent to both past pupils and to members of the Jesuit Order who had taken part or wished to be informed of what was happening.

### INFORMING THOSE MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED

An important part of restorative practice is to ensure that those involved in the harm are at the centre of the process, and therefore informed about or involved in the process and what is being discussed. Eight updates<sup>16</sup> were issued by the facilitators to keep both past pupils and Jesuits separately informed as the process evolved. These updates were distributed through an email list that was collated and used with the permission of each person. Confidentiality was paramount to people, particularly in the initial stages as they decided whether they wanted to engage further or not.

In addition to the updates sent, we recorded all engagements with both past pupils and Jesuits in this restorative document. The first draft was sent to all past pupils on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2022 before the last three chapters were written. We also sent the Jesuits involved outlines of engagements that they took part in.

### THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS

From the beginning of this process, therapeutic supports were put in place for those who had been harmed by Joseph Marmion, should they want them. Family members of past pupils were also able to avail of these supports. The uptake started slowly but as time went on more and more people availed of this service.

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<sup>16</sup> Eight updates were issued by the facilitators to victims and Jesuits in May, July, September, November, December 2021 and March, August and December 2022



## FIRST MEETING ONLINE WITH PAST PUPILS

Chapter 1 referred to the Jesuits' commitment to write a historical narrative about Joseph Marmion's life, what was known and what was done over the years. This commitment was as a result of requests and questions from past pupils. This document was very important to past pupils in general, and was awaited with a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, and dread by some as to whether it addressed the extent and nature of the abuse they had suffered.

Prior to the publication of the *Jesuit Response* on 4 July 2021, we invited past pupils to attend an online forum on 2 July to enable them to meet each other and to voice their questions, concerns and hopes. The invitation was accepted by many but was also questioned as to 'why now?' Trust was easily displaced and the fear that we were trying to influence proceedings or act on behalf of the Jesuits was apparent. We were aware that many people were in WhatsApp groups of their school-leaving year and found them very supportive, though others found them a bit overwhelming. We also knew that many others were not in contact with anyone and did not know anyone in their position now. The meeting went well, and people were very appreciative to see each other online, some for the first time, knowing that they were not alone.

## SECOND MEETING ONLINE WITH PAST PUPILS - POST JESUIT RESPONSE

The *Jesuit Response* was published on 4 July 2021. In the introduction, it acknowledged that this was an unfinished and evolving document and that it would need adding to and clarification. The reaction from the past pupils on the publication of the *Jesuit Response* varied. Many found it difficult to read and absorb. Some said that it brought up all that happened to them 40 years ago - which they had put in a locked compartment but now couldn't stop it 'spilling out'. Some were relieved by it; some appreciated the work and honesty that went into the account even while it was difficult to absorb, and some felt 'it was enough'. Others experienced anger, grief, and sadness, they identified gaps and inconsistencies, and some said, 'it would never be enough'. Past pupils expressed appreciation for the former Headmaster who sought and attained Joseph Marmion's removal from the school, and who acknowledged failures in not understanding the full devastating impact of sexual abuse on students at that time.

After the publication of the *Jesuit Response* on 4 July 2021, we again invited past pupils to attend an online forum on either 5 or 8 July to enable them to share their views and questions and to identify gaps in the publication. During this meeting, a number of past pupils expressed a wish to have the opportunity to read the *Jesuit Response* report privately and reflect on its contents before it became the subject of media interest. This wish was respected which gave the past pupils a few weeks to read and reflect before the report became the subject of media interest in August 2021.

## SELF-ORGANISING: THE PAST PUPILS STEERING GROUP

During our meeting, past pupils discussed the *Jesuit Response* report and asked us as the restorative facilitators and safeguarding office to send an email inviting anyone who had been harmed by Joseph Marmion to join a past pupils' mailing list which would be managed by past pupils themselves. This led to the past pupils making connections amongst themselves and the decision to self-organise and meet on their own to consider the key issues which were of concern to them and further action. A Past Pupils Steering Group was formed to engage with the Jesuits. It included past pupils from Ireland and abroad, and a cross section of school years and interests. We saw our role as supporting the past pupils but also supporting the co-design of a process that would be meaningful to both past pupils and to Jesuits.

The Past Pupils Steering Group entered a two-phase process of consultation which included issues arising from the *Jesuit Response* and the development of a six-point agenda to meet victims needs which included;

- Challenge information and seek answers to questions relating to the *Jesuit Response* (July 2021).
- Create a permanent detailed historical record.

- Access restorative meetings and therapeutic supports for past pupils and families.
- Develop outreach programmes for potential past pupils who experienced harm.
- Financial restitution.
- A symbolic gesture from the Jesuit Order to reflect acknowledgment of the harm.

## PROGRESSING THE PAST PUPILS' AGENDA AND CONTINUED RESTORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

While the Past Pupils Steering Group met regularly to progress their agenda, we continued to reach out to others who got in contact with us. Word of mouth, encouragement from peers and a 'good experience' of 'being listened to' proved to be powerful in encouraging others to recount what happened to them and the long-term impact on them. We took notes on the themes and issues that came up in order to record what past pupils had suffered and these are recounted in chapter 2 and elsewhere in this document.

Some past pupils had reservations about our trustworthiness and the restorative process. They questioned how we could be independent practitioners when we were being paid by the Jesuits to do this work. By and large, past pupils who did engage were reassured by the quality of the encounter and in time the criticisms lessened, but never fully disappeared.

## FIRST JOINT STEERING GROUP FACE-TO-FACE MEETING - 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

As the work to self-organise and hear from the wider group of past pupils was ongoing, so was work with the Jesuits. A Jesuit Steering Group had been formed and on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 the Past Pupils Steering Group engaged with them and the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, to present and discuss their agenda for supporting past pupils. A Joint Steering Group of Jesuits and Past Pupils was also formed, and an agenda was agreed. The independent restorative practitioners facilitated the meeting and documented the agreed agenda.

## BUILDING TRUST AND FORMING AN AGENDA

As facilitators, we welcomed everyone to the first Joint Steering Group meeting, using a restorative circle process and a Talking Piece in this initial meeting. Each of the past pupils described the impact of the abuse on themselves and their lives, their disappointment at the historical response from the Order and their hopes for the process they had now committed to on behalf of those hurt by Joseph Marmion. The Jesuits present expressed their sorrow and regret at what had happened and committed to doing what they could to repair the harm, recognising that it could never be made 'right'.

All recognised that there was a need to build trust and a meaningful relationship between both groups to meet the needs of the past pupils of Joseph Marmion. It was also recognised that while trust was fragile currently, it could be built upon by honest communication and a commitment to the actions agreed upon. The past pupils group communicated that outcomes achieved in a timely fashion would be of great help to those who experienced harm. A working agenda was agreed, and plans were made to progress the agenda in the following six areas:

- **Fact challenge and develop the *Jesuit Response*:** It was noted that gaps in the *Jesuit Response* exist and may be addressed by further questions and discussions with relevant Jesuits. A joint subgroup was formed to pursue these matters.
- **Create a detailed historical and public record:** The Joint Working Group agreed a detailed historical record would be compiled from a number of sources.
- **Restorative Meetings, Jesuit Engagement and Counselling:** It was agreed to find ways to support and encourage past pupils to engage with the restorative facilitators, engage with Jesuits and avail of paid-for counselling.

- **Detailed outreach:** The need for outreach to be invitational but not invasive or intrusive was spoken of in the meeting. It was agreed to seek some professional advice on how to manage this topic.
- **Restitution/Non-Adversarial Redress Scheme:** The Joint Steering Group agreed that a non-adversarial redress scheme would be developed, and the Past Pupils Steering Group would engage with the wider groups to select solicitors to act on their behalf. The Jesuit Steering Group also agreed to discuss this approach with their solicitors.
- **Symbolic gesture:** It was agreed to consider the possibility of a symbolic gesture from the Order that would reflect its contrition.

An online questionnaire to gather the most important needs and wishes from past pupils in an anonymous format was designed by the Past Pupils Steering Group and sent out. What they received back were unanswered questions and a number of detailed testimonies from over 40 past pupils about their experiences of abuse when they were children at school. A large number of questions and testimony, some of which was redacted was shared with Jesuits in preparation for meeting with them in November 2021.

## SECOND JOINT STEERING GROUP MEETING - 19 NOVEMBER 2021

The Joint Steering Group gathered on 19 November 2021 to assess progress on the agreed agenda. The Provincial, Leonard Moloney thanked everyone and acknowledged the level of work that had gone on to honour the commitments made to the past pupils who were abused by Joseph Marmion.

A detailed discussion ensued on the following items, and decisions were recorded as to how and who of the joint steering group would move them forward.

These included:

- Answering more than 100 questions raised by past pupils on foot of a questionnaire sent to past pupils after they had received the document *Joseph Marmion: the Jesuit Response*.
- Plans for outreach to past pupils: It was agreed to get expert knowledge as to how to do outreach safely.
- Development of an Historical Record: The approach to this was discussed. The decision was made that this would need an editorial board and be authored by the joint steering group.
- A Redress/Restitution Scheme which had been agreed earlier was discussed and further plans made. (This was launched on 11 January 2022).

## ONLINE MEETING WITH PAST PUPILS STEERING GROUP - 28 FEBRUARY 2022

The independent restorative practitioners facilitated an online meeting of the Past Pupils Steering Group on 28 February in advance of them receiving a draft of the answers to the questions they posed in November 2021.

## SUBMISSION OF FIRST DRAFT OF ANSWERS TO OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

A draft of the answers to the questions submitted to the Jesuits was disseminated to members of the Past Pupils Steering Group to read and make comment on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. This draft was accompanied by a letter<sup>17</sup> from the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, who acknowledged the abuse of boys: emotionally, spiritually, physically, and sexually in three Jesuit schools between 1962 and 1978. He also acknowledged the collective failure of the Order to recognise Joseph Marmion's unsuitability for the priesthood and their failure to address the needs of the past pupils who were pupils of this man over many decades.

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 3: Letter from Provincial Leonard Moloney March 2022

## WRITTEN RESTORATIVE ACCOUNT OF PAST PUPILS' EXPERIENCES

Chapter 2 of this document (Past Pupils' experiences) was circulated on 17 March 2022 to all members of the Past Pupils Steering Group and the Jesuit Steering Group. This was followed on 24 March 2022 by the dissemination of chapter 2 to the wider group of past pupils for comment.

### THIRD JOINT STEERING GROUP MEETING - 20 JUNE 2022

A third Joint Steering Group meeting was held on 20 June 2022, facilitated by the restorative practitioners. The purpose was to discuss what needed to be done next to ensure the needs of past pupils were met, and to make some decisions as to how this would be progressed. We also asked the group two questions: what was important for them to achieve at the meeting? And what difference was there for them, being a year into the process?

#### WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO GET OUT OF TODAY'S MEETING?

Work on all fronts of the past pupils' agenda was well underway at this stage. The past pupils outlined that what they wanted most was to get matters finalised as quickly as possible. Comments from individuals from both steering groups are captured below.

*"I would like to leave here today with some sense that we're all in this together and that we would leave this room with that sense. It's the moving forward together that matters."*

*"The most important thing is that we don't drop the ball, that redress continues as efficiently as possible."*

*"Today what's important to me is that we have a clear picture of the next steps, and we have a shared understanding of what they are. For me the permanent record is a priority."*

*"It's important we all mark the huge progress made that is due to our work and that we give ourselves a clap on the back."*

*"I'm keen to move the agenda items along."*

*"That the document(s) are accessible in a way that's as coherent as possible."*

*"So much of the agenda is agreed; the difficulty I see is agreeing how to manage the documentation and I'd like if we could tease some of that out today."*

*"We're facing into more difficult tasks. We need a deeper level of understanding."*

*"What's most important for me is that we put momentum back into this process."*

*"Today I'm hoping we'll have a definitive roadmap towards an endpoint closing this off."*

*"For the future I most like the idea of mutual trust – the more we can convey that the better."*

## AGENDA ITEMS UPDATE

Those who had volunteered to work on specific items on the agenda reported the progress made and what still needed to be dealt with. There was agreement by the Past Pupils Steering Group that the *Answers and Responses to Questions and Observations* document, which had been worked on by a joint sub-group and sent to the Steering Group, had been accepted, subject to minor edits. The group agreed that this, along with a letter from the Provincial to the past pupils, is to be distributed to the wider past pupils' group with a recommendation of its acceptance.

In terms of redress, at this date, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022, over 40 applications for redress had been submitted and 15 had been settled. The Safeguarding Officer reported that there had been a continued increase in the uptake of therapeutic supports, and details were sent with each update to past pupils. The independent restorative practitioners reported, that in terms of the restorative work we were undertaking, just one call with a past pupil who had recently come forward was due to take place June 2022. It appeared that our work in this regard was nearly finished.

In terms of outreach, the Past Pupils Steering Group have developed a password-protected website that will enable those who were impacted or harmed by Joseph Marmion to be informed about services and options available to them should they wish to avail of these supports. Jesuit involvement in this website was requested by some of the Past Pupils Steering Group though there was no consensus about this.

## HISTORICAL RECORD

Draft terms of reference for the historical and permanent record were submitted by the Past Pupils Steering Group to the Jesuit Steering Group. It was agreed that the Jesuits would work on their own terms of reference and that both steering groups would agree a final terms of reference for this document. It was decided that the historical record would be written and edited by an editorial board and would be authored by the Joint Steering Group

The group also decided that once decisions are made about the historical record, a discussion on the idea of a symbolic gesture being made to acknowledge the abuse done to past pupils under the care of Jesuits would be held.

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT FOR YOU NOW THAT WE ARE MORE THAN A YEAR ON?

The facilitators asked everyone what is different for them now that they are more than a year into this process? The responses below are positive and demonstrate an increase of trust.

*"The Jesuits have taken a non-adversarial approach to the extent that we (past pupils) have found it hard to 'pick a fight' but we needed to find something to fight for."*

*"A lot is different. So much has happened ... we are much further on."*

*"Today is about marking the progress that has been made. I came into this wanting two things. That has happened and beyond. For me the progress made is phenomenal and beyond anything I'd have believed. I am in a very different place than a year ago."*

*"I'm happy that the constituents that we are representing are confident with the work we have been doing on their behalf."*

*"For me the difference is that the Jesuits have found ways to tell the story of Joseph Marmion and their involvement in that and that everyone impacted has had the opportunity to share their story in whatever"*

*way is the most appropriate for them, be it through therapy, meeting the facilitators, or meeting Jesuits etc.”*

*“This is my first time here. The difference? Three and a half years ago I heard that past pupils may have been abused by a Jesuit. My response is we have to find who they are. Today I'm meeting you and I'm delighted to meet you.”*

*“Some of the calls I am getting from people are more optimistic, but there's lots more people out there.”*

*“What's different for me? The progress we've made. We've done enormous work. I have concerns that there are other things that are not different.”*

*“What's changed? I've insight into my behaviours over the last number of years. The fact that there's further help available to discuss that is very helpful and I look forward to that.”*

*“I feel like I was on the margin of things, I haven't done the work. What's different is the gradual awful dawning of the grotesque enormity of what happened. I feel ashamed.”*

*“I heard the word trust and in my personal experience the trust level has increased exponentially. We have queried and pushed back on everything, and we have never once been refused.”*

## **FEBRUARY 2023**

The Steering Group is working with the Jesuits to complete the historical record which has considered and referenced the documents that were in existence and were created as part of the restorative response initiated in April 2021. Before the final publication, this document will be ratified by the Joint Steering Group (Summer 2023).

55 claim applications have proceeded to the Redress scheme of which 47 have now been settled. (April 2023)

Over three hundred therapeutic hours have been availed of by past pupils and their families. This service will be ongoing.

## **DEDICATION, SACRIFICE AND 'MEN FOR OTHERS'**

What happened during this restorative process was the result of deep commitment and sacrifice on the part of individuals who themselves had been harmed, and bore that burden, but who kept foremost in their minds that they wanted to protect and ensure their peers were looked after. As members of the Past Pupils Steering Group, they spent countless hours and days developing an agenda to reflect the needs of their peers and working to get the items on the agenda into being.

The sacrifice was more than the hours put in. The past pupils who experienced harm and abuse are not a homogenous group. Finding and executing an agenda that meets most people's needs, but that will never meet the needs of all, put enormous pressure on the past pupils who are working for others. Being 'men for others', as we were told, was part of their education and culture growing up in Jesuit schools. This term had both positive and negative connotations for many past pupils who had experienced harm.

Some stayed in that group full-term, others left when their work was done, and others worked outside the Steering Group to pursue topics that they thought were important in ensuring that this could never happen again.

Their counterparts, the Jesuit Steering Group, also worked tirelessly as they grappled with the scale of the abuse, the impact on past pupils and themselves, the impact of the publicity, and their ability to respond to the harm caused.



## CHAPTER 7: THE DIFFERENCE THE RESTORATIVE PROCESS HAS MADE TO PAST PUPILS

In September 2022, after nearly 18 months of engagement, the independent restorative practitioners asked all past pupils who we had been in touch with us to share their reflections on their experiences of the restorative process during that time. 44 people (72%) of those we contacted responded in a variety of ways (online, telephone and email). Over 90% of those past pupils who responded had been abused by Joseph Marmion. Three people who had not been directly abused by Joseph Marmion responded as advocates for their peers.

The independent restorative practitioners conducted this evaluation between September and November 2022. [While much work had been completed, the redress scheme was on-going, and the writing of a historical narrative by the Joint Past Pupils and the Jesuit Steering Groups had just begun.] An option was to wait until there was ‘closure’ of the process. This would have benefits in that everyone would have received redress, read our document and the historical narrative. However, we made the decision to capture people’s experiences sooner rather than later, mindful of the expressed view of the need to ‘move on’. After more than 18 months of invitations, meetings, engagements with past pupils, engagement with Jesuits, facilitating joint meetings, along with providing information and updates, we had received only 2 enquiries since May 2022.

A simple template that mirrored a restorative process was used in this part of the process. We asked the past pupils a series of questions. However, we did not limit the conversations to these questions:

- What has this process been like for you?
- What has been helpful?
  - Engagement with restorative facilitators/safeguarding officer
  - Therapy
  - Meeting with peers
  - Meeting with Jesuits
  - Redress/restitution
  - Updates and/or reading the draft restorative document.
- What difference has this made so far, if any?
- What would your family or friends say? Has this made a difference to them?
- What is still outstanding for you?
- What would have made it a better process for you?

We were very conscious that the term ‘negative and positive feedback’ is in itself subjective; that was not our intention. Our aim always was to create the conditions that allowed every individual we engaged to find their own ‘truth’, one that we make no judgement about.

### WHAT HAS THIS PROCESS BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?

Overall, past pupils that responded said the process had been very helpful and enabled them to deal with what had happened in a different way. They described the process as painful but worthwhile. They told us that being listened to, and being understood without judgement, was helpful to them in coming to terms with the abuse. They also described seeing their experiences in ‘their own words’ as comforting and affirming. A small number of past pupils thought that the process was not fit for purpose and did not trust it, or the means by which it came about.

Past pupils’ comments on the process were as follows.

*“Overall, in my case everything was very positive – from the steering group I wanted the detailed description of what went on and why. I got that mostly. It showed the limits of what the Jesuits can do or are willing to do.”*

*“In overall terms the process has been very good. It did take some time initially as victims gained trust with the facilitators and the facilitators modified their approach. There was also a bedding process for the Jesuits as well.”*

*“Very rewarding because I could relate my experiences, be listened to, and understood, and release them from my head once and for all.”*

*“The process afforded me my first ever opportunity to come and speak about what happened and how it hugely impacted my day-to-day life.”*

*“I got vindication! Though I’d much have preferred the day in court. I’m very grateful for that. It’s a satisfaction, the way you did it. It feels like a weight off my shoulders.”*

## PERSONAL DISCOVERY AND GROWTH

Past pupils reported having made personal discoveries about themselves which honoured their resilience, their courage, and their strength, which they said was both reassuring and affirming for themselves.

*“It’s been productive and life- giving hopefully. It’s been a decently relational process.”*

*“The process has been painful, emotional, but sometimes comforting.”*

*“I feel that after 60 years since these events, I can cope ok.”*

*“I have had some really positive feedback and results from your restorative programme in terms of contacting a psychotherapist and am continuing to do so.”*

*“You all of a sudden discover a part of yourself that you never recognised and acknowledged... it’s hard to meet that side of yourself or your shadow self. Hard to reconcile the innocence and the expectations of a young boy going to an esteemed Jesuit school with the sullied experience. Delighted I did it.”*

*“I’ve engaged with this process a lot, very helpful, but the journey it set me on is not concluded.”*

*“A process like these changes one... I’m much more myself now... My need to please other people is less, my sense of who I am is stronger.”*

Past pupils described being able to deal with and understand their anger.

*“I was vulnerable, it was great to be able to talk about it, instead of festering in there... it was blocked down so far that I would never have come up and got that out without it being made public.”*

*“It has been very helpful in that I’m not angry in the same way as I was because I feel good things are coming out of it.”*

*“My anger about that time is still in me and that has affected other people. I’m learning how to cope with that anger. I’ve been able to deal with it better and not bring it into my own life.”*

*"It brought it back the enormity of it all. It took me by surprise. I thought I was unlucky but the volume of it and the scale of it took me by surprise. I still have a bit of anger that it went on for so long. From the scale of it I now know it wasn't about me. It was him."*

## A CHALLENGING PROCESS

While many past pupils told their stories, they also articulated that for some the process had not been easy, and continued to be challenging as they came to terms with the negative impact the abuse had on their lives.

*"Frightening in the beginning but incredibly affirming for me personally... incredibly, I thought I was a mouse and I know now I'm not a mouse... it's been really good for me, the extra bit that was locked away has really helped me... now it's there I'm not ashamed of it."*

*"Maybe it will be a good thing for me but now it's not. It's something that I think of several times a day it crosses your mind... I don't want it to cross my mind again. I'm still going to counselling... I sort of like it, but I don't think it's going to make huge changes. When you've been living with something for so long you sort of get into that."*

Past pupils commented on the importance of the Jesuit acknowledgment of the abuse that occurred and the way that abuse was handled by them in the ensuing decades. While some felt it was an exercise to get 'off the hook' and were sceptical about the authenticity of the *Jesuit Response*, many more felt satisfied that they had now faced up to and taken responsibility for what happened and appreciated their courage and engagement with the process.

*"Given that it didn't happen 20 years ago, it was the best process and outcome that you could hope for now."*

*"Despite the awfulness and the shame of it, the Jesuits did a good job."*

*"I was content with the acknowledgement and acceptance by the Jesuits of what had happened while still thinking there was some level of cover-up. I admired their courage in facing up to what happened and taking responsibility for it as an Order."*

*"While it realistically cannot be perfect, it appears that most of the Jesuits and the Order have endeavoured to address the wrong doings as openly and best they can."*

*"Still a lot of scepticism that they weren't aware of the sexual behaviour... I would have started out there... I broadly believe now that they were telling the truth... the truth of how they handled the situation in September 1977 was abominable... at least some of them now are shocked that those who were abused had to sit in his classrooms for another year."*

*"If they have learned from it, will they carry that through to other places such as hard-line groups?"*

## WHAT HAS BEEN HELPFUL?

There was positive feedback from the support provided by the independent restorative practitioners and the Safeguarding Office, and the professionalism by which it was offered.

*"The psychiatric assessment... sessions with the therapist that unblocked those last graphic details... engagement with others, particularly Saoirse, the Safeguarding officer... the suggestion of family therapy: all good."*

The public acknowledgement of the abuse, the naming of the abuser and the recognition by past pupils that they were 'not alone' was also described as very helpful, if at times painful.

*"Telling my story was helpful!"*

*"This process has been very helpful to me. It pointed me in the right direction."*

*"The professionalism with which it's been dealt with has been impressive. I want to thank you both for what you've done, it wouldn't have happened without you."*

*"The external parties have all been extremely helpful. I think the Jesuit engagement has been real but the lack of apparent capacity to address 'situational and cultural factors' is still shocking."*

Past pupils described that through the public naming of Joseph Marmion and the opportunity to talk to their peers, they could acknowledge that what happened to them was abuse.

*"The naming was most helpful about the process. It wasn't news to me that Joseph Marmion was an abuser – but only through talking to others and hearing others' experiences made me realise what happened to me was abuse."*

*"I had no idea there were so many people, including myself, who didn't realise that it was abuse and that what the priest did was abuse... to hear other guys talking about what happened to them took the shame out of it for me."*

*"Quieter people got solace when stronger ones were involved."*

*"The support that ye provided and the meetings ye facilitated with the Jesuits, the Provincials, and former headmaster, I found that very rewarding."*

*"The one [group meeting] with our former headmaster. I found that very rewarding."*

*"Getting the story out there was cathartic... It has been helpful in that I'm not angry anymore as I was... I think good things are coming out of it... I've also forgiven myself for not being able to do it when it mattered."*

## SUPPORT FROM PAST PUPILS STEERING GROUP

Past pupils also commented on the achievements of the Past Pupils Steering Group which worked on their behalf to enable the setting up of the restitution scheme, pose further questions and seek answers from the Jesuits, and their commitment to outreach to those who had not come forward yet.

*"The work that the steering group have done is amazing... they deserve a great deal of credit for it."*

*"The steering group did excellent work, and it was all volunteer work!"*

*"None of this would have gotten to this stage if it weren't for you guys and those on the steering group."*

## REDRESS/RESTITUTION

The past pupils who availed of the redress/restitution scheme negotiated by the Past Pupils Steering Group and the Order evaluated that the scheme was, in general, hugely positive. Dealings with the redress solicitors, psychiatrists and psychiatric reports were experienced as sensitive and very helpful overall. A small number found the experience difficult and that the harm to them had been minimised. A past pupil who helped his school friend stated:

*"This was very helpful in that it acknowledged in some way the pain that was inflicted on victims and their families. In addition, the non-adversarial approach was also a key element."  
"I think the speed of the redress was good."*

Most people used the solicitors that the Steering Group engaged on behalf of the past pupils, while some engaged their own solicitors.

*"My lawyer was excellent. I employed my own solicitor and was happy with the process and the settlement. It will give me some security and has enabled me to do some things I otherwise wouldn't have been able to do."*

*"I'm very happy at the way that the Jesuits are handling this and fronting up the cases as they are happening. My experience of the redress scheme is positive."*

*"I experienced huge elation and validation when this was done, it was that I've done something good, and I've done the right thing... not just that we acknowledge that this was done to you."*

*"I availed of the finance. I didn't want the money. Part of the reason that I have the money is that it is in the bank for others. I recognise that it's real money, but the real pain is to make sure that the changes stick. I don't want to let them off lightly."*

#### ENGAGEMENT WITH THE RESTORATIVE FACILITATORS AND THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Past pupils were appreciative of being able to speak about their experience of abuse, in many instances, for the first time. Stories recounted through email, in online platforms, over the telephone and in person broke the silence of many years, enabling people to share those experiences with partners, friends and past pupils.

*"As I said to you before, I wouldn't have wished this process on my worst enemy when it started but now, I would wish it for my best friend."*

*"Overall, I have been very impressed by the way which you (facilitators) have gone about your work, including the levels of transparency and trust that you sought to foster, and the various strands of work that have been advanced."*

*"Being able to write my story for somebody who is a professional and being listened to, was and still is, a facility for closure for me... it was a considerable relief to be able to state my case and having offloaded my experience, I felt that a burden has been lifted from my mind."*

*"The process afforded me my first ever opportunity to come and speak about what happened and how it hugely impacted by day-to-day life. I got great help in being able to share, and then being able to share with other people and my wife. I stopped feeling dirty, the enormity of it took me by surprise."*

*"Everything worked out perfectly for me. I am so happy and in saying that, both yourself and Catherine helped me to extinguish experiences in my youth that were there in my head and now they are gone. I am freed of them. They don't wake me up in the middle of the night and they don't flash across my head at an unsuspecting moment."*

*"First thing was being able to talk to someone about it – apart from my wife - to be able to talk to you guys in that trusted and understanding way... it lifted a bit of the weight... I didn't seek to talk to the Jesuits, didn't seek restitution, it didn't seem important for me to do though I was very happy that the options existed... being able to talk about it and when your conscious role was to listen was very important."*

*"Thank you for listening."*

*"You really created the context that enabled all this to happen. Your contribution has been invaluable."*

*"Your efforts were most welcome and professional... thanks for your efforts and sympathetic ways."*

*"Telling my story to the facilitators was good, I didn't realise how it had impacted my life."*

*"I think you both have done fantastic work along with the safeguarding officer, along with the sterling work of the victims' steering group."*

*"Having yourselves involved has been really important. I can't imagine how it would be if people like yourselves were not involved."*

*"I could see how you were both different, helping me talk to strangers helped me make sense of it in the early days."*

*"I want to thank you both very much. It's been a wonderfully vindicating process. They moved him around because they knew he was a problem. There was a sign early on."*

Past Pupils that engaged, or were offered group meetings with Jesuits, commented positively on the support received from the facilitators in a variety of settings.

*Engagement with the facilitators was very helpful. I think it was very important to have had the facilitators operating between the Jesuits and the victims. This took a while to settle down which was not surprising as trust needed to be built."*

*"Helping us navigate through those large meetings was really helpful."*

*"You gave people plenty of avenues to go down for support... horrific as the accounts were, I do believe the Jesuits by and large didn't know what was going on."*

*"The group meeting was difficult, but it was a good meeting. I was happy for that meeting in Milltown and that I went to it."*

*"I think it was hearing similar stories. When you understand what happened to me happened to others, it was different. Not something you'd talk about to your friends."*

*"I got great help from you in being able to share and then was able to share with other people, and for the first time my wife. It gave me that opportunity and I stopped feeling dirty."*

*"Support in meeting with the Jesuits was great."*

*"What was helpful to me was the support the two of ye provided and the meeting you facilitated with the Jesuits and myself. Also, the meetings between victims with the former Provincials."*

## READING THE RESTORATIVE RESPONSE DOCUMENT AND UPDATES

For many, reading the first draft of this restorative response document sent to past pupils in summer 2022 made a real difference to them. While missing three chapters including these evaluations, it contained other crucial information about the Jesuit Order's deliberations about what happened.

*"I read the (restorative) report three times, it's almost like reliving a bad experience. It is necessary and very necessary you are carrying out your role. I have a different role in coping with it."*

*"I really liked how you reflected and tabulated the conversations that the Jesuits considered. Some people might have not considered it relevant. It was clear that they too were operating under the strict authority of that era. The voice of the Provincial and their superiors were never questioned."*

*"I had severe doubts that the full knowledge would come out. The biggest things you did were the quotes from other people... You didn't change my own quotes and to see the others – best possible documentation – very harrowing read."*

*"I found the part where former students were quoted and the nature of the abuse was documented was excellent and comprehensive, as was the Jesuit Response."*

*"Reading the (restorative) report was a tough read and the volume of victims and what we all went through was systemic, the whole thing."*

*"I think it's important that that story is told – that all the stories are told."*

*"It's been a very thorough and very extensive report, a very difficult piece in Irish history."*

*"I thought it was very good, very thorough."*

*"The work you have done is admirable and a tough journey for yourselves... very professional, taking both sides."*

*"What is clear to me is that this was (and may still be) a systemic issue in many religious schools. There were more abusers than Marmion at school when I was there. None as serious nor as multifaceted in their approach."*

## **THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS**

*"I found the therapy very helpful; I left therapy after six weeks. I didn't want to do it anymore."*

*"Therapy has been helpful... couples counselling I had resisted... this process has made me realise that I need it."*

*"The therapeutic supports were very good, given generously, no drama, all have been helpful to me."*

## **PEER SUPPORT**

Past pupils expressed gratitude for the support and solidarity expressed by their classmates. The Past Pupils Steering Group were described as 'tenacious' in working for past pupil supports.

While some past pupils expressed their strong appreciation of the support received for those who communicated through WhatsApp, there were others 'who listened silently', and yet others who felt distant or overwhelmed by it all.

*"It was great to have this common purpose... to see how collectively and independently we were saying we can't let go... that emergent group behaviour... to know that you were part of a band of brothers... that was good."*

*"I am also conscious that many of my peers gave generously of their time and experience to working with you, including on behalf of their schoolmates and others. While I might have liked to be able to contribute more to the overall process myself, I am humbled by, and proud of, their work on everyone's behalf."*



*"I think the system let my deceased brother down... the initial impression of that meeting with former classmates of his was great happiness... that those people were willing to come forward with respect for my brother, his friends wanted to meet with me and remember him, it was tough, but it was good."*

*"What I got from listening to the others in the group, or the one's I heard speaking, seemed to have been addressing these problems for donkey's years, whereas until this came out two years ago, I just buried it, I found that very difficult."*

*"I was in the WhatsApp group. I didn't say anything... I just said my story... people were very nice but then I disengaged."*

*"I've only mentioned what happened to my friends in the vaguest terms."*

*"The manner in which the group grew and became a place where people could tell their stories and become a mini-movie – a bit of the good, the bad or the ugly – and the realisation that some of this stuff was too heavy and too private and then moving it into a separate group... humbling those who went through... I worry there are many out there."*

*"It has brought all the guys in my year closer together."*

*"The level of support from everyone was fantastic... at 14/15 no one wanted to admit it happened to them... in that sense it has been very healing, I didn't realise how debilitating it was for me."*

*"We will keep in touch... the group will stay together... we will have a school reunion... the events of last year will be spoken about from a supportive point of view, not a questioning point of view."*

A past pupil, through talking to his peers in recent times, reflected that Joseph Marmion's model of bullying behaviour led to the same behaviour becoming more prevalent in school, resulting in more negative impacts on others.

*"Conversation with some of my then friends, however, showed me that the effects of enabling and encouraging students themselves to become bullies affected many others."*

A past pupil who had advocated for a peer who had been abused by Joseph Marmion stated:

*"This has been helpful for a number of reasons: i) It helped victims in the knowledge that they were not alone, ii) it demonstrated how the abuse affected victims in different ways, iii) it demonstrated that the wants and needs of victims were different, iv) it was overall supportive to each other."*

## RESPONSES TO ENGAGEMENT BY THE JESUITS

There were a variety of different emotions and opinions expressed in response to the engagements with, and by, the Jesuits. Most past pupils who engaged directly with them found it to be a positive experience, though there were two exceptions to this. One past pupil spoke of feeling 'empty' after a one-to-one meeting with a Jesuit. Another spoke of feeling angry and upset after a meeting but was glad he challenged the Jesuit without losing his temper. Many other meetings were seen as positive, some even cathartic.

There was anger for the damage that was caused by the initial abuse and further anger for the inaction to engage earlier, leading to multiple injustices. Past pupils felt that earlier interventions could have made significant differences to many lives.

*"I did not meet with any Jesuits. I have no interest in asking for an apology, since the same words of apology have been spoken and written by the Jesuits and the church in general since the mid 1990s and so for me are meaningless. For me, the information-gathering aspect of any such meeting was better handled by the steering group's fact-checking and historical record work."*

At the same time there was respect for the courage of the Order in now facing up to the damage done and putting supports in place quickly for those harmed. One past pupil who supported a peer who had been abused by Joseph Marmion in meeting the Provincial commented on his experience of the process:

*"The mediation process had a lot of benefits for the complainant/victim who is primarily seeking explanation and prevention of recurrence for others... It was a better and fairer route for all than recourse to law."*

Another said:

*"This was very helpful as it allowed victims to tell their story of abuse and how it affected their lives thereafter. It also allowed the Jesuits to witness first-hand the damage that was caused as a result of the abuse their colleagues had inflicted on innocent boys. It gave the Jesuits the opportunity to apologise for the hurt and damage inflicted on victims."*

A small number of past pupils found the Jesuit discussions difficult to read and felt they were self-absorbed. Others found them enlightening and they thought there was a 'ring of truth' to what was written down.

## THE RESPONSE TO THE JESUIT ORDER, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The majority of the past pupils who were impacted by Joseph Marmion found the *Jesuit Response* generally to be genuine, open and honest. Some got consolation from reading that Jesuits had pointed out the Order's need for systemic change. Some were heartened by the apology that the Provincial, Leonard Moloney, gave at the Belvedere College Union dinner in 2021. Some past pupils found meaning and some closure after receiving a written apology from the Provincial for what happened to them as children while in their care.

*"I think Leonard Moloney's speech to the Union dinner was a landmark in the whole process. There was no holding back in that apology, no excuses advanced."*

*"I got a letter from Fr Moloney, I wanted some written confirmation that what happened did and I got an apology not just for me but for my brother, now deceased. I genuinely believe that what he wrote was authentic and I wrote back, and that was closure for me."*

*"I was impressed with Fr Leonard, he has to do a balancing act with the Pope breathing down his neck, he'll get it sorted."*

*"Once the Jesuit Order decided to acknowledge what had happened, they behaved in an exemplary fashion. I particularly would salute them for their redress scheme which is admirably non-adversarial."*

*"It is great that all this happened and that the Jesuits are looking at their own system while at the same time knowing that many lives have been ruined."*

*"The apology didn't matter hugely to me, but I felt they were genuine."*

*"Whilst it realistically cannot be perfect, it appears that most of the Jesuits and the Order have endeavoured to address the wrongdoings as openly and best they can. I believe that the process and apologies were principally driven by Leonard Moloney SJ notwithstanding strong internal resistance and facilitated independently by your good selves and the others contributing to the outcomes."*

*"I empathised with the younger scholastics who were in Belvedere at the time because there would have been a formidable old guard there."*

*"I felt that the headmaster at the time dealt with an awful situation in the best way he could at the time. I felt that he became a bit of a scapegoat for the institution."*

*"Maybe the younger ones [Jesuits] will bring education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."*

## WHAT HAS NOT BEEN HELPFUL?

Many of those who expressed positive feedback also expressed things that they found unhelpful about the process. Two past pupils who had been highly involved in the process expressed a wish for more direct engagement between the Provincial, in particular, and the Past Pupils Steering Group. Others thought that the process gave too much time to the Jesuit experience and expressed disappointment when the information gleaned showed how Joseph Marmion was dealt with.

*"I thought that there was too much space devoted to the feelings of the Order and its members, as it seems a rationalization to explain away lack of timely and adequate action on their part... generally I found that part disjointed and irrelevant. For the most part the (restorative) report was very good with the above caveat."*

*"They had no idea how to deal with bad people in their ranks, they moved him around because they knew he was a problem."*

Some past pupils from Clongowes Wood College found the draft Restorative Report overly focused on Belvedere College and less on Clongowes Wood and the Crescent Colleges.

*"I was in Clongowes... it was very biased towards Belvedere – that was the main core of the report... I would have liked to see it broken down into the different sections."*

Past pupils who were themselves abused have described the impact on hearing about the abuse inflicted on others and the impacts of it on them.

*"I personally am not necessarily any better as my feelings are towards the collective and the mess that has been made of so many lives both Jesuit and victims alike, by this whole affair. I think in time when it is all finished, I will be able to reflect on a job collectively well achieved but the dismay at what has happened, and the grief that it has caused will still just leave an emptiness about the whole affair."*

*"I found one thing very difficult - when I was trying to tell friends about what happened, they didn't like the negativity, people don't like negativity - I felt very alone in the information around Marmion."*

Whilst many of the people who had been abused found the support of their peers invaluable, some were overwhelmed by the WhatsApp group interactions.

*"I didn't like the WhatsApp groups, there were too many tangents and people I didn't trust in them."*

*"Not very helpful, these are people I crossed paths with fifty years ago, I don't need new friends."*

*"If I was brutally honest, I'm sorry I got involved, I got so upset. The WhatsApp group was very difficult."*

Another past pupil said that he found therapy and this process useful, but it had been so difficult for him, he would have preferred for none of this to have come out. He said perhaps he would feel different later.

## WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE IT A BETTER PROCESS FOR YOU?

While most past pupils that answered this question told us that the process was as good as it could have been at this stage, one past pupil felt that it had been very difficult to get to the full truth of matters.

*"What would have made it a better process? Not to have to always negotiate a more truthful rendition of the story. And, in the end, without complete success."*

Another said,

*"Hindsight is great. Given the complexities around the issue of child abuse I think the process went as well as could be expected."*

One past pupil thought that an advocate could assist the steering group who had taken on such a lot.

*"The steering group took on a lot... Would an advocate that was strictly on the side of the victims have helped the steering group?"*

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT FOR YOU NOW?

Past pupils related to us that this restorative process has made a difference, both positive and negative. For some, being able to talk about what happened to partners, children, friends, and former past pupils broke the self-imposed silence brought about by shame, sadness and self-blame that many absorbed. For others, the difference was more negative. Having the past brought up resulted in difficulties and disturbances whereas they had been able to compartmentalise and suppress what happened so they could get on with their lives. Other comments are outlined below.

*"I am someone who has released himself from a certain imprisonment of experience. I engaged with the nature of the process which has been supportive and helpful and in the course of the dialogue have stepped back from self-blame... facing life with new vigour. Would I have the same sense of vigour if I had not engaged in this process? I don't think so."*

*"This has been put behind me, it meant that I was right for once in my life, I never felt I could say what happened... It lightened a load I didn't know I had, I'm able to be more myself."*

*"I think my wife is delighted that something I have spoken about to her has been aired in public and she takes consolation from that."*

*"There's one guy, we've become close, a kindred spirit, the fact that my wife knows. I'm not afraid to look at myself in the mirror. It's not your fault... the letter was a big thing... it was very meaningful and gave me some degree of closure."*

*"My partner would say things are different... better than the beginning and the counselling has given us the opportunity to thrive."*

*"I want you to know I'm in a better place now and I've spoken to some classmates. My wife knows and I'm not afraid to look at myself in the mirror. He was the predator, and I was the prey. I don't blame myself anymore."*

*"Now I have the ability to hold down a job... I'm doing something that I love... there's a bit of spark in me again that's back in me after a long, long time... I've gone back to swimming again... It could be described as carrying a massive load around your neck like a big medallion and now it's gone."*

*"What is different is everyone saying the same thing and everyone being supportive and not going through it on your own. Nobody wanted to say it to parents and to friends... because you couldn't stand up to someone and you felt ashamed."*

*"My family have noticed a difference."*

*"Hasn't been great. Can't sleep. Health has suffered recently. Initially it was good to discuss with facilitators... I've been prescribed medication so need to start the programme."*

*"I have been disturbed over the last eighteen months but am reaching a new balance/equilibrium, which is better than where I was at the outset."*

One past pupil described where he is now.

*"I hope, despite what I am, despite what I have done, and worse, what I haven't done, that God might see me and love me anyway."*

## MOVING BEYOND THIS PROCESS

We asked past pupils to imagine what it will be like for them when this is over, with no more updates or documents to be reviewed and the process has been dealt with. Below are some of their comments.

*"I think we are still just beginning the journey in terms of learning and applying the lessons and we may never succeed if this toxic culture continues to be pinned on one bad apple or flawed man."*

*"I think people want to draw a line under it now and retreat into normal life with a few safety nets. It would be interesting to see how people are in a year's time. Life goes on in a different way after something like this happens. A process takes time to work through people."*

*"I'll wave goodbye readily with joy to the whole process."*

*"That it won't be forgotten about."*

*"I look forward to looking back on this."*

*"I'm interested to see how people are in a year's time."*

## WHAT IS OUTSTANDING FOR YOU NOW?

Past pupils stressed the need for the Order to continue reaching out to those who were harmed by Joseph Marmion but have not yet come forward. Others wanted to know what can be done to ensure safety for children in schools in authoritarian and hierarchical countries. Others wished that what became available to them would be available to past pupils abused by other priests in other Jesuit schools. An overriding concern expressed by many was that what happened would neither 'be forgotten or repeated' in the years to come. Some past pupils said that the full truth had not yet been acknowledged.

*"While it is vivid in my mind, it is such a long time ago, and so much has happened since then in everybody's life that there is probably a strong opinion that it is in the past and should be left alone. But bear in mind the silent sufferers who did not come forward for a variety of reasons. They need to be consoled."*

*"My overriding concern remains one of how we can be sure something like this can never happen again, in Jesuit schools, and indeed more generally. I say this in part that, thanks to your work, we now have good processes in place to help those who are victims and who have suffered in the past and are still suffering."*

*"The truth, the truth, the truth!"*

*"Glaring for me is that this process is not available for other victims of other Jesuits. It can't happen without naming people with credible allegations against them. It hurts me that what I benefited from has not been available for other people."*

*"It is totally unjust that the Jesuits can hide behind one man and convince the public there weren't others. This has been hidden for years. So, a much wider inquiry on broader themes in which the whole truth is revealed would have been a much more complete process."*

*"Your examination of events is a once-off. It will never happen again because we are too old, and it is too long ago. Your brief is Marmion. I feel that it is unfair to those of us who suffered from other Jesuits because it implicitly exonerates others who did dreadful things."*

*"Nothing has been achieved in the real world, only on paper."*

*"One thing I would like to address is the Obituary of Joseph Marmion in the Clongownian... It can only be described as 'glowing' and is a complete distortion of the facts. Especially as now the Jesuits have acknowledged that he was an abuser. I would like to suggest that the Jesuits set the record straight regarding Marmion, and that a retraction or correction of the Obituary should be published in the Clongownian."*

A number of past pupils who had been abused by Joseph Marmion expressed the hope that Jesuits would examine their own institutional culture and make the changes necessary within their Order.

*"I believe the issues with the exercise of clerical authority, conflicts of interest, lack of separation of powers, a dependence on individuals as against structures etc. should be well understood by now and should now give way to external, independent oversight and regulation which good governance is based on."*

*"Wider governance is needed. Until they recognise and act on the fact... the only way they can actually truly address the issues is to have external oversight... but I'm not sure that they've really embraced that. All their efforts will fail without it in extreme cases."*

Some past pupils expressed concern around safeguarding and other practices dealing with safety and wellbeing of children in Jesuit schools, both in Ireland and across the globe. They entreated the Jesuit Order to address that issue at the highest levels and to ensure that the role of confession was safeguarded against abuse.

*"I feel that what has happened here could happen in the developing world, that in hierarchical churches overseas and other organisation, this is waiting to happen. I did some work with NGOs in Africa, but the context was there. They had a lot of power. Saving people off the streets and meeting vulnerability with power."*

*"I am not satisfied to focus on one perpetrator and instead seek lessons that are based on the situations such as confession that create risks for priests and those innocently put in their care. The more I have looked at confession, the concept of a good confession, and the process of a priest guiding 'children' to examine their conscience, the more I think the process is inherently abusive and should be abolished."*

## SUMMARY

The ability to be heard, believed, and listened to enabled many past pupils break a 40-year silence on what they had gone through and how it had impacted their lives. While most past pupils appreciated the late, but swift, response of the Jesuits within the process, there was also anger and sadness as to why it had taken so long to reach out and help past pupils when doing it 20 years earlier would have made a significant difference to their lives.

Three past pupils described the process as defective and questioned its impartiality. Most past pupils valued the support, the ability to be heard and to have their needs noted and the effort made to meet them. They valued the peer support that emerged and the tenacity of the Past Pupils Steering Group who worked on their behalf. There was an appreciation expressed for the leadership of the organisation and the willingness of the Order to make the supports and redress offered as painless as possible.

Concern was expressed for the safety of children living in countries under authoritarian or hierarchical power structures as well as the potential for confession to be used as a vehicle for abuse. There was also concern for continued outreach to those who had not come forward to avail of services. While many past pupils were concerned for their peers, they were also adamant that the culture and the governance of the Order needed to change both for the Jesuits themselves and for their current and future missions.

Another past pupil expressed the need to make 'a Catholic ethos' a reality - something that is seen and experienced and that this process is not the 'end point' but just the beginning.



## CHAPTER 8: THE DIFFERENCE THE RESTORATIVE PROCESS HAS MADE TO JESUITS

We wanted to find out how the Jesuits who took part in the restorative process since April 2021 had experienced the interventions. We had engagement from 55 Jesuits over that time via either in-person meetings, group encounters, email, or phone contact. 12 Jesuits met with 27 past pupils who had experienced harm by Joseph Marmion and a number of them, such as the Provincial or the former Headmaster, met certain past pupils multiple times. Over 90% read the testimonies of past pupils and drafts of the restorative documents as they emerged.

Clearly, while being members of the Jesuit Order, these men, like the past pupils who were harmed, are not a homogenous group. Each person has differing experiences, perceptions, views and needs. We asked a series of questions, similar to those we asked past pupils who were impacted or experienced abuse from Joseph Marmion. Of the 55 people we had contact with, 41 responded to the evaluation and shared their experiences with us. As said already, we were very aware that the term 'negative and positive feedback' is in itself subjective; that was not our intention. Our aim at all times was to create the conditions that allowed every individual we engaged to find their own 'truth', one that we made no judgement about.

The questions we posed followed a restorative line of inquiry. These included:

- What has this process been like for you?
- What has been helpful?
  - Engagement with restorative facilitators?
  - Meeting with fellow Jesuit(s)?
  - Reading the victims testimonies and the draft restorative document?
  - Meeting with victims?
- What has not been helpful?
- What difference has this made so far, if any?
- What would have made it a better process for you?
- What have you learned?
- What is outstanding for you now?

The responses received were from individual Jesuits who gave their own personal accounts of what the process had been like for them.

### WHAT HAS THIS PROCESS BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?

Jesuits responded by saying that they came face-to-face with the abuse experienced by past pupils initially through media reports and subsequently either through meeting those impacted or by reading the regular documented accounts of their experiences.

While the majority of the Jesuits described the experience as 'difficult and raw', 75% thought that the whole experience was positive for a number of reasons. They hoped that the process was helpful to those who were abused and appreciated the honesty of the process.

Understanding what those who experienced harm went through was important, while difficult to face. All wished to support those that have been harmed in whatever way they could. They appreciated being able to discuss the cultural conditions that led to what happened. They also saw value in being able to respond to criticism about their organisational culture and the failure of leadership over a 40-year period to understand and publicly acknowledge the long-term impact of that abuse on past pupils.

Although challenging, they also expressed appreciation for an organised channel such as the restorative process which gave them the chance to 'face into the problem'. They also really valued the opportunity to engage directly with members of their own Order and the Jesuit leadership to discuss the legacy of the abuse, the institutional failures and their support for past pupils who experienced that abuse. The process was valued as an opportunity to express their anger, fear and distress at the harm caused to young people, and to support the leadership shown by the Provincial in putting the needs of those impacted at the centre.

Two Jesuits felt that the process was too 'drawn out' and suggested that expectations could have been set earlier in terms of what a restorative process could realistically deliver. Another Jesuit favoured a more independent process.

*"The process has been a real eye-opener for me... revealing the reality of the hidden horror and suffering of the victims as well as the depravity/sickness of the perpetrator(s). I came to feel a bit like an innocent-abroad unaware of the possibility of anything like such abuse in 'my back yard'. Again, knowing the names made it very real for me."*

*"The initial challenge I – and probably most – experienced in engaging in this process was one of feeling very vulnerable, profoundly ashamed, and the desire to run and hide. These feelings did not go away, but thankfully the process you were engaging with helped me to move beyond simply that and take small steps forward."*

*"Pretty tough at times but was gratified to be able to answer questions and support those that had been hurt. It helped me to 'get into myself', it was late when I really learned the impact of all of this on those that were abused and what I didn't do later. Over the years I wasn't busy considering the victims so when nothing was done in the 90s, I wasn't harassing the organisation to do something about the victims."*

*"Humbling for Province and myself. Scouring, heart-breaking, appalling."*

*"The process has been profoundly unsettling. I found myself having to deal with a reality which is deeply challenging. I have now spent over sixty years of my life in the Society which I love."*

*"My direct involvement in the process has been very limited – just one meeting with other Jesuits in Milltown Park and reading documentation related to the process."*

*"Very important meetings. Sense of courage and magnanimity demonstrated on the part of those that were abused."*

*"The documents were stark, explicit, clear. To hear the experiences of those abused brought shame and sorrow."*

*"I am most grateful that this opportunity was offered to us to talk to one another and hear from others under your guidance. I am made to wonder how a culture of corporal punishment became so entrenched in some of our schools."*

*"I found the process difficult but necessary to face the facts, some of which I only learned at meetings."*

Younger Jesuits described having to live with the legacy of abuse and 'carry the can' for the failure of those in leadership at the time to address the issue, particularly in the 1990s. They also acknowledged that the Order that was being described in this account bore no resemblance to their experience today.

*"This is not the Society I joined."*

*"It was surreal in that I was looking at a part of recent Jesuit corporate history that I wasn't around for. The Society I joined is very different."*

*"Difficult at times but overall, it is the story of an institution that is foreign to my experience. Despite this, there is anger towards those individuals not only for the damage they did to children who carry a wound into adulthood, but also because I and current Jesuits have to 'carry the can'. This anger is also felt towards those in leadership who failed to deal with such individuals historically and especially great disappointment for the failures of the 1990s."*

*"As an outsider, both from the generations involved, being younger, and from the cultural context, being from outside Ireland – the entire process left me with a sense of the 'surreal', as if I walked within a dream, a nightmare, not my own."*

Jesuits talked about their reaction to engaging directly with impacted past pupils and the reputational damage to the Order that many had given their lives to.

*"Difficult and richly rewarding. Difficult because of such raw and direct exposure to the suffering of survivors and victims, the terrifying spectre of reputational damage and the calling into question of the basic goodness of the Jesuit project."*

*"The process has helped me to face into the painful issues around the abuse suffered by the survivors. It has helped me to face into it in solidarity with others rather than doing so alone. It has helped to keep the focus on the survivors rather than on myself or on us while at the same time having the opportunity to discuss how we as a group have been affected by the situation."*

*"Listening to the victims and being supportive – that they were being believed and that I repented of the fact that I was wasn't able to help them earlier."*

Many Jesuits live in local small communities and while there are invitations to some larger inter-community and province gatherings, they explained it is not usual to meet and discuss between the smaller communities in the way they have done during these processes. They expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to gather as 'Jesuit brothers' from different communities in Ireland and abroad. They appreciated the chance to talk and hear from each other about what happened, why it happened, how they were impacted by it, and to discuss the institutional failures that enabled it to happen and prevent anything being done about it until now. They were grateful to be able to support meeting the needs of past pupils and to advocate for change. One Jesuit wondered if they shared 'what they really thought'.

*"Richly rewarding: the open and honest conversations with fellow Jesuits which were deeply satisfying; the encounter with survivors and victims, their anger, their generosity."*

*"This was wonderful and quite unique in my experience of Jesuits together. I have never heard my Jesuit brothers speak to each other with such openness, personally and generously, truly a substantive turning point in our journey."*

*"Full sharing of information. Invitation to the various meetings and being asked to play a part in the process."*

*"Good sharing/listening by all concerned: facilitators, Provincial and brethren."*

*"The openness and honesty on all sides. The discovery that there was trust in the shared meetings. The valuable insights about how we live together which were articulated in the Jesuit group."*

*"The meetings with other Jesuits were a very positive experience."*

*"The confidence and optimism about the future generated by the quality of exchange and willingness to share."*

Jesuits commented on the importance of the process being conducted by independent 'outsiders'. The process by the facilitators was described as well-organised, while for two Jesuits it was described as 'too long drawn out.'

*"It has given me certainty that a restorative process was being put in place by two independent experts. These experts were able to set their own agenda and fulfil it without the interference of the Jesuits. They could deal independently with the survivors and confidentially assess their needs and ensure that they were put in place quickly."*

*"For the most part, this process has operated (and necessarily so) independent of me and my everyday life, even though I am aware that it is happening."*

*"Overall, the process has been a well-organised experience that demanded a good deal of reading of documents as we went through the restorative process."*

*"It has been painful and shaming. And it has been a wonderful expression of my/our desire to be as generous and forthcoming in our response as we can be."*

*"Overall, very positive. Honest engagement on all sides."*

*"Too long- drawn- out and would have benefited from setting expectations of what this process could deliver earlier on."*

*"This process is just part of a process, it is not the end point, but a middle point or even a starting point."*

## **WHAT HAS BEEN HELPFUL?**

Jesuits valued the leadership shown by their Provincial when he named the abuser publicly, and the ability to hear the stories of survivors of the abuse which were recounted explicitly. They also valued the open conversations with their Jesuit colleagues on institutional failures. They indicated the work of the facilitators in enabling difficult conversations to be important.

*"The documents about the facts of the matter, the common reflections with other Jesuits, individual meetings with the facilitators, meetings with victims, efforts by Jesuits to change our procedures."*

*"The most helpful moment was the moment the Provincial undertook the step to proactively seek out and find Joseph Marmion's victims by naming Joseph Marmion publicly."*

*"Listening to the victims and being supportive – that they were being believed and that I repented of the fact that I was wasn't able to help them earlier."*

*"The overall process has been helpful. A sense that, however awful confronting the legacy is, there will be a freedom going forward. Hearing Jesuits in a restorative circle speak of their shame should create a humbler Society. Hearing survivors tell of their experience has been a privilege and a powerful motivator to ensure a genuine culture of care in our works and in our interpersonal relations. Hearing how the process has helped survivors overcome the past affirms the rightness of the decision."*

*"There were many conversations, formal and informal, which took place after that initial gathering, and I believe this was a genuine fruit of this initial meeting."*

*"Reading the testimonies of the survivors and the draft restorative document was also most helpful, even if also quite difficult and upsetting."*

A number of Jesuits commented on the facilitated and non-facilitated meetings with past pupils who had been abused that they participated in.

*"One-to-one meetings with restorative facilitators were helpful as they brought up points that I might not have considered deeply – they were also a kind of a preparative interview for meeting those who had been harmed and which helped at times."*

*"Meetings with students was helpful and I hope it enabled me to show a certain empathy particularly for the students who were abused. Those that weren't abused, I hope I was able to tell them that I think they did what they should have done."*

*"Most helpful of all for me was a single, non-facilitated meeting with an individual from the victims group. I was deeply moved by his generosity and by his concern to seek justice with fairness and love. I had a deep sense of the presence of God in that meeting and it taught me so much."*

One Jesuit heard the testimony of a past pupil who had been harmed but who did not wish to speak directly to the Jesuits. This testimony was read to the Jesuit by the facilitator.

*"I had just one one-to-one meeting with a facilitator. Again, while it was not a pleasant situation to have to face... it was never anything less than a supportive and compassionate experience for me... thanks to the facilitator."*

*"Honesty and neutrality of the facilitators was very helpful."*

Jesuits spoke strongly about the value of coming together with their fellow Jesuits and colleagues to hear about the long-term impacts of the abuse on past pupils and to have a frank and open discussion about their Order, its shortcomings and how to address them.

*"The facilitated day along with fellow Jesuits in November 2021 was especially helpful as was the facilitated meeting with fellow Jesuits on September 26, 2022. Reading the testimonies of the survivors and the draft restorative document was also most helpful even if also quite difficult and upsetting."*

*"There were valuable insights about how we live together which were articulated in the Jesuit group."*

*"Meeting, hearing and being listened to by fellow Jesuits that we were able to be honest about significant shortcomings in the way the Society has functioned at times... and about the significant inadequacies in our structures and ways of proceeding."*

*"Feedback from facilitators after meetings and being kept up to date on what is happening."*

*"The documentation (feedback from those affected by the abuse and from Jesuits in positions of authority and/or involved in Belvedere at the time) has been both informative and painful to read."*

*"The honesty... calling a spade a spade... I found that very helpful."*

*"The process was indeed helpful for my own integration into the history of the Society and to my understanding and growing compassion for those who have suffered. What truly matters is the feelings of those who suffered the hurt and hopefully it has been helpful for them."*

*"The group meetings with Jesuits I found really useful, grounding and healing."*

*"I have learned how much the Provincial and other Jesuit brothers have been involved with the process over the past eighteen months. I am deeply impressed by the commitment they gave in time and emotional energy to it all."*

#### **WHAT HAS NOT BEEN HELPFUL?**

*"Nothing to record. There was inevitably some initial tension, but this dissipated quickly."*

*"What has not been helpful has been the less than rigorous response of the Jesuits to the challenges posed by the abuse cases."*

*"The sense of far more numbers coming to light unexpectedly in the recent Irish Times disclosure, certainly far more than members of the community have been led to expect."*

*"The whole process has been helpful."*

*"I don't regard any aspect of the process as unhelpful, either for those affected or for the Irish Province. It could serve as a template for other Jesuit provinces."*

#### **WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE TO YOU SO FAR, IF ANY?**

*"It has heightened my awareness of the need to identify and eradicate institutional shortcomings that made abuse and/or its cover-up possible. But it is not yet clear to me what steps are necessary to achieve this."*

*"Life will never be the same again: innocence dashed. Embarrassed in front of friends and well-wishers. Shades of grey."*

*"The confidence and optimism about the future generated by the quality of exchange and willingness to share."*

*"It has made me more conscious of the legacy of pain and trauma carried by survivors into adulthood and the need to ensure a space for them to be received and heard."*

*'I think this process could provide a model for other Jesuit provinces.'*

#### **WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE IT A BETTER PROCESS FOR YOU?**

A small number of Jesuits said that a deeper exploration of the institutional failings and a study of the available research would have improved the process. Another Jesuit said that more information on the best available research on the causes of sexual abuse would have added to the process. Others thought that the ability to meet more of those who had been harmed would have made it a better process .

*"A clear focus by the Jesuits on finding the fault in our processes with a commitment to changing them."*

*"A closer examination of the causes of institutional failings that made both the abusive behaviour and its cover-up possible in the first instance."*

*‘If there had been greater in-depth engagement regarding what the best available research has to say about what lies behind sexual abuse and its effects, and if we had been provided with the full facts about the number of Jesuits who have allegations of sexual abuse against them... I shouldn’t have had to hear information of this kind in the Irish Times after being part of the restorative process.’*

*‘It would have been more complete if the extent of the overall problem had been indicated, and not left to the Irish Times to provide the first disclosure.’*

*‘I think that a meeting with some of the victims would have had a deep emotional impact on me.’*

## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Jesuits reflected on the dangers of institutional self-protection and ‘our litany of failures’ and were appreciative of the past pupil whose persistence resulted in the naming of Joseph Marmion publicly. They also reflected on the ongoing crisis of abuse within the Catholic Church and how this abuse was causing them to ‘live the cross’.

*‘Self-protection has been death for the past pupils and for us ourselves. We thank... the Provincial... and we thank one particular survivor for pushing us to go there. The process was a life-giving process for us all!’*

*‘The extent of the fragility in religious life.’*

*‘I was shocked by our litany of failures. The impression we had given ourselves was that we had done a great job in the area of safeguarding... we fooled ourselves and missed opportunities.’*

*‘I learnt that my view of the situation was very myopic. I could have done something like harassing the Provincials to do something... I learnt a fair amount myself reflecting on that further. I learnt that it only dawned on me later in the 90s.’*

*‘We have been taught to ‘live the cross’. The Provincial has set us on that path and we Jesuits are following along (some maybe reluctantly) and learning the value of moving into a space of vulnerability and stepping beyond ‘self-protection’.’*

*‘After three decades of revelations about abusive behaviour in Church-related institutions in Ireland and elsewhere, I can’t say that I learned anything new. But the documentation shared with us as part of the process brought the tragedy of abuse ‘closer to home’. I feel sad and angry, but appreciative of the fact that there is some effort at restorative justice, however belatedly.’*

*‘In the course of the process, I learned that my ...deceased older brother was a victim of abuse, in circumstances very similar to those described by former Belvedere students (rehearsals for an annual school musical). The effects on my brother were not unlike those described by Belvedere alumni. So, for me, this issue is intensely personal, not merely institutional.’*

## WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU NOW?

Helping those who were abused was the most important issue mentioned by Jesuits. They also recognised their own need for better communication and support for each other at a cross-community level, and one cited the need for a restorative process for the Jesuit Order itself.



*"The entire process convinced me beyond a shadow of a doubt that such things can never again be let to happen, and that the Society should not tolerate them and speak out right away. The culture of silence let the Devil do its work."*

*"What matters is to continue to walk alongside those who have been hurt such that healing must take place, and equally to not allow this to happen under any circumstance."*

*"What matters most now is that there be healing and justice for the survivors and that we all remain alert and vigilant to avoid abuse of those we serve going into the future. Our communities and apostolates need to be safe places for those we serve, and we must be proactive about promoting safeguarding."*

*"I am very grateful to the victims for bringing their experiences into the open, and in doing so challenging us to reflect on ourselves as we are and have been doing. Ironically, perhaps, they have done us a great service, painful and all though it might have been for us to do so."*

*"The question of how to address the issue of hidden victims of the abuse perpetrated by other Jesuits."*

*"Ensuring the structures are in place to act decisively and quickly to protect children at risk, and deal with Jesuits who we become aware are harming today."*

*"That justice be done, insofar as that is possible, so many years after the original abusive/criminal behaviour. Flawed institutional demands or requirements should never be allowed to outweigh personal moral/legal responsibility."*

*"To ensure that such an occurrence does not happen again we have to incarnate this (putting victims first) in the way we move forward in the years ahead."*

*"What is most important is to speak about abuse when it occurs, be transparent. Without this there will be no remorse or repentance, the personal corporate sin will fester, and the victim cannot begin to heal."*

*"Every time a survivor said something about the process, I felt affirmed: affirmed that the survivors were being helped, affirmed that we were correct in the manner in which we were addressing the undealt legacy of (our own brother!) Joseph Marmion."*

*"To play my part in healthy community living. To report anything suspicious. To pray for victims, perpetrators, and us all."*

*"I would probably like to have seen us begin to formalise a restorative process for ourselves into the future... always understanding that the specific restorative process appeared to be moving forward so positively, in general."*

*"We Jesuits have been forced to become more 'gospel compliant'. We have been badgered and challenged over a long period of time to face up to ourselves, to take the actions we have now taken and provide justice for the survivors."*

*"We need to have a less individualistic style of living... with proactive protection for our companions through a more supportive community living experience. and prayerful trust in God's care for the Church and the Society as true servants of all, especially those who are most in need of our care now."*

## WHAT IS OUTSTANDING FOR YOU NOW?

Issues for further consideration for Jesuits included a changing religious context in Ireland which includes dwindling vocations and a Catholic Church that is in need of reconciliation and renewal. There was a growing consideration of the complexity of naming other Jesuits accused of historical abuse and a call to address sexual abuse in society in general, whether in the family or in wider society.

*"Involving those abused in a long-term church restorative process not focused on victims but on the church itself."*

*"I would say we have a question to answer around other people... are we going to approach that or not... are we going to name them or will we let them rest in peace."*

*"That we keep faith on all sides and keep working to a conclusion as satisfactory as it can be, including successful and acceptable completion of the historical document."*

*"We live in a very different church and province now. And I am continually amazed at the amazing faith and trust so many people still have in those of us who are priests. But enormous damage has been done, and the church (by which I mean all believers) still has to learn how to be a different kind of organisation and to be a community of believers rather than a hierarchical and organised social structure."*

*"There is a whole story of child safeguarding that can't be told just yet in Irish Society. Child abuse is part of any society, some groups are scapegoated more than others. I wonder when it is possible, or when will it be ever possible, to try and tell the more complete story without being accused of denying the pain of victims, or denying that the church did not do well, or denying that the church with its high ideals should have done better."*

*"The question of how to address the question of hidden victims of the abuse perpetrated by other Jesuits. Ensuring the structures are in place to act decisively and quickly to protect children and risk and deal with Jesuits who we become aware of harming today."*

*"I do not want to lose the lessons learned from this process; I do not want to see us go back to a 'life as normal'. We have been led into a new place, a place of 'putting victims first', there can be no going back from putting victims first!!"*

## SUMMARY

The restorative process provided an organised channel that enabled Jesuits to hear what happened, to acknowledge what happened publicly and privately, and to try and atone for the abuse - recognising that it could never be made right. The public acknowledgment by the Order of the abuse caused by Joseph Marmion in the 1960s and 1970s let loose a cascade of anger and anguish, followed by stories of the abuse perpetrated, and the widespread impact on the past pupils that had been abused.

The poisoning of the present with the legacy of historical abuse left younger Jesuits 'carrying the can' for abuse that happened well before their time. The legacy of this historical abuse was a source of great sorrow to those we heard from and there was commitment to 'do what they could for the survivors', recognising that it could never be made right.

The Jesuits who participated in the restorative process challenged themselves, their leadership and the institutional failures, and committed 'to doing better.' It was also evident that they valued the opportunity to come together as colleagues, to speak about what happened openly, and there was a strong desire for that to continue. They appreciated the invitations to engage with each other in dialogue, with some

advocating for a greater need for more community cross-sharing with 'their brothers' so they could share their personal stories (some of whom were abused themselves as children), the chance to discuss their corporate failures, and their solidarity with those who were harmed in ensuring that they got whatever they needed to help their healing.

There was admiration for the current Provincial for making the decision to publicly acknowledge the abuse and to 'own it' corporately, recognising that this exerted a heavy toll on him at times.

Other questions mattered for Jesuits: the ongoing impact of abuse in the Catholic Church and whether the Society of Jesus could play a role in helping the Catholic Church in Ireland to move through and past the current crisis. Another expressed that view that the Order itself needed a restorative process. There was strong anger and incredulity expressed amongst others at having to learn from an Irish newspaper about further Jesuits who have been accused of abuse.

## CHAPTER 9 REFLECTIONS OF THE RESTORATIVE PRACTITIONERS

### INTRODUCTION

***“Why did we not raise the possibility that he was more than odd and difficult, something more than a complicated misfit? How did it never occur to us that he might be secretive and hidden because he had something to hide?” (Brody, 2022, p.155)***

This quote refers to a male teacher who abused large numbers of children in Canada. It could have been referring to Joseph Marmion and echoes the incredulity from both past pupils and Jesuits as to ‘how could we, or they, not know?’ This was the central question that past pupils struggled to have answered and the Jesuit Order struggled to answer for more than two years. To past pupils, the ‘dogs in the street knew’, therefore there had to be a ‘cover up’. For some, their questions were answered through this process, for others it is still unfinished business.

### A RESTORATIVE PROCESS

In a world where the predominant culture of dealing with harm and conflict is through formal and adversarial channels, a restorative approach can be difficult to comprehend. The formal approach asks what law was broken, who broke it and how should those who committed the harm be punished. A restorative approach asks *what harm was done and to whom, what is or what was the harm, what needs have arisen from the harm and how do we repair the harm* (Zehr, 2002). However, ‘repair’ does not mean making the harm dissolve or disappear. While the harm can never be undone, being believed and having the harm acknowledged is crucial for people who experienced harm. Holding those who are responsible for the harm to account, seeing them take responsibility and take meaningful actions to meet the needs of those who have been harmed is also seen as crucial. This is why a restorative approach can be seen as a *‘paradigm shift in the way that crime and wrongdoing is considered....[it] returns the focus to the harm done to individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live’* (Keenan, 2014, p.24).

This restorative process came about after the March 2021 public acknowledgement by the Jesuit Order of the harm caused by Joseph Marmion. This acknowledgement came about through the persistence of one past pupil who himself was abused by the priest. The ensuing expression of needs by abused past pupils to the Safeguarding Officer led to our engagement as independent restorative practitioners as described in chapter 1.

As best practice would suggest, we used a ‘victim-led’ process (Council of Europe, 2018) and closely followed the needs that past pupils identified in order to help them do what was necessary to move on with their lives. A restorative process stresses the need for accountability and where possible the healing of relationships, including, often, people’s relationship with themselves. It provides an organised channel where questions can be asked and answered, where challenges can be made and where some form of atonement can be engaged with.

The previous chapters have outlined the trajectory of events that took place in this restorative process including the private meetings with individual past pupils and individual Jesuits, the group meetings with past pupils, the group meetings with Jesuits and the meetings between past pupils and Jesuits both one-to-one and group.

They have outlined the development of the Past Pupils Steering Group and the ‘past pupils’ agenda’ which mirrored and added to the needs identified by those who were harmed after the public announcement in 2021. This work began and much of it was conducted through the latter half of the Covid19 crisis which

meant that many meetings and discussions were held online or in restricted conditions. While we appreciated the possibility of conducting the work through online channels, more face-to-face meetings would have been preferable.

## SHAME, TRAUMA, SILENCE AND POWER

Through the generous sharing of their stories, we have borne witness to the trail of destruction described by past pupils that was caused by the legacy of the historical physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse perpetrated on them. They reported low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, sexual difficulties, sleep disorders including nightmares, and other self-injurious or self-destructive behaviours - all known consequences of abuse of children (Briere & Elliott, 2003).

Past pupils' descriptions of the impacts of their abuse mirrors research on trauma as:

*"Overwhelming, unbelievable and unbearable... we suspend our sense of what is normal and accept that we are dealing with a dual reality: the reality of a relatively secure and predictable present which lives side by side with a ruinous ever-present past." (van der Kolk, 2014, p.195)*

Their experiences reinforced how abuse never acknowledged or spoken about at an early age can result in *the violation(s) becoming a deeply embedded trauma which results in a shame-based self, frozen in time.*" (Maté, 2022, p.30)

John Bradshaw describes two types of shame: healthy shame and toxic shame. Healthy shame is that which encourages us to do better, we feel shame for the act. With toxic shame, we feel shame for being irreversibly defective. Many past pupils have described this crippling and debilitating toxic shame they experienced to us in a way that mirrors the statement below by Kaufman.

*"Contained in the experience of shame is a piercing awareness of ourselves as fundamentally deficient in some vital way as a human being... People bearing trauma's scars almost uniformly develop a shame-based view of themselves at the core, a negative self-perception most of them are all too conscious of. Among the most poisonous consequences of shame is a loss of compassion for oneself." (Kaufman 1980)*

The different manifestations of toxic shame recounted by past pupils are reflected by a number of researchers in the field (Braithwaite, 1989, Nathanson, 1997). They described how shame was numbed, denied and resulted in withdrawal, acts of sabotage or acting out in seemingly 'shameless' ways.

At the time of the abuse, a culture of deference towards the Catholic Church permeated Irish life. Power dynamics were asymmetrical. Corporal punishment in schools was legal with violence and bullying commonplace. Past pupils told us they couldn't tell their parents, they couldn't tell their teachers and shame prevented them from telling their peers. This resulted in a silencing of their experiences, which were driven underground by power and authority resulting in confusion, shame and self-blame. This silence and silencing of people who had been harmed has been well documented. Decades after he had lived in Canada, Hugh Brody described his shock on finding out about the abuse of children by a teacher known to him that had taken place while he lived in the Arctic. Mirroring the response of Jesuits who told us that they had no idea about the sexual abuse that Joseph Marmion was inflicting on pupils he says *"There was also a shocking reality that I failed to see."* He went on to say:

*"In the early 1970s people did not think of priests, and still less schoolteachers, as possible sexual predators. It seems naïve in retrospect, or at least a sign of the times, to have failed to recognise that possibility... We lacked the knowledge, perhaps we even lacked the language, with which to raise the appropriate suspicions." (Brody, 2022, pp.155-156)*

The Jesuit Order in Ireland was experiencing a seismic shift in the 1970s. As we heard, there were internal struggles between some older Jesuits like Joseph Marmion and others who resented the changes taking place as a result of the Second Vatican Council and a younger cohort of Jesuits who were more focused on the social justice issues of the day. These struggles and tensions played out in their schools.

*“When priests committed abusive acts, they were often not reported at the time of the incident, not recognised by the abusers, peers or leaders, and when known were not dealt with in a way that helped victims recover from the resulting harm.” (Terry & Freilich, 2012, p.446).*

Further research undertaken reported that the impact of victimisation was not fully understood and that research on sexual offenders was in the preliminary stages of development. However, by the early 2000s reporting requirements for sexual abuse had changed subsequently and left many past pupils very angry with the failure of the Jesuit Order to reach out to abused victims earlier.

## SEXUALITY AND ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT OF PRIESTS WHO ABUSE

The topic of sexuality was largely conspicuous by its absence in discussions with the Jesuit Order in what happened, how it happened and why it happened. While beyond the scope of this document, the topic cannot be ignored because of the sexual nature of many of the crimes that had been committed.

Of those who did bring up the topic of sexuality, one Jesuit expressed the view that it was far easier for Jesuits to remain on an intellectual level and over control their emotional life especially anything around sexuality (page 36). Another agreed that the sublimation of sexual desire did not come easily highlighting the failure of Joe Marmion with disastrous consequences (page 107). It is widely acknowledged that sexuality is central to ‘being human’ which includes a healthy desire for connection, love, and intimacy. If those needs are not met and acknowledged in a healthy way, a sexual drive can be driven underground and risks becoming distorted and destructive.

In previous chapters, past pupils and Jesuits described a range of behaviours in Joseph Marmion which is compatible with research findings on priests who abuse children. The Loyola Study (Kennedy & Heckler 1971) noted that a large majority of American priests were psychologically immature, underdeveloped, or maldeveloped. Other studies pointed out abuse of children was most prevalent amongst priests ordained up to 1970 particularly those ordained in the 1940s and 1950s (Terry & Freilich, 2012). Numerous studies also recognised that mental health struggles, depression, anxiety and drug dependence, including alcohol, were very prevalent (Terry & Freilich, 2012). These behaviours were all spoken of over the course of this process in relation to Joseph Marmion. One past pupil, who had been abused by the priest and who went on to abuse children himself, told us he recognised Joseph Marmion was a person whose development had been arrested. He identified that his own sexual and emotional development had been interrupted and arrested as a result.

## THE PROCESS OF HEALING AND REPAIR

*“Storytelling is fundamental for healthy social relationships. To feel connected and respected we need to tell our own stories and have others listen. Having others listen to your story is a function of power in our culture. The more power you have, the more people will listen respectfully to your story. Consequently, listening to someone’s story is a way of empowering them, of validating their intrinsic worth as a human being.” (Pranis, 2001)*

Past pupils described to us how the restorative processes they engaged in enabled a level of healing to happen for many. Unfreezing a deeply embedded trauma is sensitive and takes time. Healing happens when people begin to reconnect with themselves and start to integrate what has happened to them into

one of the stories of their lives – not the only story - which begins to help them to live fully again, unencumbered by the past. We saw how healing was a process for people and developed over time.

Our role as independent restorative practitioners and the restorative process involved: building trust between us and the past pupils; building trust between us and the Jesuits; and facilitating engagement between Jesuits and past pupils so that past pupils could judge the extent to which they could trust or believe Jesuits. While we are not neutral to the fact that harm has happened, we are multi-partial in our role to ensure that everyone has a chance to listen and be heard.

The importance of dialogue cannot be underestimated and is summarised below. The use of written word, such as frequent updates on what was happening, also helped greatly. The evaluations from past pupils told us that dissemination of an earlier draft of this document was important in enabling them to trust us and have more understanding and trust of Jesuits in a lot of cases.

Past pupils have reported that breaking their self-imposed silence by speaking about the harm caused, in a trusted place to a trusted person or persons, has been very helpful. Past pupils were enabled to speak out, gain support from their fellow past pupils, their networks, and their family through the restorative processes. Some told their partners, children, and friends for the first time.

## APOLOGY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

An essential part of any restorative process where harm has happened is to develop accountability for the harm caused. It is also essential that any apologies given are meaningful and not given before the person or organisation understands the full impact of the harm.

Kay Pranis (Pranis, 2006) lists five levels or elements of sincere accountability that are part of any restorative process:

1. Acknowledgement that your actions caused harm.
2. Acknowledgement that you had agency in those actions.
3. Understanding the full impact of your actions on those impacted.
4. Taking steps to repair the harm and make amends.
5. Identifying patterns or cultural elements that caused the harm and taking steps to address them.

The public announcement naming Joseph Marmion as having abused children while in Jesuit schools acknowledged corporate responsibility by the Jesuit Order and they committed to try to make amends for what happened, recognising that what happened could never be made right. While this first acknowledgment and apology enabled people to come forward, it was taken with a 'grain of salt'. Many had not been in contact with a Jesuit for decades and they had no reason to trust or believe them. On the Jesuits' part, they were dealing with the shock of the scandal and the pain of hearing past pupils they knew speaking on the radio. At this stage they were grappling with Joseph Marmion as a 'sick man' and less engaged with collective Jesuit accountability.

As past pupils started to engage with the restorative facilitators some had already challenged the Jesuit Order to answer a number of questions. In July 2021, in response to these questions from past pupils, Provincial Leonard Moloney admitted that the Jesuit Order was accountable for '*a shocking level of Jesuit failure... to bring Joseph Marmion's wrongdoings to the attention of the civil authorities*' (page 1). He stated that '*there are no excuses... acknowledging fully the role we played as an Order in allowing this abuse to happen and go on for so long*'.

In addition, he acknowledged the failure of the Order:



*“not to actively seek out abuse victims, which left many carrying a wound they may have believed was unique to themselves and has had a profound impact on some past pupils' lives.”*

A further apology was made in November 2021 at a Belvedere union dinner when the Provincial again acknowledged their failure to act earlier and apologised for the *‘betrayal of those parents who made great sacrifices to send their sons to Jesuit schools’*.

The development of a Joint Past Pupil/Jesuit Steering Group, and the execution of actions by the group to meet the needs of past pupils who were harmed, demonstrated the four levels of accountability identified by Pranis. Outcomes included further answers to questions, a continuation of therapeutic supports, an efficient non-adversarial restitution scheme and the writing of a historical narrative that would serve as a record of what happened then and now. We undertook to record the restorative processes which was utilised in some form by 62 past pupils and 55 Jesuits over a period of more than two years.

As the Joint Steering Group developed a way of working and organised sub-groups and tasks, individual meetings took place between Jesuits and past pupils. These were mostly experienced as meaningful and healing. Group meetings that were held between Jesuits and past pupils were at times contentious, heated but were also compassionate and conciliatory. Past pupils who were present thought they were extremely worthwhile and helpful in understanding topics such as *‘how could they not know’*.

In July 2022, as a result of further engagement with past pupils, and as part of the answers to questions that were worked on by the Jesuit and Past Pupil sub-group, the Provincial Leonard Moloney issued a more explicit acknowledgment and apology (see appendix 3). This detailed more explicit accounts of Jesuit failures to act, particularly from the years 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2009.

The above summary indicates that at this stage the first four of Pranis’s elements of accountability have been reached. The levels of engagement and processes deepened the levels of accountability reached. Attempts to include the fifth element are noted below.

Facilitated group meetings took place between over 50 Jesuits. Through meetings, reading the testimonies of, and discussing challenges made to them by past pupils, their understanding of the nature, extent and impact of the abuse and its consequences became more deeply known and felt. This moved them to a unified desire to do what they could to support and enable the past pupils to heal.

The fifth element Pranis speaks of, ensuring that what happened could never happen again, had begun during these discussions. The Jesuits spoke about their shame and distress at the governance and leadership of their Order that had been so defective and caused harm. Jesuits told us that being challenged about the culture within the Order was painful at times. They began to challenge each other as a collective to discuss what had to be changed in order to ensure this didn't happen again. There was a call within the Jesuit meetings *‘to face into the problem and not go into institutional or self-protection mode’*. Certain commitments were made around changes in management, governance, formation processes and Jesuit community living that need time and energy and focus to deliver.

Commitments were given during meetings with past pupils and Jesuits to explore issues such as *‘confession as a site of situational risk’* and possibilities of sharing information about credibly accused priests.

A number of apologies were given by the Provincial, Leonard Moloney. Each one was more explicit about the collective responsibility of the Order and its failure to act in the best interest of those who were harmed on specific occasions when they could have done so. Later apologies were also given in a climate where trust had been built by the Order and they had been seen to act and were therefore more credible.

To the past pupils, the apologies increasingly met the criteria of what constitutes a worthwhile apology: that of acknowledgment, affect and vulnerability (Schneider, 2000). In the case of Joseph Marmion, the Jesuits recognised their responsibility for the harm caused in making certain decisions and not making others. They expressed regret and shame, and took action to demonstrate it, and they showed vulnerability in knowing that they couldn't undo the harm but could offer some form of recompense to acknowledge it.

*“Where a serious injury has been done, an offer of reparations may accompany the apology. It is crucial, though, that the person apologizing recognize that there is truly nothing s/he can offer tangibly that will suffice for the damage done.” (Schneider, 2000)*

## ENSURING WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE COULD NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN

Both past pupils and Jesuits spoke about the importance of ensuring that what happened before to children could never happen again. They also wanted to know how such abuse could be prevented in countries where the power dynamics were different to those in the western world.

Jesuits and past pupils spoke of the cultural conditions that had enabled Joseph Marmion to continue his cycle of abuse over such a long period. They spoke of the changes that had taken place since then and what remained to be dealt with to ensure that this could not happen again anywhere. They also spoke of the governance failures of the Jesuit Order to deal with the abuse in a way that promoted healing and demonstrated accountability.

Jesuits spoke of the needs for external oversight and the inclusion of lay people, particularly women in the running of and development of the organisation. This is mirrored in the CIASE report which highlighted the systematic nature of the abuse crimes committed and the structural factors that inhibited safety and helping victims who had been abused (CIASE., 2021). Recommendations included the importance of safeguarding and prevention being central to church policy as well as facilitating reparation for victims along with following up with perpetrators. It emphasised the need for religious congregations to take short- and long-term responsibility for questioning governance and ways of life on an ongoing basis and the necessity to work with lay people, women, along with others in public institutions such as the justice system and civil society to enable distance from and oversight of institutions (CIASE., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

This document has endeavoured to record this restorative process over a two-year period. However, the process of healing is not concluded for those that were harmed and for some it may not even have begun. For those who were harmed, originally by Joseph Marmion, and afterwards by the non-action of those in the Order who knew 'enough' at the time to stop it, this remains an ongoing source of pain.

What we heard through the evaluations undertaken in late 2022 and early 2023 was that past pupils were largely satisfied with the process they engaged in for almost two years. They valued the regular communication from the facilitators through the updates sent out and the dissemination of the draft accounts of the meetings with past pupils, Jesuits and between past pupils and Jesuits.

For many past pupils, the opportunity to be heard, to be believed, to have their experiences documented, to have their questions answered, to have access to ongoing therapy and to have financial restitution reassured them that the Jesuit Order accepted responsibility. While the process did not answer every need, there was a sense that it had gone a 'long way' towards meeting most of them. Many expressed a wish that it would now stop and allow them to get on with their lives.

For those Jesuits who now live with the knowledge that the Order they love, and have given their lives to, could have done something earlier is also a source of great pain. The process of healing began for them with accepting responsibility and accountability and listening to hear rather than to defend or explain. It continued with the deeply disturbing and explicit accounts of the past pupils who laid their hearts and minds bare for them. These accounts and the face-to-face encounters have had the greatest impact on the Jesuits we engaged with. It also raised further questions for the Jesuit Order: the naming of other Jesuits who had abused and were not named publicly, and the situational risk for children globally, posed by using confession for abusive purposes. They have also been challenged by past pupils and each other to explore further external processes in relation to governance and oversight.

At different times throughout this process, we heard a sense of spiritual and faith loss because of the abuse that happened. Described by one past pupil as being *'deprived of a relationship with God'* while spiritual direction was witnessed by others as a perversion. This loss was also confirmed by Father Hans Zollner SJ<sup>18</sup>, who described how the wound and subsequent trauma caused by abuse can impact hugely and weigh heavily upon the core of a person's spirituality and lead to a broken life of faith and a lack of trust in God (Zollner 2018). Therefore, he emphasises the importance for the Catholic Church of listening, safeguarding, and accompanying people who have been abused by members of their church. The past pupils in this process by and large acknowledged the efforts of the Jesuit order in listening and trying to respond to their needs. Creating the conditions for cultural change within the Jesuit Order while dealing with the legacy of past abuse will require 'a not forgetting' of what has been learned from the pain of those that suffered the most, the past pupils as well as the contribution that the Irish Province could usefully now make to issues of abuse globally.

When speaking to Catholic priests on sexual abuse in the church, Zollner acknowledged that there is 'abuse fatigue' but warned members of the Catholic Church of the need to *"keep yourself awake and look around even in places where you think everything is ok....[because] we will have to continue living with this very uncomfortable area of our lives."* (Zollner, 2022) Furthermore, he said,

*'You [members of the Catholic Church] won't be able to do away with it once and for all. With all our safeguarding measures, you won't eradicate it completely. It's impossible...because we continue to do evil things, despite the Gospel, despite the law, even if we have our own conscience, we act against it.'*

A restorative process is by no means an easy option for anyone. We can only thank the courage of the past pupils and Jesuits for their strength and vulnerability. The ability of past pupils to focus on the well-being of their peers over their own well-being was inspirational to see.

We thank you all.

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Zollner, SJ is a German Jesuit priest, theologian and psychologist. He is Director of the [Institute of Anthropology, Interdisciplinary studies on human dignity and care for vulnerable people](#). (IADC) of the [Pontifical Gregorian University](#) which provides training and research in safeguarding globally. Recognised as a pioneer in safeguarding, he has recently been appointed as consultant to the Diocesan Office for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons of the Diocese of Rome.

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### APPENDIX 1: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE IRISH JESUIT COMMUNITY

19 April 2021

My name is Donal Ballance and, along with other children who attended Belvedere College, I am a victim of sexual abuse committed by Joseph Marmion SJ during the 1970s. After a great deal of thought, I brought a complaint to your institution in February 2019 and asked that Joseph Marmion's name and crimes be published, an initiative that came to fruition in March 2021. I am glad that the institution had the courage to allow this to happen and I believe Leonard Moloney SJ deserves great credit for acting on something that should have been acted on many years ago.

I have learned over the past twenty-seven months something of how your institution deals with a complaint. My experience has certainly seen compassion and concern, but it has also taught me that despite the learnedness, devoutness, and commitment to reflection, there is an aloofness, almost a detachment, in your community's reading or interpretation of the Joseph Marmion story. I believe this explains, at least partially, the reason why not a single Jesuit in the 50-year history of this matter has spoken up until now to redress the terrible crimes which were perpetrated by Joseph Marmion against children in Jesuit schools.

I am not suggesting there was a deliberate intent to conceal Joseph Marmion's crimes or to shield him from justice, and that is not my motivation in writing this letter. I am suggesting that something prevailed within your Order which prevented Joseph Marmion from being exposed as a paedophile, and therefore prevented victims from being able to come forward. This omission, despite multiple clear opportunities for correction over many years, questions whether it is indicative of a complicit pattern of behaviour. I believe it is not just the responsibility of the current Provincial to answer this question on your behalf, it is the responsibility of your entire community to answer it directly to the victims. Therefore, I have asked for Leonard Moloney's support to write and ask you to reflect on how you may have played a part in propagating or accepting a culture in your institution within which this abuse could have occurred.

This is not a question about whether you were a contemporary of Joseph Marmion and may know something relevant, nor is it a question about whether you were aware of the rumours about him. It is a question about the culture of loyalty or obedience or silence that could and did lead to complicit behaviour within your community. I know little about the training and discipline required to become a Jesuit, but it is my contention that somewhere within that framework, there is a flaw that allowed a man such as Joseph Marmion to become a priest, to abuse children sexually and emotionally and then, having been caught and recognized for what he was, to continue in active ministry to the end of his life.

From 1943 until 2000, little was done by the Jesuit Institution to stop him, and the question is not so much 'why not', it is more a question of how such a catastrophic failure could have occurred around one man under the noses of so many right-thinking people. When we talk about the catastrophic failure of oversight in the corporate world, we always find in the aftermath that it was the prevailing culture that caused it. I believe that, if given the same scrutiny, we would find this also to be the case with the Irish Jesuits.

Despite the statement and apology from the institution, and despite the restorative processes being planned, I do not believe the institution has yet grasped the gravity and enormity of what happened, nor do I feel this event will change your perception of your institution unless you are prompted to look at it in a different way. While Joseph Marmion may indeed have been an aberration, he was also the product of a system and culture that gave him free rein to abuse, browbeat, bully, and belittle many around him with

little or no restraint from his peers. So, as we prepare for a restorative process, my question for you is whether that system and culture has changed sufficiently from 1977 to 2021 to genuinely grant the Order a leadership role in a restorative process?

To answer this question, we would have to look at each inflection point in the past fifty years, those occasions when, given the right investigation, the right discernment, and the right decision, the graph might have changed trajectory. What we see is that the curve never changed. It just continued on a smooth plane from the complaints in 1978 and continued right through to the complaints in 2000, 2002 and 2019. Nothing in that time changed other than the processes required by new legislation, which in themselves should have been a catalyst for transparency. The curve finally changed trajectory in 2021 with the publication of the statement, but the pressure to change it came from the outside and I believe the curve would have continued on a smooth plane forever if it had not.

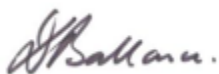
To challenge what I am saying would be to contend that the culture of the past fifty years has changed, and that candour and transparency are now as much a part of your culture as reflection and discernment. However, if it is that your institutional culture has not changed substantially in the past fifty years, then complicity and secrecy and silence are all still prevailing factors in how you try to provide leadership. You may feel justifiable pride that the Joseph Marmion statement is an act of leadership, and that is not disputed, but it is also an admission that complicity, secrecy, and silence still acted as powerful restraints at least until very recent times.

Some of you may find my letter arrogant and speculative, given I do not really know what it is like to become a Jesuit, or to walk in the shoes of a Jesuit every day. That would be a fair criticism. However, I can only offer that the many living victims of Joseph Marmion, and the fact that they have not been recognized until now, is strong evidence that at least some of my observations are accurate.

As we move toward some form of restorative justice, the process will undoubtedly include a meeting between the Jesuits and the victims. If that meeting were to take place today, I believe your institution would acknowledge the failure to properly address the complaints, with the attention focused on Joseph Marmion as the perpetrator, and a sincere regret for the poor decision-making. I would suggest that Joseph Marmion and the decision-making failure are perhaps just the symptoms of a deeper problem, a malaise which caused many good, devout men, over many years to remain complicit and to really view the Joseph Marmion story as no more than an unfortunate blot in an otherwise pristine copybook.

As we look to the necessary meetings between Jesuits and victims, I believe it is vitally important that you also meet among yourselves and decide whether you have the right to provide leadership in a restorative process, or if there is more self-examination to be done to prepare you for that leadership role. If you truly see yourselves as parts of a body bound together by a communion of minds and hearts, now is such an occasion to use that principle to review and understand the Joseph Marmion story in all its truth and rawness, and to know and to understand the part you may have played, however small, in letting it happen in the first place, or in allowing it to fester for so long.

Sincerely,



---

Donal Ballance



## APPENDIX 2: RESPONSE OF IRISH JESUIT TO OPEN LETTER BY FORMER PAST PUPIL

Dear Donal,

I write in the stark awareness that we Jesuits have failed you miserably and that we need to be brought through a process of systemic change. *'Guilty as Charged'* was my primary response to your letter. On my own behalf I apologize unreservedly for what was done to you by us and would wish to make amends, however inadequate, for our collective failure to safeguard you while you were in our care.

You have identified a serious shortcoming in what was - and no doubt to some degree remains - the Jesuit culture of the time. What follows here is not an attempt to explain away that shortcoming, that 'complicit pattern of behaviour' as you well put it, but to offer my own 'take' on that culture with the intention of shedding light on behaviour that most otherwise seem unintelligible to outsiders. If my comments are not helpful, please ignore them. I speak on my own behalf, other Irish Jesuits will, no doubt, have seen things somewhat differently.

It is coincidental but important to mention that I am currently making my way through *Derek Scally's The Best Catholics in the World: The Irish the Church and the End of a Special Relationship* (Sandycove, 2021). His theme is the responsibility that we Irish carry our own past: he notes that there is a 'continuum of knowing' from which we cannot escape, even though we might be late comers on the scene, and might have played no active part in the unfolding of the sordid events chronicled in the Ryan and Murphy Reports, in the Magdalen Homes, Mother and Child homes, etc. Simply by living in Ireland over the last 80 years, as I have done, entails appropriately owning the institutional wrongdoing of that time.

To identify myself: I was educated by the Christian Brothers in Saint Vincent's Glasnevin from 1948 to 1954. There I experienced my share of physical punishment, while my brother was beaten to the extent that my mother had to have him seen by a doctor: she protested to the principle, and the offending Brother was later sent away to another school.

### JESUIT FORMATION

I joined the Jesuits immediately after school in 1954 and was plunged into a new culture focused totally on the formation of young men to the Jesuit way of life. Every detail of the day was attended to, unquestioning obedience was the central virtue. Admonition was regularly employed to rid us of our external faults and our breaking of rules. The notion of 'breaking people down' in order to reform them as soldiers of Christ was sometimes used.

I was overawed by those in charge: I admired them but had no sense of friendship with them. Nor were friendships among the novices allowed. We always met for recreation in threes: this prevented '*particular friendships*' from emerging: it also meant that there was no opportunity to share confidences on how one was finding things or on what was going on. Doors had to be left open if visiting another person; We were forbidden to touch others, even in jest: this prevailed even in playing soccer.

Subjects on which we might talk in our formal recreation periods were limited: we were discouraged from talking about our 'past lives' so far as we had any at the age of 17. We were forbidden to talk of '*the contrary vices*' especially those contrary to chastity. Saint Ignatius, influenced doubtless by his own experiences, says '*what concerns the vow of chastity needs no explanation, since it is playing how perfectly it ought to*

*be observed, that is, by endeavouring to imitate angelic purity in cleanliness of body and mind' - Constitutions 547'. The centrality of sexuality to mature development was ignored, and in our formative years there was no opportunity to develop relationships with women: ours was a strictly male culture. Family visits were limited to three over the two years. Such were some of the flaws in the formation process which to a greater or lesser degree crippled our capacity to form right relationships.*

This distancing from corporal reality wove itself into our culture and has lasted a lifetime for many. While more recently we use of ourselves the term friends in the Lord, and live with a good degree of mutual charity, deep friendships are fewer than one would wish. Throwing the slogan that *"feelings don't count"*, and you can see how our emotional life was stunted. Capacity for good relationships were not developed, and that lack played itself out in a myriad of ways including our capacity for friendship with God and for a relationship with God. Even now while the sharing of faith is encouraged, few feel comfortable about engaging in it and owning their truth.

### ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES

The concept of distancing gives insights as to why we reacted as we did to the presence of Joe Marmion. We were taught not to interfere in the office or job of another, and to speak with superiors about difficulties rather than share them among ourselves - gossip was 'out' and was a failure in charity, for which the remedy was confession.

Neither the prevailing Jesuit nor Church culture was healthy in terms of psychosocial maturity. If formation is centrally about learning the art of good relationships, as I believe, our capacity adequately to address the difficulties raised by Joe Marmion's abrasive style was found wanting. *'What did you do with the knowledge you had?'* is a disconcerting question. I did nothing: I was never in close contact with him. But that is not an excuse. Likewise, as a Christian Brother's boy, I did nothing about Artane, which was presented in school and at home as the ultimate deterrent for bad behaviour. Given that respect for individual situations was commendably high, confidentiality was observed, and issues were addressed on a one-to-one basis, never in the group.

While I presume that Joe was admonished by superiors on occasion, such intervention was ineffective, so long as the issue was confined to his abrasiveness, criticisms, and capacity to rubbish students. Nor were the needed steps taken to ensure or restore the well-being of students who fell afoul of him. We felt powerless other than to speak in confidence to the local superior or provincial and leave the matter in his hands: we had access to the Provincial who met each individual once a year. We were not encouraged to speak out if we saw injustice. I was a consultor to the Provincial from 1974 to 1981, but I cannot recall any mention of Joe or any others who may have been involved in CSA. The agenda for Province Consults was set by the provincial with an eye to preserving secrecy about individuals as much as possible.

The Society of Jesus is not a democracy but strongly hierarchical: this I accept, but I have often mused on the failure in the province and across the Irish Church to support a stronger sense of individual social conscience, to say nothing of engaging in discernment among ourselves to work out what to do with knowledge that had come our way about someone's damaging behaviour.

### APPOINTMENT OF SUPERIORS

To turn to superiors of communities, whose role is central; Their training for the task was seriously defective: it seemed to be presumed that what was called "the state of grace" would give them the

required wisdom for their task. I was appointed the rector of Milltown at the age of 37 with no training that I can recall except a short course in management by objectives. But this community totalled over 80 men, each unique and with their own gifts and challenges. How should I lead them? How enable a large group of highly qualified men to provide support and pose a challenge to one another in those post conciliar years which were tumultuous with many men discovering themselves for the first time and trying to come to terms with their own deepest desires. The myths prevailed that having gone through 14 and more year's training, a Jesuit was prepared for anything (*paratas ad omnia*) - and so could be safely appointed to care for the brethren without further preparation. All of this despite evidence to the contrary. Ignatius used to say that the well-being of the Society depended on the quality of Superiors.

## TO BE A SINNER

In 1974 the 32 General Congregation was called. Because the issue of Jesuit self-identity was recurring, a decree was written which began with the words: *'what is it to be a Jesuit. It is to know that one is a sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus'*. I recall my reactions both shock and relief. The statement did something to puncture the lurking bubble of Jesuit pride which made us feel that we were indeed better than others. Our supporters connived with this: it raised their own status to be associated with men who would regularly be introduced as 'the distinguished Jesuit...' Adulation muddled the truth of what we really were.

Periodic re-evaluation of what is known within the society as our way of proceeding was mainly linked to our *raison d'etre*, which is mission, rather than addressing the culture binding the Order together. The term 'rugged individualism' was occasionally used to characterize the style of those for whom community life was merely a convenience to be used as they carried out their given mission, which might often be an individual rather than a corporate apostolate. Such a style meant in practice that the deviations of others were not their concern.

Our main focus has always been on mission, and the Order's achievements in this dimension have been considerable. Ignatius' desire was simply to help others in whatever ways were possible. But the busyness of mission can conceal the flaws in one's personal or relational life. We have sometimes been criticised as working for rather than with others; is constantly giving but without acknowledging our need to receive as serving generously but failing to form bonds of friendship with those we served. Such failures in relationships are critical, because the world of grace is rightly spoken of in terms of divine and human friendships, and these are not to be sealed off from one another.

## HAPPY? CONTENT?

Were the Irish Jesuits of Joe's time a happy group? Perhaps the term 'content' would suit better. We carried a number of unhappy men who for one reason or another stayed but became isolated. Could the community have done more to integrate them? I am not sure, given that in those years we saw community as being in service to mission, rather than offering a caring space for the brethren who might be out of step.

My own hopes have been abundantly fulfilled in this Society - through the trust, support, and encouragement I have received; through manifold expressions of love in service given and received; through being enabled to realize my God given potential; through engagement in the struggles of humankind across the world; through the sense of intimacy with God in Jesus Christ; through the long-life companionship of so many good men... It has been a rewarding and worthwhile life. I am more grateful to

Providence than I can say to have been spared those early fault lines that steadily developed in Joe Marmion and ended in a destructive life. I am also grateful not to have gone to school in Belvedere where it was offered to me as a better place than Saint Vincent's: I sense I'd have been one of his victims had our paths crossed.

When I was tasked over a number of years with the formation of scholastics and later of novices, I came to see that a young man might have the qualities to make a good Jesuit, but yet lack vocation - that inner sense of being called by God to religious life. Someone like Joe might have wanted to join the SJ's, be deemed suitable from moral, intellectual, and other criteria, and yet might lack that critical factor which is divine. I saw that to allow such men to continue was to court disaster. But this discernment of vocation is a delicate thing: it requires the exploring of the quality of the man's parental relationships: did the parents love their child, and did they love one another? A life long and fruitful celibate life needs a strong foundation in human love. I doubt Joe had that.

### **MORAL THEOLOGY?**

The issue of clerical sexual abuse (CSA) did not feature to any significant degree in moral theology, which occupied a major part of our theological studies. I studied for the priesthood from 1965 to 1968, my ordination year and continued for another four years in the US. Vatican 2 had ended in 1965: it was a pastoral Council and welcomed as such, because Christian living was still largely dominated by fear of mortal sin and eternal punishment: Joyce's Portrait and the sermons on hell still echoed. Moral theology at the time focused on confessional practice: were a penitent to confess to paedophilia I would have been quite out of my depth, but I would have dealt with the issue in terms of sin committed against God first of all, and while the issue of restitution or restoration to victims [what might it mean?] might have come up, there was little if any understanding of the lifelong impact of the wrongdoing on those abused. Joe Marmion would have laboured over his moral texts, but they would not have challenged him in regard to CSA.

### **CELIBACY**

The obligation to celibacy became a burning issue in the church after Vatican II. 'Why should the obligation of celibacy be linked to priesthood?' This was not ostensibly a question for us as religious, since we had taken perpetual vows, including one of chastity, after the two-year novitiate. But by the 70s the question assumed a new form: 'Am I unconditionally loved by anyone? Can I love another in an unconditional way?' In the 70s Jesuits began to leave at the rate of 1000 per year worldwide. Most soon married hoping to find a level of fulfilment which had eluded them in the society; We did not engage deeply with the question of how much our own way of life was responsible for these departures. Of those who remained some engaged briefly in what became referred to as 'The Third Way' - they were technically celibate but were pushing the boundaries of sexual expression. This sublimation of sexual desire does not come easily: Joe Marmion failed in this, with disastrous results.

### **CONCLUSION**

I hope the above brushstrokes provide a background, from the inside to your statement about Jesuit complicity and secrecy and silence, and the sense you have of an aloofness, almost a detachment in our response to the Marmion tragedy. As to whether we are the ones who can lead a restorative process, I have doubts. I sense instead that we need to be lead, however demanding a process it may be.

Sincerely yours, Brian Grogan SJ



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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APOLOGY FROM FR LEONARD MOLONEY SJ

On 4 July 2021 the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) shared with past pupils abused by Fr Joseph Marmion SJ a chronology which set out the history of Joseph Marmion's membership of the Society and provided information about the complaints that had arisen about him and the Jesuits actions in response. The chronology was accompanied by a Preface and Jesuit Reflection and was titled 'Joseph Marmion: The Jesuit Response'. Following its publication, the Steering Group representing past pupils spoke of the mixed emotions which the reading of the document elicited for many and of the need to afford past pupils the opportunity to raise questions and make observations as to its shortcomings and omissions. Following a process undertaken by the Steering Group those questions and observations were gathered and submitted in document form to the Society on 21 October 2021. The Jesuits undertook to respond to every question and observation. The chapters which follow are our fulfilment of that commitment.

The task of researching our responses took more time than was at first envisaged. All Jesuits whom it was thought could be able to provide any relevant information about Fr Marmion have been spoken with, as have many lay teachers now retired from Belvedere College SJ. I know that Jesuits and retired lay teachers have welcomed the opportunity of being able to offer their recollections and of being part of these restorative processes. The Jesuit Archives and other archival sources of the Society have been examined for the purpose of identifying any documentation that could assist in answering the questions. As Jesuit communities we are reflecting deeply upon what has happened.

In publishing these responses, I wish to make a number of acknowledgements; some I have made previously, others are new and are made in consequence of our reflection upon what we have been learning from past pupils, from Jesuits and lay teachers:

1. Fr Joseph Marmion SJ abused boys emotionally, spiritually, physically, and sexually in three Jesuit schools over a period of two decades. He faced no legal consequence for his violation of boys in our care.
2. By the time Fr Marmion was ordained to the priesthood in 1957 serious doubts and questions had been raised about his behaviours and personality traits. Plainly, it was not foreseen that these behaviours and personality traits would be deployed to such destructive effect in our schools, and more precisely, that they would take the form of the abuse of children. However, the doubts were such that he should have been asked to leave the Society before ordination.
3. Through the voices of survivors and of many Jesuits, we know that Fr Marmion's abusive behaviours were manifest and observable from his earliest days as a Jesuit priest in our schools. As Jesuits, we failed to act with courage in protecting boys in our schools from the many harms which Fr Marmion was causing. His conduct was enabled through our failures. Were it not for the emergence of the complaints of sexual abuse in 1977, Fr Marmion would

have been able to continue his bullying and abusive behaviours. We apologise unreservedly to you who have suffered and who continue to suffer through his behaviours towards you.

3. By 1977 the Jesuits had all the information needed to realise the importance of reaching out to the victims of Fr Marmion's sexual crimes and to create the opportunities for you to receive the acknowledgements that you have deserved. Each one of us has spoken to our personal knowledge. This has been heard as defensive, and individual recollections cannot equate with the reality of our collective knowledge. Tragically, that knowledge was not gathered with the purpose and resolve of finding those victims of Fr Marmion who needed to hear from us and for whom earlier acknowledgements from us might have been transformative. I say unequivocally that the Jesuits knew that Fr Marmion had sexually abused boys in Belvedere in 1977. This Jesuit knowledge was not revisited or re-examined by us over the following decades as societal and Church understanding and approach to issues of child abuse evolved. In particular, in the early 1990s, we failed to consider the appropriateness of Fr Marmion being allowed to exercise ministry in St Vincent's Private Hospital or anywhere. We failed to fulfil the recommendations of the 1996 Church guidelines in regard to the reporting of our knowledge of his sexual abuse. Through our failures to examine Fr Marmion's case, he could continue ministry until shortly before his death.
4. Our Provincials, including myself, knew enough at different points in time that it should have prompted them to inquire further to gain a full appreciation of what Fr Marmion had done and the actions taken by his Jesuit Superiors in response, and to reach out and communicate with past pupils who had been taught by and harmed by Fr Marmion. In so doing, they would have quickly learnt of the extent of the harm and the large number of people affected.
5. By allowing Fr Marmion to continue to exercise ministry, we implicitly communicated the message that he was a priest in good standing. As a result, victims of Fr Marmion viewed themselves at a significant disadvantage in coming forward with their complaints. Nothing should have stood in the way of Fr Marmion's victims receiving the justice they deserved, both in relation to him and in relation to our responsibilities for him as a Jesuit priest.
6. In 2000, months before his death, Fr Marmion attended the beatification of his grand-uncle Abbot Columba Marmion. This was another occasion through which the falsehood of Fr Marmion as a priest in good standing was maintained. I profoundly regret that this veneer could only have added to the difficulty victims faced in coming forward to speak of their experiences.
7. In April 2002, two victims of Fr Marmion came forward. Information was gathered at that time with the objective of communicating our availability to individuals whom it was thought might have been abused. The efforts that were made were necessarily framed from the perspective of respect for the privacy of each person who might have been abused by Fr Marmion. It is apparent that much consideration was given to finding ways in which a wider outreach might be attempted. But ultimately little action was taken.

Through our failure to communicate in the wider public domain, a significant opportunity was missed in 2002 to convey our availability to people who had suffered abuse in our schools.

9. In 2004, a book was published in which a chapter was dedicated to detailing Fr Marmion's paedophilic, emotionally, and physically abusive behaviours, without naming him. This

publication could have presented an opportunity to invite people who were suffering because of the actions of Fr Marmion to come forward. A means could have been found to communicate such an invitation without necessarily identifying Fr Marmion specifically. We did not take this opportunity.

10. In November 2009, the report of the Commission of Investigation in relation to the Archdiocese of Dublin was published. This was another opportunity for a call to be made to anybody who was carrying suffering as a result of their experiences in a Jesuit school.

As Jesuits, we are ashamed at our own failures – failure to allow the truth to be told, failure to admit to the wrong that had occurred, and failure to create earlier opportunities for you to receive the vindication you sought, deserved and needed, as a result of your experiences of Fr Marmion. I apologise for our delay in creating a context in which you could receive the acknowledgement that was justly yours, and the care to which we as a Christian community aspire in our lives and mission.

In publishing these responses, we hope that the opportunity to continue our rebuilding of trust with you whom we have failed and whose wellbeing we cherish, through dialogue, will arise for those who wish for this.

I conclude by offering my heartfelt thanks to each member of the Steering Group for their exceptional work throughout our restorative processes, in bringing to us these questions and observations and in collaborating with us in the preparation of these responses.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Leonard Moloney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Fr Leonard Moloney SJ  
Provincial  
1 July 2022