

Looking Into The Dark

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All the Bishops' Men: Clerical Abuse in an Irish Diocese, by Tom Mooney, Collins Press, 288 pp, €12.99, ISBN: 978-1848890992

Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture, by Marie Keenan, Oxford University Press, 400 pp, €2.80, ISBN: 978-0199895670

In Plain Sight: Responding to the Ferns, Ryan, Murphy and Cloyne Reports, by Carole Holohan, Amnesty International Ireland, 430 pp, <http://www.amnesty.ie/content/plain-sight>, ISBN: 978-0955560040

Summary Report on the Review of Safeguarding Practice in the Dioceses of Raphoe, Kilmore, Dromore, Ardagh and Clonmacnois, Derry, and the Archdiocese of Tuam, by Ian Elliott, National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, 4 pp, <http://www.safeguarding.ie/reviews-nov-2011/>

Anxious to set itself apart from its British neighbours, the young Irish state looked to conservative Catholicism to help repel the filthy modern tide that seemed set fair to drown Ireland in English and liberal ways. In close alliance, Church and State imposed censorship, policed morality, and gave to Catholic institutions the major part in education and social services.

Catholic charities identified neglected children so that courts might remove them from poor families and send them instead to Catholic residential institutions that received, at least in the 1930s, more than twice as much to care for each child as their families had been given in child welfare. Bishop John Charles McQuaid influenced the framing of the Irish constitution of 1937, notably in the Christian tone of its preamble claiming the Holy Trinity as the ultimate source of all authority and in Article 44.1.20 affirming “the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens”.

Conservative Catholic social policy was enshrined both in the implicit denigration of state provision of education and in the aspiration that women would find their fulfilment as homemakers. The family was asserted to be the “primary and natural educator of the child” (Article 42.1) with the state having no right to oblige parents to send their children to “schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State” (Article 42.3.10). Irish women were told that it was “by her life within the home” that “woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved” (Article 41.2.10). Although the “special position” clause was deleted in 1973, these other provisions remain and, even today, some 93.5 per cent of Irish children in primary education are in schools owned and managed by the Catholic Church, even while they are taught in school buildings very largely built at state expense and by teachers paid by the Irish state who yet are expected, as explained by St Patrick’s Drumcondra, one of the colleges offering the Certificate in Religious Studies, “to hold a qualification equipping them to teach religion according to the tenets of the Catholic faith”. This close alliance of Church and State has been a distinctive feature of the Irish polity and society but it is one that is increasingly in question and the scandalous physical and sexual abuse of children by clergy and religious has very largely prompted this re-examination.

The deference shown towards the Catholic Church by the government of the Republic of Ireland put both individual clergy and the institutions managed by the Church somewhat beyond the reach of state police

and inspection. The consequences for Irish children were dire. Far from cherishing all of its children, the Irish state turned a blind eye to their cruel treatment in many Catholic residential institutions and on many occasions to their abuse by some priests. By and large, it has been survivors and journalists rather than the Department of Education or the Garda that have investigated this abuse. The brutality of the Christian Brothers towards schoolboys in day schools was notorious and the Irish state repeatedly filed away damning evidence of the neglect of and sadism towards boys in some residential schools. In 1946, after publicity over the naked flogging of Gerard Fogarty for trying to escape back to his mother from Glin Industrial School, Thomas Derrig, Minister of Education, decided that “no useful purpose” would be served by an inquiry. In 1977 John Dwyer, a House-Father at Madonna House, a Sisters of Charity Home in Stillorgan, abducted a nine-year-old in care, Tommy Hayden, taking him to Edinburgh, where he subsequently drowned him in a hotel bath. In January 1978 Dwyer was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder. The Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Charles Haughey, could not “see that any benefit would be derived from holding a public inquiry”. The opportunities for inquiry and reform were legion. Denial and deference reached all the way into the heart of the Irish state. Not only did the Director of Public Prosecutions choose not to prosecute in many of the early cases, but also, when in 1993 the attorney general from the United Kingdom requested extradition of Father Brendan Smyth to face charges of child abuse in Belfast the warrants languished in the office of the Irish attorney general and were never executed. It was, again, the work of a journalist, Chris Moore, who made a programme for Ulster Television in October 1994 (*Counterpoint: Suffer Little Children*), that brought this evasion to light. The excuse that a difficulty was presented by some of the warrants relating to events some two decades past was patently inadequate given that other of the warrants against Smyth were not. The Irish attorney general, Harry Whelehan, resigned (November 10th, 1994), as did the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds (November 17th), who had been seeking to appoint Whelehan president of the High Court. By this stage also, Smyth had been induced to surrender to the police in Belfast, where he was convicted in January 1994. In 1997 he was extradited to the Republic, where he pleaded guilty to seventy-four further offences against twenty children in nine different counties of Ireland during the period 1957 to 1993. He died early during the twelve-year sentence he received.

Tom Mooney is editor of the *Wexford Echo*, in which, since 1990, he has reported on the cases of the clerical sexual abuse of children in the Diocese of Ferns. He knows how deference towards the Catholic Church materially hindered the investigation, prosecution, and public admission of these crimes against young humanity. *All the Bishops' Men* is a chilling account of the Ferns tragedy. Mooney begins in April 1988, when, while attending a school in Monageer, Co Wexford, to prepare young girls for their confirmation, Father James Grennan complained to the school principal, Pat Higgins, that several of the girls had been rude to him. After scolding the girls, Higgins was told by ten of them that during confession Grennan would put his hand up their skirts to touch them on the thighs and also force them to put their hands inside his trousers. Higgins advised them to tell their parents and, upon advice from the Childline of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, he himself contacted the local health board, who sent Katherine Kinsella to interview the girls at school. She then proposed that they be brought to the community child centre at Waterford Regional Hospital for evaluation. At this point, one set of parents refused to allow their two daughters to be assessed and another directed their own child to apologise to Grennan for making the allegations. At the hospital, Dr Geraldine Nolan heard enough to be persuaded that the children were credible.

The director of community care, Dr Patrick Judge, made a report to the diocese, the school, the local Garda superintendent, Vincent Smith, in Enniscorthy, and spoke to Grennan himself. Mooney reports that Bishop Brendan Comiskey claimed not to believe the allegations and attended confirmation in Monageer alongside Grennan, thereby witnessing two families walking out of the church at Grennan's appearance, after which Comiskey organised a meeting of local priests who, although not made privy to the details of the allegations, sent a collective letter of support to Grennan. The local gardaí interviewed the seven girls whose parents were willing for them to cooperate. The notes of the interviews with the girls were not typed up. Mooney explains that Supt Smith visited the girls' parents and persuaded himself that they were not anxious for any inquiry. The notes became lost. Grennan himself was not interviewed although, at the direction of Chief Supt James Doyle, one local garda, Tony Fagan, tipped Grennan off that there was likely to be some sort of protest at the confirmation and advised him that his absence might be politic, advice he chose not to take. The investigating officers suggested that the Grennan case be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions with a recommendation to prosecute. By Mooney's report, Supt Smith took neither of these steps, deciding himself that the matter would go no further, yet in 2004 he told the Ferns Inquiry that at the time he had believed the allegations to be true. By this date, Grennan had died (1994), one of his victims had committed suicide (2002), and in an internal inquiry of 1996 gardaí from Cork had recommended that the DPP consider prosecuting the local gardaí of Enniscorthy for obstructing the course of justice. When Bishop Eamonn Walsh visited Monageer in 2002 and apologised for the Church's failure to protect children from Grennan, many family and friends of Grennan continued to protest his innocence. Only prosecutions, it seems, can break down the denial that deference has built. Journalists and survivors have dragged Church and State into public debate and account. In 1988 Paddy Doyle published *The God Squad*, the story of his experiences of neglect and physical brutality at St Michael's Industrial School, Cappoquin (Sisters of Mercy), while, in 1991, Patrick Touher's *Fear of the Collar* did the same for St Joseph's Industrial School, Artane (Christian Brothers). In 1996 RTÉ broadcast Louis Lentin's *Dear Daughter* about Christine Buckley's ghastly experiences abandoned to the Sisters of Mercy at St Vincent's Industrial School, Goldenbridge. At this point the Department of Education and Science made some of its archives available to the journalist Mary Raftery and, with Eoin O'Sullivan, she was able to produce three documentaries, *States of Fear* (RTÉ 1999), illustrating the neglect and abuse suffered over many decades by too many children. By drawing upon the department's own materials the documentaries stood as explicit rebuke to the state for its failure to act upon what it knew. This bids fair to be acknowledged as the most significant piece of journalism in the history of the Irish state. On May 11th, 1999, on the eve of the last of the last of the three programmes the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, promised, at last, an inquiry adding that "We must start by apologizing. On behalf of the State and of all citizens of the State, the Government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue." And so began, under Justice Lafoy, the Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse, which was charged to hear evidence of physical and sexual abuse in state-funded institutions, to examine its causes, and to propose forms of redress and repair, and which, after having its wings clipped more than once, finally reported, under Justice Ryan, in November 2009.

Adults who had survived childhood sexual abuse by priests also braved public hostility and stigma to tell their stories. In 1995 Andrew Madden contradicted claims by Archbishop Desmond Connell that the funds

of the Dublin diocese were not used to pay compensation to any victims of abuse. He had been paid £27,000 in 1993 in recognition of the harm he had suffered from five years of repeated molesting by Father Ivan Payne. Connell later clarified to the Murphy Commission that the payment to Madden was in fact a loan to Payne so that he might settle with Madden, while to Madden he explained, as Madden told the same commission, that he had asserted to journalists only that diocesan funds were not being currently used to pay compensation and not that they never had been. Madden published his story as *Altar Boy* in 2003. In 1998 Colm O’Gorman went public with civil suits against Father Sean Fortune and against the papal nuncio. In 1999, and before the trial began, Fortune committed suicide. That same year O’Gorman founded “One in Four” as a support group for the victims of sexual abuse. In March 2002 O’Gorman contributed to a BBC programme, *Suing the Pope*, which alleged that Bishop Brendan Comiskey shielded Fortune, moving him around the Ferns diocese to unsuspecting parishes where he found fresh victims to rape. Comiskey resigned as bishop directly as a result of the allegations in the programme. The Irish government set up its own inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations in the Ferns diocese and the report was issued in 2005 while O’Gorman published his own story as *Beyond Belief* in 2009.

In October 2002, RTÉ broadcast *Cardinal Secrets*, a documentary about the Dublin diocese, in which Mary Raftery and Mick Peelo took up Andrew Madden’s story and presented Archbishop Connell as refusing to cooperate in Garda investigations of priests he knew to be serial abusers. In April 2002 Marie Collins herself told journalists that she had been the young girl of thirteen who, while recovering in Our Lady’s Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin, had been molested and photographed naked by Father Paul McGennis, a case that had ultimately resulted in his conviction in 1997. She described her many attempts to have McGennis restrained by the Church but in 1985 Father Eddie Griffin said he did not want to know the name of her alleged abuser and instead offered her absolution for her own guilt, while in 1995, although Monsignor Stenson secured an admission from McGennis that he had indeed taken the photographs, Stenson then refused to confirm this to gardaí. In fact, back in 1960 when McGennis had sent the original photographs to Britain for processing, the British police had reported this to the Garda but when the Garda itself left the matter to his discretion, McQuaid, as Archbishop of Dublin, chose to take no action. *Cardinal Secrets* prompted the government to pass a Commission of Investigation Act (2004) that resulted ultimately in the Murphy Report of 2009, which described as “risible” McQuaid’s explanation that McGennis’s photographs had required no further action since they showed little more than his “wonderment” at the form of female genitalia.

The focus of the various state inquiries (Ryan 2000-9; Ferns 2002-5; Murphy 2002-9; and later Cloyne 2009-11) was upon individual clergy or religious. This had two consequences. First, it diverted attention away from the structural features of the system of incarceration and the state’s own involvement in processing children through the courts to confinement in church-run but state-funded reformatories, Magdalen asylums, orphanages and industrial schools. In the pages of the *Irish Independent*, and in *The Irish Gulag*, his book of 2009, Bruce Arnold has been one of the few commentators to note this deflection from State to Church. The second consequence of the focus upon individual clergy and religious is that the causes of child abuse were not examined at all. It is understood as a problem that originates within clerical contexts and as such beyond the purview of the state. Yet of course male violence against children is broader than this and the inquiries missed an opportunity to examine more widely how children might be cherished, shown love and mercy, in family and home, during education and sports, and very much more generally than only when under the care of the clergy of the Catholic Church.

Both the religious orders and the Irish dioceses had been confronted with the problem of the abuse of children continually. In addition, the multitude of cases litigated in the United States during the early 1980s, many of which involved priests brought up in Ireland, must certainly have focused attention even more sharply upon the risk of scandal. By 1987, according to evidence given to the Murphy Inquiry into the Diocese of Dublin, several Irish dioceses had secured insurance against future damage claims that might be established by the victims of clerical sexual abuse. In 1994 the Irish Bishops Conference (IBC) set up an advisory committee to produce guidelines on how dioceses might respond to allegations of abuse. In 1995 the organisation of the religious orders, the Conference of the Religious in Ireland (CORI), set up a child protection taskforce and child protection office. In 1996 the advisory committee of the IBC published *Child Sexual Abuse: Framework for a Church Response*, which suggested that each diocese produce a protocol for dealing with allegations, that in each case a support person be provided for the accused, that someone be appointed for the accuser and their family, that each bishop have an advisory panel for these cases, and that “in all instances where it is known or suspected that a priest or religious has sexually abused a child, the matter should be reported to the civil authorities”. In 1997 CORI set up a phone-line for people abused by religious. In 2000 the IBC commissioned from the Royal College of Surgeons a scientific study of clerical child sexual abuse and in 2003 this was published as a survey of the consequences of child sexual abuse, *Time to Listen*. Given Vatican criticism of its 1996 framework, the IBC, together with CORI and the Irish Missionary Union, elaborated a new amalgam of civil and canon law in their 2006 policy document, *Our Children, Our Church*, and constituted a new National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCC). The new board was to monitor how allegations of clerical child sex abuse were handled by dioceses and religious orders, and its CEO, Ian Elliott, was charged with researching and reporting.

Elements of the church hierarchy resisted the 1996 framework strategy. In January 1997, writing on the authority of the Vatican body that regulates church discipline, the Congregation for the Clergy, the papal nuncio in Ireland, Archbishop Luciano Storero, wrote to the IBC that it should not adopt the framework policy since “the situation of ‘mandatory reporting’ gives rise to serious reservations of both a moral and a canonical nature”. The prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos, himself visited Ireland in November 1998 to address the Irish bishops and, as alleged by Mick Peelo in his documentary for RTÉ (*Would You Believe? Unspeakable Crimes*, 2011), Hoyos then insisted that the primary obligation of the Irish bishops was to defend their accused priests, a message he reinforced as he met them again on the visit of the Irish bishops to Rome in 1999 when he told them, according to Peelo, that they were to be fathers and not policemen to their priests. When the French bishop Pierre Pican was given a suspended three-month sentence for not reporting the serial abuser Father René Bissy, whose crimes had been met with an eighteen-year sentence, Hoyos drafted and had approved by Pope John Paul II a letter congratulating Pican “for not denouncing a priest to the civil administration”, for not “denouncing his son and priest”. A copy of this letter was sent to all bishops.

There were also some Irish bishops and senior clergy who clearly had not supported the strategy proposed in the framework document. The best construction that can be placed upon their resistance is that it was motivated by an understanding of clerical child abuse primarily as a sin by the priest and secondarily as a scandal for the Church. In these circumstances, the priest or religious is at the heart of the issue. He must be given every opportunity to repent and to rejoin the community of fellow worshippers. The sin that has been committed imperils the soul of the sinner with the prospect of eternal damnation. No other harm or

risk can be reckoned as quite this serious. The stigma attending the public humiliation of the sinner as a criminal endangers the pastoral work of reintegrating the penitent into the communion of Catholic souls. The stigma also promises to give comfort to the enemies of the Church. On grounds of pastoral care and in avoidance of scandal, Canon Law, the internal regulations of the Catholic Church, enjoins reconciliation and discretion. The Murphy Report on the Diocese of Dublin, and the later Cloyne Report, lay bare the extent to which pastoral priorities and Canon Law were appealed to by those who would rather not report abusive priests to the Garda. To Monsignor Denis O'Callaghan was directed the management of child abuse cases in the Diocese of Cloyne, yet he disapproved both of the 1996 framework and of the 2006 policy document, *Our Children, Our Church*, believing that, as he wrote in a letter of 2008 later published by the Cloyne Commission, the bishops had decided to "surrender all pastoral discretion and would hand over to secular agencies overall responsibility for alleged offending priests".

Yet it is quite inadequate to approach child abuse as a sin; it is a compulsive behaviour, it harms children, and it is a crime. For those who see child abuse as a sin, repentance and absolution might wipe the slate clean, but, turning from the soul to the body, it is evident that a firm promise to sin no more offers little guarantee that the abuser will not in fact offend again. However satisfactory spiritually, the sacrament of confession is ineffective as therapy.

Marie Keenan's psychiatric and therapeutic experience with those who have suffered abuse as children, and with adult abusers, both clerical and other, grounds *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church*, her very wise account of clerical masculinity as a pertinent dimension of the problem of clerical sexual abuse of children. To date the most important work on the characteristics of abusive clergy has been the social-scientific studies of the Catholic clergy in the United States undertaken by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. Its 2004 study of *The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States* was based on details provided by dioceses on some 6,700 substantiated allegations. Keenan's focus is much narrower, being derived in the main from the in-depth narratives offered by nine abusive priests or religious. It also comes from her therapeutic practice, which involves individual sessions, accountability sessions with the abusers and their superiors to explore issues of responsibility, sessions with groups of abusers so that they can develop insights by commenting upon each other, and narrative therapy that invites people to develop vivid accounts of their experience so that the many influences that bear upon problematic acts can be brought to mind. Ultimately, this approach hopes to detach the individual from the problem, giving them the resources to commit to alternative life-paths. If the process is successful, then, through a fuller understanding of the causes of their own engagement with problematic acts, people might elaborate and invest in new life-stories connecting their hopes to less problematic practices. If honesty and reflection can serve a therapeutic function, they might at the same time contribute to a fuller understanding of the contexts and formation of people like themselves who subjugate the better angels of their nature to urges and behaviours that hurt others.

Keenan hears these men describe an ideal of perfect celibate clerical masculinity that they found to be "a life that is impossible to live". An obsession with the dangers of impurity enshrined sexuality at the very heart of their identity and their repeated impurity of thought haunted the early adulthood during which they committed to a life of celibacy. Indeed one attraction of the priesthood was the unrealistic belief that it would shield them from sexuality. For these men masturbation was by and large resisted until their thirties. Their fear that intimacy and closeness with other adults might excite dirty urges consigned them to

loneliness and emotional immaturity. Ultimately, for these men, it was only with children that they felt they could control the consequences of their transgressions towards intimacy. They understood their own need for intimacy or power and some persuaded themselves that befriending children in this way might even be a gift to the child. They understood their actions as having implications for their own account with their God and did not reflect too much on the psychological or physical consequences for the children. The men knew too little of the multiple ways that priests molesting children filled those young people with fear and guilt, damaging their chances of developing into confident adults capable of sexual joy and intimacy. Instead of empathy, the moral calculus of these priests sought true north in deception and secrecy. Indeed, were they to cultivate empathy with their young victims it would only add to their shame, and avoiding shame is the very purpose of their multiple deceptions. Theirs is not a behaviour that can be lived in the light. Confession can be complicit with this enclosure of the abuse, by allowing a resolution of guilt in secret and thereby unburdening the priest until their compulsive needs assert themselves again. Understanding these men as irredeemably evil offers them no prospect for recovery. Individualising their failings denies Church, State, and society an opportunity to learn how they came to fall so far short of what they once hoped to be, offering no prospect of reform. On Good Friday 2005, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, reflecting upon the third fall of Christ while carrying his cross, spoke of the suffering that he imagined failings within the Church must cause Christ: "How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to him!" This places the fault entirely with the individual abusive priest, avoiding a broader contextual analysis. Keenan directs attention instead to the dynamics of priestly formation with its extreme denigration of the body, its over-intellectualising of morality, its failure to equip seminarians with sufficient knowledge of the way modern life is lived and understood, its neglect of the personal and emotional development of the curious young men training for priesthood, its unrealistic expectations about the sublimation of sexuality, and she concludes that "Making celibacy mandatory for all Catholic clergy no longer serves anyone well."

Many must share the blame. The abuse of children by priests and religious was shielded by their superiors and indeed was abetted by a focus upon souls and not bodies, relying upon the stated intentions of the abuser rather than upon a thorough and realistic assessment of the risks to children. Children's bodies came a poor second to priestly souls. The state also failed its own duty of care when its police failed properly to investigate and prosecute crimes, its civil servants and government ministers claimed responsibility for a system that consigned children to institutions that were state-funded but over which that state failed to exercise even the most basic oversight. This egregious failure to inspect and prosecute was not only contrary to the duties that the state claimed for itself in regard to cherishing its children but constitutes also a breach of international conventions to which the Republic of Ireland has subscribed. The institutionalised violence in many of these places, together with inadequate food, clothing and heat might, as Carole Holohan explains in her report for Amnesty International Ireland, *In Plain Sight*, readily be understood as cruel and degrading treatment under the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman Punishment, ratified by Ireland in 2002 and thus available to indict the Irish state if any people alive after 2002 yet suffer from cruel and degrading treatment, even if the occasion of their abuse was earlier. In these state-funded institutions, children were put to labour without payment (slavery), were deprived of family life (kept apart from siblings), and in some cases denied their right to identity (being given a number or a new name and being deprived of the celebration of birthdays). In 1992 Ireland signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, committing itself to respect each child's

“right to survival; [...] to the development of their full physical and mental potential; [...] to protection from influences that are harmful to their development; and [...] to participation in family, cultural and social life”. It is clear that deference to the Catholic Church prevented the Irish state from discharging these obligations.

The state cannot devolve to religious organisations the duties of inspection, prosecution, and compensation. At present the NBSCC operates a voluntary system for auditing the way dioceses and religious orders respond to allegations of child abuse. In November 2011 the reports on six dioceses were published. In his *Summary Report*, Ian Elliott reflects that: “The picture that is presented by all of these dioceses is an improving one. There is greater awareness and much greater commitment to safeguarding children than was once the case. Individuals that are seen as being a risk to children are reported quickly to the authorities and steps are taken to eliminate their access to children.” The bishops of these six dioceses are “amongst the most frequent attenders” at national training sessions. The texts of the individual diocesan reports are agreed with the bishops and thus one is left wondering what might be behind anodyne remarks such as these made in the *Report on the Diocese of Derry* - that in the diocese there remain at least two priests who “seem to be less than fully behind the diocesan safeguarding project” or that in Raphoe the person responsible for handling complaints “expressed a preference for learning the role through experience rather than reading through guidelines”.

The publication of the Raphoe report was delayed for fifteen months and it does contain the observation that in acting upon allegations “Too much emphasis was placed on the situation of the accused priest and too little on the needs of their complainants. Judgements were clouded, due to the presenting problem being, for example, alcohol abuse and an inability to hear the concerns about abuse of children, through that presenting problem.” The Raphoe report also remarks that “Bishop Boyce in at least one serious case was keen to protect the family of the convicted priest from further trauma by not initiating laicization”. But the bigger and more general problem about the Raphoe report concerns what it does not tell us. This was the diocese in which Eugene Greene was a priest. As Martin Ridge, the garda most closely involved in the case, reported in a book of 2008, *Breaking the Silence*, this was a man who ultimately pleaded guilty to forty-one sample charges from a list of 115 and whose victims still bore serious scars “being bridled with guilt and shame” and afraid that having spoken out “they would face the disapproval of society”. Over the years there had been complaints to the diocese of Greene molesting choirboys. At one point the diocese sent him to a clinic where abusive priests were assessed in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Upon his return he was sent to a different parish in the same diocese. At the time of Greene’s conviction in 1999 Bishop Seamus Hegarty insisted that the diocese had handled Greene “very professionally, very responsibly”. The Raphoe report has no comment upon any of this because the diocese retains no record of any complaint against Greene despite having responded on at least one occasion. The audits have few investigative powers and must write up what they do know in a manner that will not allow individuals to be identified. They report the number of allegations and convictions but give no details of out-of-court settlements or indeed of any compensation payments (allegedly €1.1 million in the case of Raphoe). The focus, then, is upon the future, not the past, upon generalities not specific cases, upon dioceses that invite inspection, upon writing what bishops will consent to have published and upon convictions rather than allegations sufficiently plausible to result in out-of-court settlements. This is too narrow a window for the reports to serve as a genuine audit of the extent of abuse and the character of its management by Church and State.

In January 2012, Frances Fitzgerald, as minister for children and youth affairs, announced that in 2012 Ireland would make a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the progress of children's rights in Ireland. The forsaken children deserve a voice in that audit and the state should fully acknowledge the failings that came from its peculiar relationship with the Catholic Church. Taoiseach Enda Kenny responded to the most recent of the reports on clerical child abuse (in Cloyne) by insisting in the Dáil that "This is the 'Republic' of Ireland 2011. A Republic of laws ... of rights and responsibilities ... of proper civic order ... where the delinquency and arrogance of a particular version ... of a particular kind of 'morality' ... will no longer be tolerated." We shall see.

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