

The Focolare Movement publishes the results of an Independent Inquiry into cases of abuse by a former consecrated member in France

Margaret Karram: *"I commit myself on behalf of the Focolare Movement to respond with action, listening, openness and preventive measures, to the final recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry."*

The Focolare Movement has announced the results of the investigation carried out by an external and independent body into the cases of sexual abuse involving JMM, a former consecrated member of the Focolare Movement in France.

On 23rd December 2020, the Focolare Movement entrusted the Inquiry to the British company [GCPS Consulting](#), an independent body whose mission has always been to help institutions improve their systems for preventing and reporting abuse. To ensure the integrity, quality and reliability of the inquiry process and its results, the Focolare Movement also appointed Alain Christnacht, a former senior French civil servant, as an independent supervisor, with no connection to the Movement.

At the request of the victims, the Focolare Movement entrusted the inquiry to an independent Commission in the same spirit with which the French Bishops' Conference commissioned CIASE (Commission indépendante sur les abus sexuels dans l'Église), in February 2019, to carry out an investigation into the whole of the Catholic Church in France with the sole aim of giving absolute priority to the victims in its investigation.

The independent body received testimonies covering the period 1958-2020 which clearly show that JMM was responsible for different levels of abuse of at least 26 victims.

GCPS Consulting summarises the work done for the Inquiry as follows:

"Listening to the victims was one of the main tasks and a challenging part of the process, for the victims and for the Inquiry team, but it is the most important element.

The report describes events over five decades in which JMM abused or attempted to sexually abuse his victims, mainly teenage boys, describing his *modus operandi* and also the context in which the abuse took place. The investigation listened to other victims of abuse, some sexual and also other types of abuse, from a significant number of victims and witnesses.

The fact that the abuse was widespread and not addressed, even when reported to those in positions of leadership and responsibility, is also a subject of the report. The Inquiry was asked to examine the extent to which the people responsible were aware of these events at the time and subsequently, and to assess how they were addressed. The report describes in detail how complaints were not responded to adequately, victims were not heard, were not treated appropriately, and how opportunities were missed to respond to JMM's abuse and to prevent subsequent incidents.

Finally, the report details how the Focolare Movement has developed safeguarding measures more recently and makes a number of recommendations to strengthen the safeguarding environment, including those related to fundamental changes in culture and leadership".

After reviewing the report Margaret Karram, President of the Focolare Movement, said,

"There are no words that can adequately express the shock and pain I feel at the harm that has been done to children and young people by JMM and - I say this with immense suffering - not only by him, as is clear from the results of the inquiry."

Addressing the victims, she added, *'In this moment, all my thoughts and feelings are for you who have suffered a very serious crime that in many cases has ruined your lives'.*

**TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU PERSONALLY,
AND TOGETHER WITH CO-PRESIDENT JESÚS MORÁN, AND ON BEHALF OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT,
I HUMBLY ASK FORGIVENESS.**

*We must recognise that despite the good that the Movement has done throughout its history, here we failed in being vigilant, in listening and in being receptive to the cries for help from so many people. **This must not happen again** and is in total contradiction with the values that the Focolare Movement with its Christian spirituality is called to live.*

I commit myself on behalf of the Focolare Movement, to respond with action, listening, openness and preventive measures, to the final recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry".

The Focolare Movement is more determined than ever to ensure that its communities around the world are safe places where there can be mutual enrichment. As the GCPS inquiry points out, in 2011 the Movement began an in-depth evaluation of measures to prevent abuse and safeguard people. Those measures were reviewed in 2014 and 2020 and will be further updated after an in-depth study of the results of this inquiry.

The Focolare Movement has informed the French Bishops' Conference and the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life of the publication of the report.

The Movement's main concern is to contribute as much as possible to the healing process of the victims, including financial compensation, if necessary and requested.

For this reason, on the recommendation of the Church in France, the Focolare Movement has asked the "Commission indépendante de reconnaissance et de réparation" (CRR), a multidisciplinary body composed of experts from civic society and set up by CORREF (Conférence des Religieux et Religieuses de France) to accompany victims who so wish on their path to reparation. As of now, victims can contact this body.

Mail: victimes@crr.contact - Tel: 09 73 88 25 71 -

Internet site: <https://www.reconnaissancereparation.org>

In order to fulfil its commitment to the victims of JMM, the Movement has for some months now been running a psychological support procedure coordinated by Dr Alexis Vancappel. This procedure will be maintained for the victims who have already used this service.

The Focolare Movement states that in the coming weeks it will make known the procedures and measures it intends to put in place to respond to the recommendations contained in the report.

The **results of the survey** are published in full and accessible to all on the [GCPS Consulting](#) website and on the [French](#) as well as the [international website of the Focolare Movement](#). At present, the survey is available in English, French and Italian. Translations in German, Spanish and Portuguese will be added later.

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Attached:

- Summary of the survey
- Letter from the Focolare President and Co-President to the members of the Focolare Movement in France

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