

## **Independent Inquiry into JMM - Term of Reference**

In light of ongoing concerns regarding cases of violence against minors by J.M.M., a former consecrated member of the Focolare, resident in France, the Focolare Movement decided to entrust to an independent Body, GCPS Consulting, the task to set off and bring ahead an extraordinary inquiry.

The task of GCPS Consulting will be to listen to the victims and to gather further testimonies, as well as investigating whether there were any omissions, cover ups or silences on the part of those responsible for the Movement. At the end of the investigation, the independent Body will make its final report public.

### **Object of the mandate**

The object of the mandate given by the Focolare Movement to GCPS is to achieve the following general objectives:

1. To carry out an investigation into the sexual abuses committed by JMM, reviewing the details of known offences, the context in which they occurred, and highlighting others that may come to light.
2. To establish, as far as possible, the degree of knowledge of these events by the persons responsible at the time and subsequently, and assess how they were dealt with by the persons responsible, in the light of the historical periods concerned.
3. To provide recommendations on current child protection arrangements - for the Focolare in France and more generally for the whole Focolare Movement - including reporting and response systems and, in particular, case management.
4. To draw up within a year a public report detailing the findings and recommendations of the commission of enquiry.

To achieve the above objectives, with the collaboration of the Focolare Movement's Central Commission for the Promotion of the Welfare and Protection of Minors (CO.BE.TU.), GCPS Consulting shall gather all available information about JMM's history. This includes: how he entered the Movement, the time he lived in the Focolare in-house communities, his activities, responsibilities, and contacts, the circumstances in which he operated and was in touch with minors, his collaborators and contemporaries, reports of abuse received against him, and any other relevant details about him.

It should be noted that, during the investigation, the only interlocutor between the Focolare Movement and GCPS Consulting will be the Central Commission for the Promotion of Wellbeing and the Protection of Minors of the Focolare Movement (CO.BE.TU.), which has exclusive competence, according to art. 47 of the Guidelines in force in the Focolare Movement, in the management of cases of child abuse concerning its consecrated lay members, such as the case of JMM.

Only to the latter, therefore, can GCPS Consulting address any request useful for the investigation.

### **Process**

GCPS Consulting will aim to make the inquiry process as victim-centred as possible. To this end, as far as possible, the proposed process will be shared with known victims of abuse who made a request for an independent inquiry in view of their input and to ensure they reflect their idea of an independent inquiry. To this end, GCPS will have direct contact with the victims in planning the process.

The inquiry team will invite victims of abuse by JMM to contact the Inquiry. The exact number of people who have been subject to abuse is not known at this time, but an invitation will be extended to contact the inquiry team via confidential routes with a view to enabling victims to say as much or as little as they wish about their experiences.

The inquiry team will comprise people (it is intended for there to be men and women available) who are experienced and trained in listening to people who have been subject to abuse.

It is recognised that victims may need support or assistance in order to participate in the Inquiry, as a consequence of disclosing their experiences to the Inquiry team and possibly as a result of the abuse they have experienced. The Inquiry team will make provision to discuss the needs of individuals when it comes to participating in the Inquiry and what they may need before, during and after their engagement.

If in the course of their work the Inquiry team receives information about new allegations of sexual abuse or other issues of misconduct, these will be referred to the Central Commission for the Promotion of the Welfare and Protection of Minors of the Focolare Movement (CO.BE.TU.) or to the Co-president of the Focolare Movement who will set off the due procedure to ensure the allegation is investigated by the appropriate authorities.

During the investigation process the independent inquiry team shall:

- Review of all relevant documents concerning known cases of abuse and the handling of these by the Focolare, as well as background materials, guidelines/procedures, and so on in order to establish context and define further detailed planning of the Inquiry process.
- Hold sessions with victims (either remotely or in person) to speak with them directly regarding their experiences.
- Conduct interviews with witnesses and other involved people, persons responsible, and others who may be in a position to provide information regarding the alleged violations and how these were handled.

### **Implementing Timeframe**

In light of the scope and nature of the work, especially the possible number of people to be interviewed, it is proposed to set an initial 12-month timeframe for the Inquiry, to be reviewed as the process unfolds. The key principle is that there will be flexibility to allow victims to come forward and speak to the Inquiry commission and to ensure the investigating team is able to pursue all relevant lines of enquiry.

We further propose that the Inquiry process commences in January 2021. The first two months (January and February 2021) should be spent establishing the Inquiry process, working with the Focolare Movement's Central Commission for the Promotion of the

Welfare and Protection of Minors (CO.BE.TU.), and with the victims to ensure the process is satisfactory, to identify relevant victims support services, to set up communication channels for victims and others actors to be able to contact the Inquiry, to work with Focolare media/communications colleagues to promote the Inquiry, to gather background documents and other materials, to establish the Inquiry team, and so on.

Active investigation and interviewing/listening to victims and others would commence in March and potentially go through to September 2021. Final Reporting should be issued by end of December 2021.

## **Outputs**

At the end of the inquiry, GCPS shall draft a public report detailing findings and recommendations from the Inquiry team. The report shall include:

1. An analysis of the information gathered with clear findings and conclusions on the main elements of the Inquiry.
2. A timeline reconstruction or chronology that describes the history of JMM in the Focolare Movement in France, key events, contacts and details of alleged abuses, along with details of how persons responsible and other people in leadership or key roles received and processed this information, as well as the initiatives taken to respond to it.
3. Analysis of the impact of the abuses committed by JMM, on the lives of the victims.
4. Recommendations about current safeguarding arrangements – for the Focolare Movement in France and across the Focolare Movement more broadly - including reporting and responding systems and case management in particular.
5. The report will also include recommendations and findings on the following matters:
  - An apology - by whom and the nature of the apology;
  - The requirement for redress to be provided to meet the particular needs of victims.

However, the nature or level of any potential redress (financial or by means of the provision of services) is a matter that the Focolare will discuss and agree as a separate matter and following receipt of the Inquiry team final report. Forms of redress or compensation will not be something for the Inquiry Team to consider as part of its work, although the latter may be consulted and give advice on the details of any such scheme.

The final report will be made available prior to publication for review<sup>1</sup> by victims individually to ensure their stories and their experiences are appropriately presented.

The final report will be drafted in the respect of the privacy and confidentiality of each person who shared their story and at no point will any details of the persons involved in the Inquiry will be divulged to the Focolare or anyone else without their express permission or unless there is a need to do so (e.g. for child protection purposes or being required to do so by a court of law).

All information will be subject to strict confidentiality, privacy and data protection requirements and details of what information is captured and how it will be used, will be made clear to all those that participate in the Inquiry process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Subject to any legal or other constraints on sharing the content of the final report.