

Press Release, 19th February 2013, 9pm

Justice for Magdalenes welcomes the official State apology

Justice for Magdalenes (JFM), the survivor advocacy group, welcomes An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny's official apology to survivors of the Magdalene Laundries in the Dáil this afternoon.

JFM arranged for a group of surviving women, children and family members to sit in the public gallery in Dáil Éireann and all of them wish to acknowledge Mr. Kenny's sincere and heartfelt words of sorrow on behalf of all Irish citizens and the Irish State. This was a deeply meaningful experience for people who never thought they would see this day, and the official apology, come to pass. JFM thanks Mr. Kenny on their behalf.

In particular, JFM welcomes Mr. Kenny's acceptance of State involvement in the Magdalene Laundries, in all the five areas investigated by the Inter-Departmental Committee, as well as the inclusion of all surviving women in the apology and ensuing compensation scheme.

We also acknowledge the important gesture of "taking back" the secrecy and stigma carried by the women for so long. In doing so, Mr. Kenny leads by example in demonstrating the need for our nation to re-examine its "conscience" for the manner in which marginalized women and children are treated in the past and the present. On the 19th February 2013, we witnessed the beginnings of the end of "Magdalene Ireland."

JFM now looks forward to the intent of the apology being made evident by the introduction of a system of redress that is prompt, open, fair, and transparent.

We contend that Justice John Quirke, who will head up the three month review to recommend the criteria for providing supports, payments and services to the women, must be given statutory powers. There must also be an independent appeals system, and Justice Quirke must be properly resourced. The system must be non-adversarial and transparent. It can be private but not secret. And, the process of review must be completed in the three-month time frame.

Finally, JFM welcomes the detail that An Tainiste, Mr. Gilmore provided in his remarks, especially the acknowledgement of human rights abuses and his call on the religious congregations to contribute to compensation.

Justice for Magdalenes acknowledges and thanks all the people who have supported our campaign—many people made this day possible and we want to acknowledge your all. **Thank You.**

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