

Cumulative report of the Ombudsman of the Montreal Archdiocese

July 31, 2022

Ombudsman's Fourth Quarterly report

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Summary:

The cumulative report of the Ombudsman of the Archdiocese of Montreal was filed on July 31, 2022.

First, it analyzes the new complaints received since April 1, 2022, namely:

- 7 complaints of abuse, six of which were sent to the Advisory Committee.
- 16 complaints referred to the Vicars General, and;
- 6 of the jurisdiction of the director of the OPP.

Then, cumulatively, it analyzes the content of all the complaints received since the Ombudsman took office on May 5, 2021, namely a total of 123 complaints, which break down as follows:

- 58 complaints of abuse that were submitted to the Advisory Committee for recommendations to Archbishop Christian Lépine, 33 of which concern sexual abuse;
- 41 complaints to the Vicars General which do not target members of the clergy, but are rather in connection with the holding of cemeteries, funerals, the requirement of a vaccination passport, genealogical research, requests for apostasy or relations of work, and;
- 24 complaints to the Director of the OPP mainly concerning problems between employees and members of the clergy or between the Church Council and a member of the clergy were sent to the Office of Pastoral Personnel (OPP).

In addition, following the deposit this spring of the external audit carried out by the Honourable André Denis, retired judge, on sexual abuse of minors, the Ombudsman was given the mandate by Archbishop Christian Lépine to deal with any old file of complaint or of abuse that would not have been dealt with satisfactorily in the past. As part of the execution of this mandate, the Advisory Committee was seized with 11 complaints, known as "*Ombudsman complaints*" which all concern sexual abuse.

Cumulative report of the Ombudsman of the Montreal Archdiocese

Introduction:

This report is the fourth since I took office on May 5, 2021. As was the case with the previous ones, this report is public and will be made available to everyone through the Archdiocese's website.

It covers concurrently:

- The period comprised between April 1 and July 31, 2022, and;
- cumulatively, the period from May 5, 2021, to July 31, 2022,

which is reflected in the various statistical portraits found there.

Calls from victims

At the risk of repeating myself, since my last report, I again received numerous calls from people who have suffered tremendously as a result of the abuse they suffered or are still suffering. Listening to their suffering is central to the Ombudsman's job.

The complaint process and its internal handling:

Further to the comments made in my last report regarding the failures in the complaints process, I must note that it is working better and that the deadlines, in particular for sending letters or following up on recommendations, have improved. The break-in period for the new process is not over yet, but things are moving in a better direction.

"Ombudsman" complaints: old files

Following the filing of the external audit carried out by the Honourable André Denis, retired judge, on the sexual abuse of minors from 1940 to the present, and in accordance with what was declared in the public notice of the Archdiocese :

“The results have been subsequently confided to the person designated in each diocese to receive and listen to complaints and, thereafter, to refer them to the committee responsible for investigating such complaints.”¹

A complete copy of the said audit was given to me in the spring and Mgr Christian Lépine entrusted me with the mandate to analyze its content and, if necessary, to refer to the Advisory Committee any cases of abuse that would not have been dealt with satisfactorily in the past. To do this, Archbishop Lépine granted me all the powers necessary to fully perform this task, including full access to the secret archives.

A good part of my current energies is therefore put into dealing with these old complaint files which, depending on the case:

- had not been dealt with at all;
- had been dealt with, but without any sanction or even follow-up;
- were destroyed, but with an express mention of the abuses they contained.

If these files include those highlighted in the audit of the Honourable André Denis, they also include old complaint's files whose abuses were not retained by the Honourable Denis since his mandate was restricted to sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable people, which is not the case with mine.

The mandate entrusted to me covers all forms of abuse and not exclusively those of a sexual nature, although as you will see, I have decided to prioritize the processing of cases where sexual abuse has been alleged against people still in office or still having faculties in order to ensure first and foremost the safety of the community.

In these complaints that I have dubbed “*Ombudsman complaints*”, there is also past abusive behaviours that was discovered by chance during the analysis of the file of a person targeted by a current complaint.

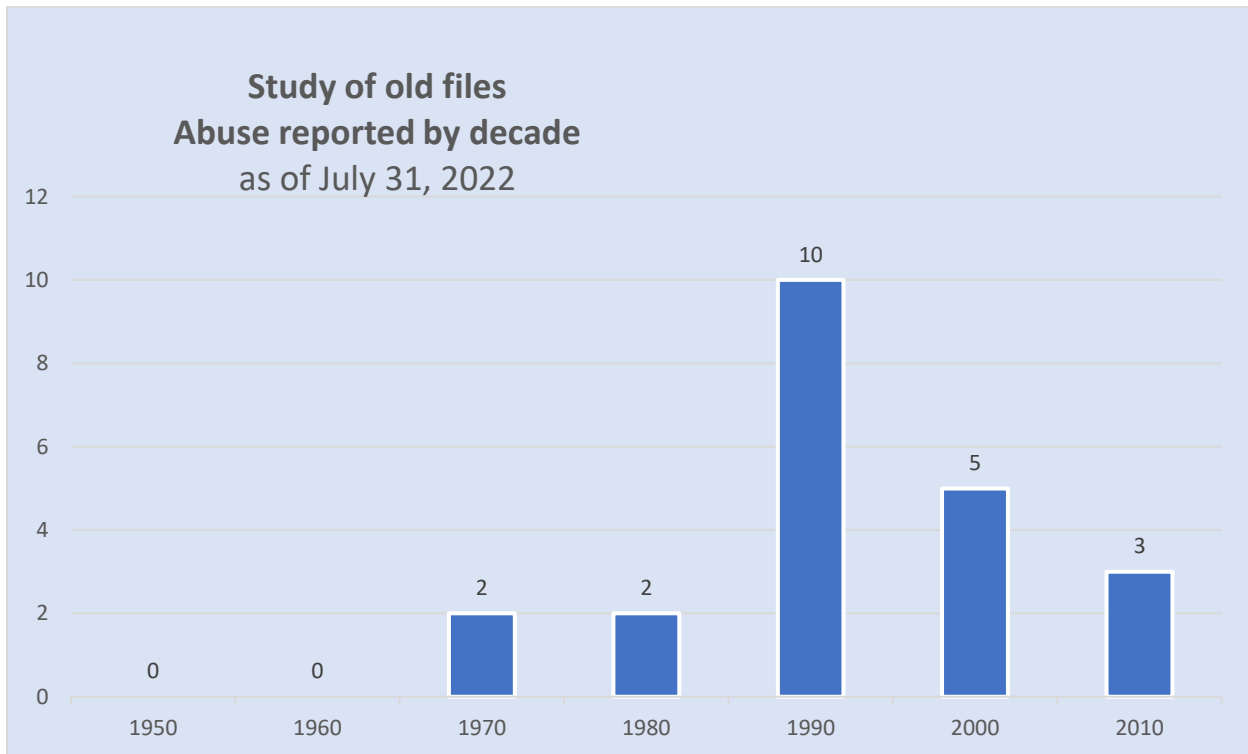
My work on these old files will now be the subject of a detailed section in my quarterly reports.

¹ For more information, see the Archdiocese announcement of June 8, 2022 : <https://www.diocesemontreal.org/en/news-and-info/latest-news/sexual-abuse-nine-roman-catholic-dioceses-quebec-release-findings>

For the purposes of this report, in my capacity as Ombudsman, I have already forwarded 11 complaints to the Advisory Committee arising from my analysis of some of these old cases. These “*Ombudsman complaints*” target 11 members of the clergy who, according to what I found in the files, would have affected at least 22 victims.

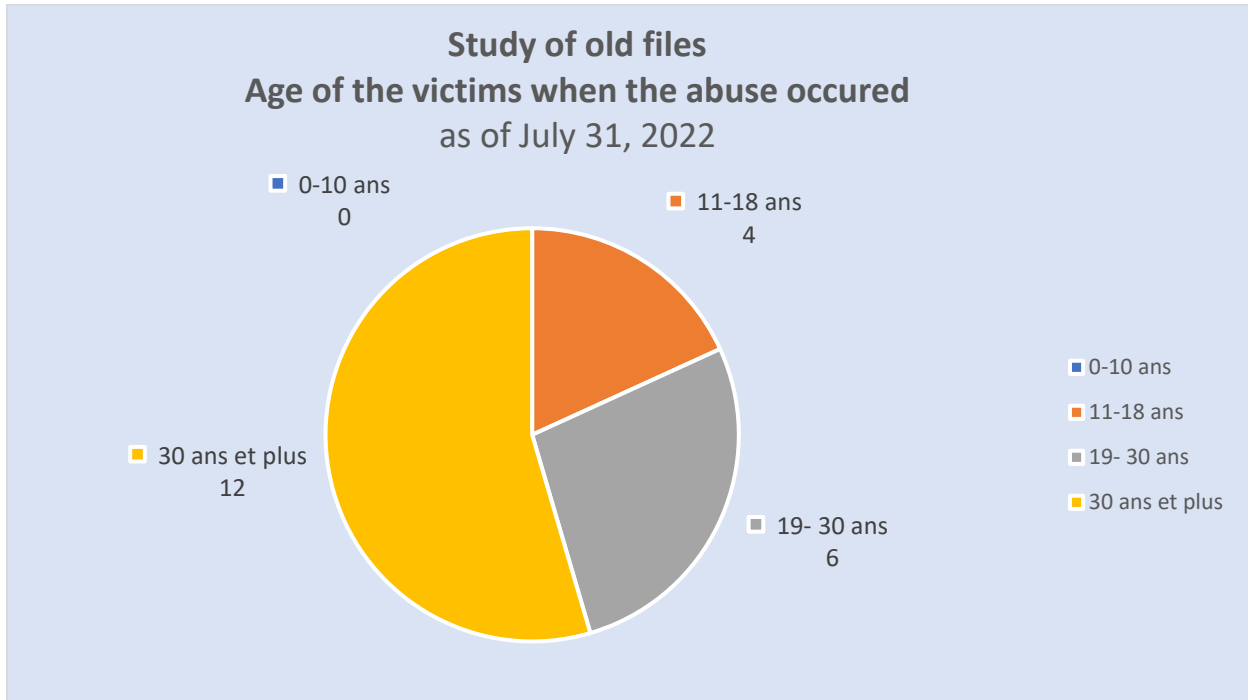
Abuse by decades:

To date, these files contain abuses that have taken place mainly since the 1990s:



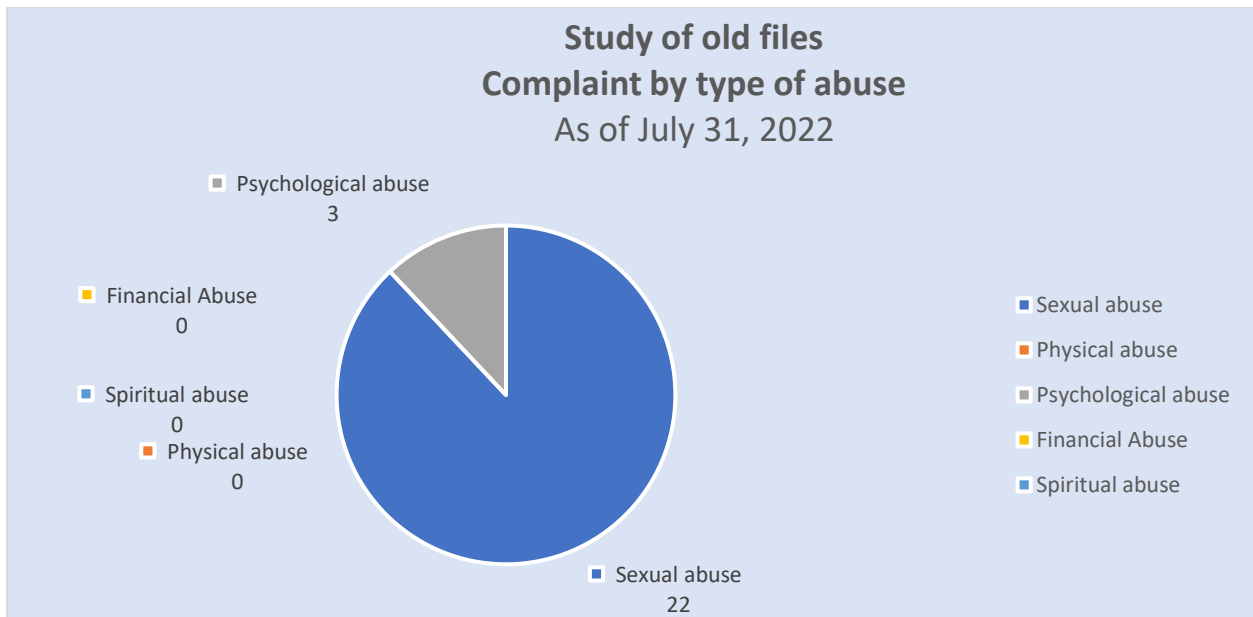
The age of the victims:

The victims of these abuses are mostly, although not exclusively, adults:



The type of abuse:

And all of these files include sexual abuse:



I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of the Advisory Committee for the colossal work they have done given the large number of “*Ombudsman complaints*’ that I forwarded them.

At their request, I found one of the victims who, although surprised that I contacted her, hastened to agree to collaborate in the upcoming investigation.

Analysis of the Complaints of Abuse:

The present section analyses in depth the content of the complaints that I, as Ombudsman, have received from the persons who contacted me. Its analysis is subdivided in two parts:

- Part 1: covering the complaints received between April 1 and July 31, 2022, and:
- Part 2: covering the complaints received between May 5, 2021 and July 31, 2022.

The complaints received were related to the following form of abuse:

- psychological abuse including abuse of power and misogyny;
- financial abuse;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse.

In the latter case, we find complaints that cover exhibitionism, pornography, unwanted sexual advances or proposals, sexual harassment, group masturbation, being forced into performing fellatio or masturbation, the male version of tribadism, vaginal penetration and sodomy.

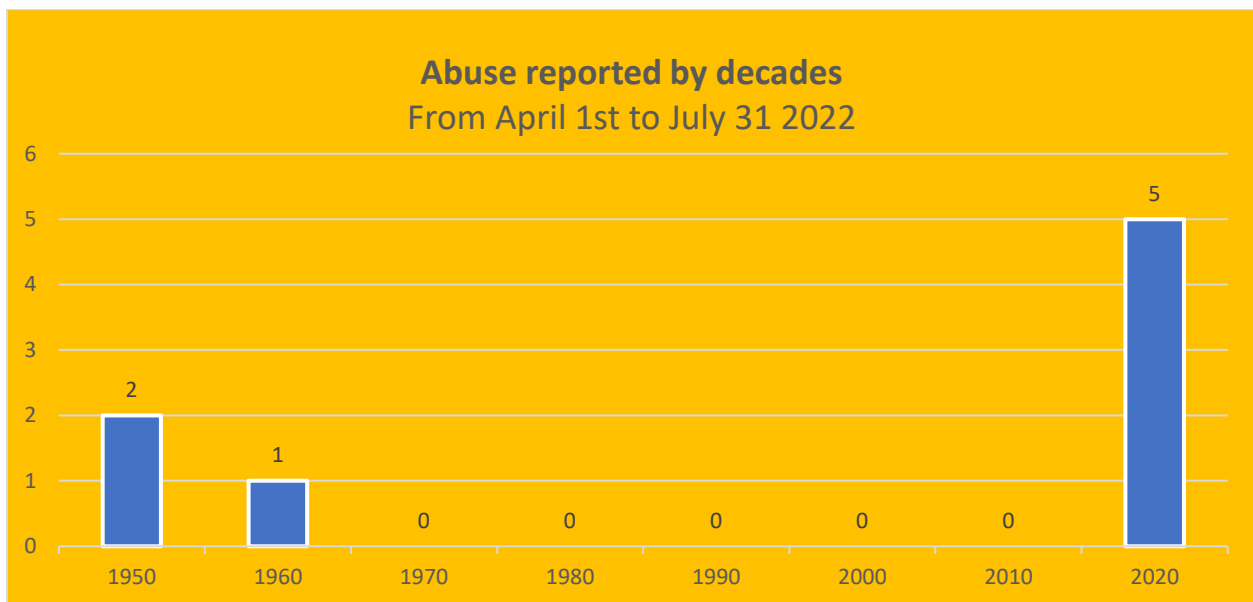
Part 1: Analysis of the complaints of abuse received between April 1st and July 31, 2022:

The number of complaints of abuse:

Between April 1 and July 31, 2022, I received 7 reports of abuse, 6 of which were the subject of formal complaints forwarded to the Advisory Committee (one of the complainants did not wish to file a complaint).

Abuse by decades:

The abuses reported took place in the following decades (included is the abuse suffered by the person who did not wish to file a formal complaint)²:



² One of the victims, a Duplessis Orphan, suffered abuse during two decades.

The age of the victims:

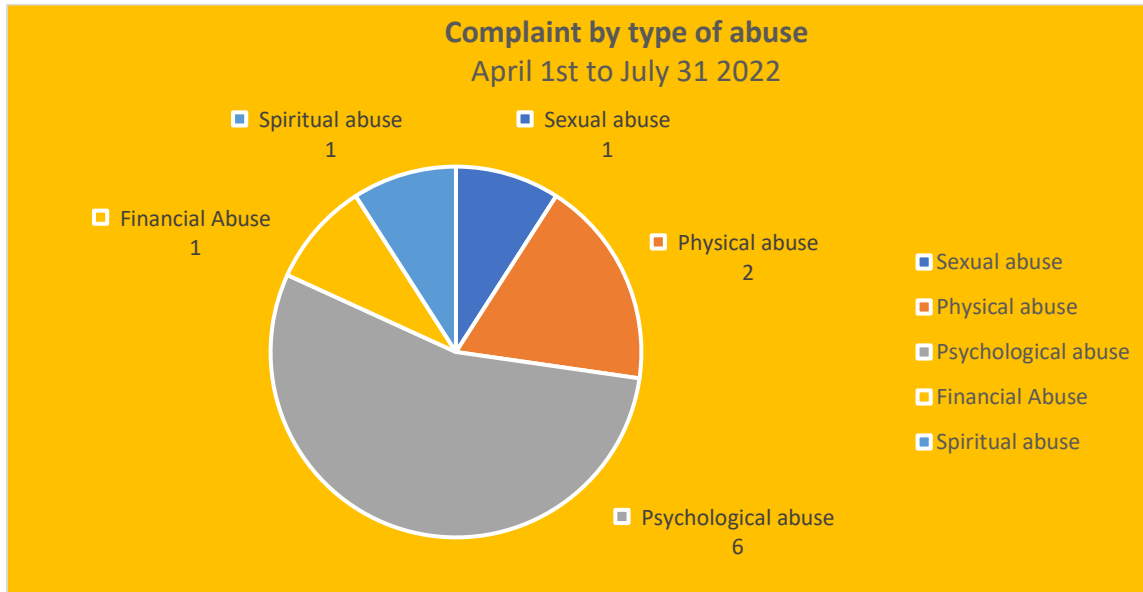
The age of the victims³ at the time of the abuse falls roughly equally into each of the four categories:



³ One of the victims, because of the considerable duration of the abuse to which he was subjected, namely from early childhood until his early twenties, is found in 3 age categories.

The type of abuse:

As to the type of abuse suffered, it is as follows:



Part 2. Cumulative analysis of complaints received between May 5, 2021, and July 31, 2022:

Cumulative number of abuse complaints:

To date, the Advisory Committee charged with analyzing complaints of abuse, has received 58 formal complaints. As of July 31, 2022, of those that have been processed, only 5 complaints have been rejected and 3 closed for lack of information. One complaint was also withdrawn by the complainant before it was studied by the Committee. In addition to the 58 formal complaints referred to the Advisory Committee, there were the 11 “*Ombudsman complaints*”, the files mentioned earlier that I, in my capacity as Ombudsman, forwarded them, bringing the number of complaints handled or to be handled by the Committee to 69⁴.

The cumulative statistical data in this section does **not** include the “*Ombudsman complaints*” and therefore refers only to complaints received from individuals through the Ombudsman’s complaints process.

External investigations:

In twelve of the complaints, investigations were recommended by the Advisory Committee and these are currently underway.

Six final investigation reports have been filed to date. Of this number:

- Three reports concern abuse of a sexual nature. The reports conclude that the alleged acts were committed. The acts were committed against four persons.
- One report concerns psychological and financial abuse. The report concludes that the priest targeted by the complaint committed psychological abuse towards five (5) people and financial abuse towards one of them.
- One report concerns psychological abuse and concluded that the priest, subject of the complaint, committed such abuse against two persons.

⁴ Some complaints were forwarded to the Advisory Committee in July during their summer hiatus.

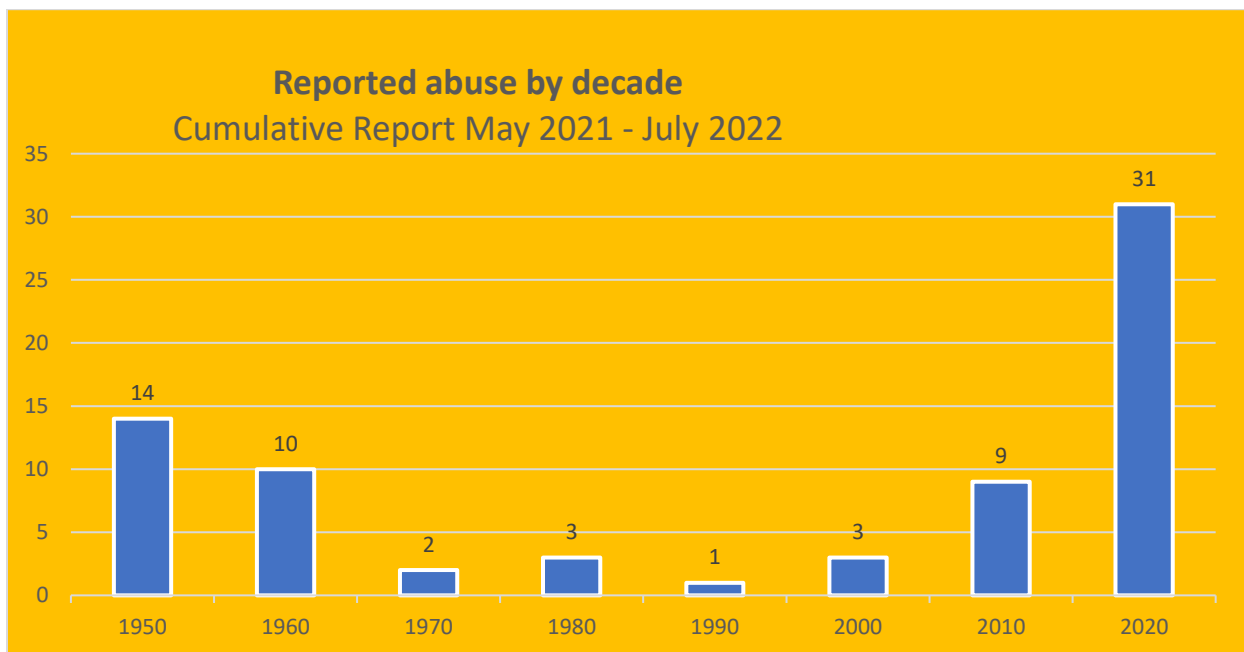
- Finally, one report concerns an allegation of sexual harassment. The report concludes that without reaching the level of abuse, it is an inappropriate gesture on the part of the person concerned.

The persons targeted by complaints of abuse:

Of the 62 persons targeted by complaints of abuse forwarded to the Advisory Committee, 32 were members of a religious order, 26 members of the clergy, and 4 lay people, employees of religious orders⁵.

Abuse by decades:

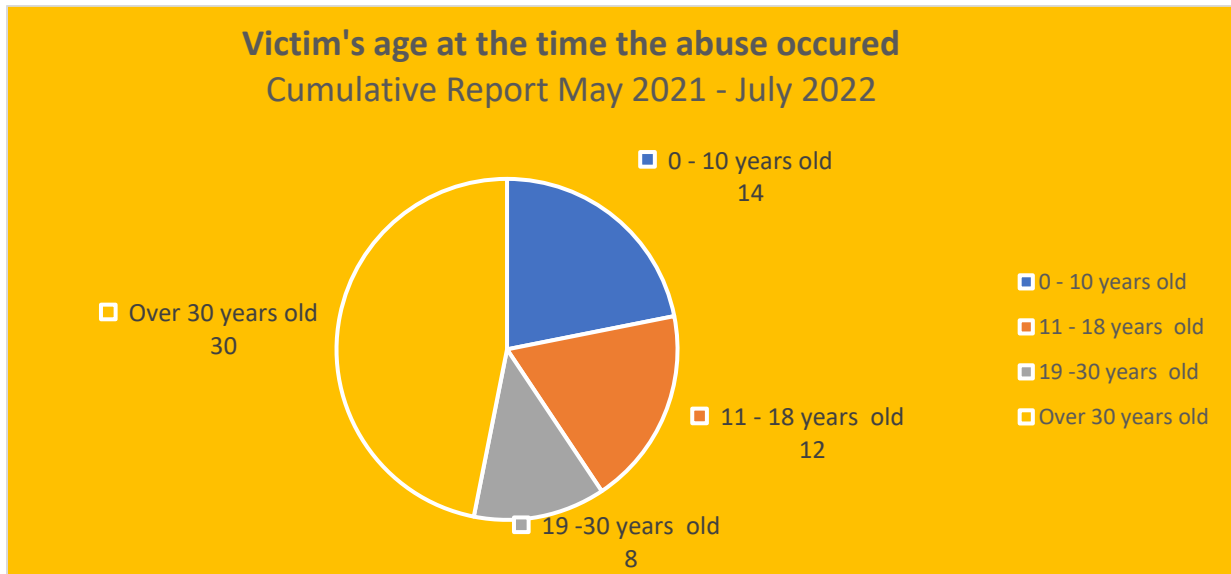
The complaints relate to events that took place from the 1950s to the present day and some complaints relate to abuses that span more than a decade, particularly in the case of the abuse suffered by the Duplessis orphans.



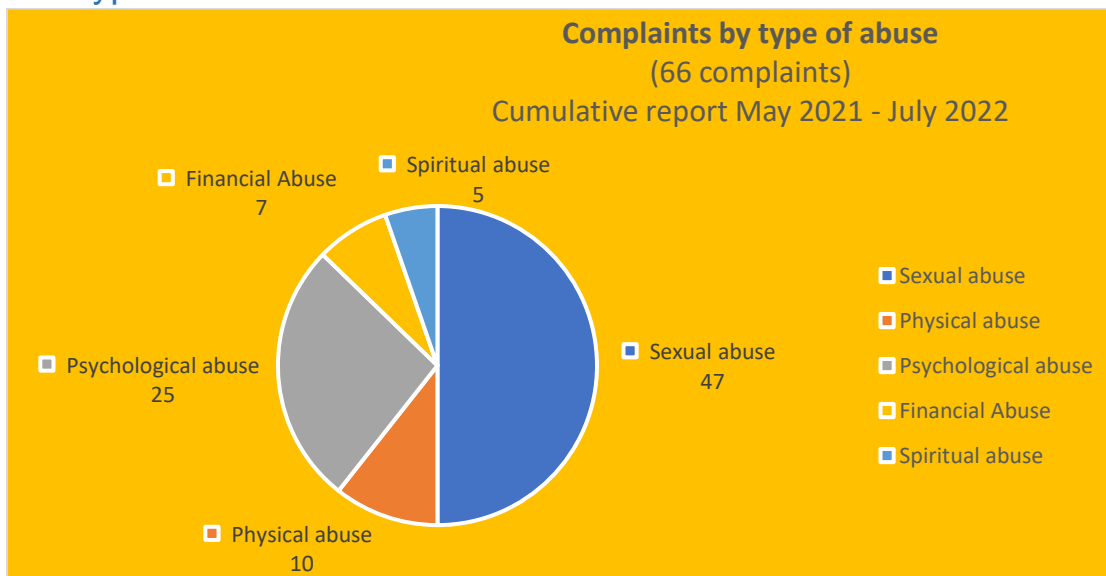
⁵ Some complaints target more than one person.

The age of the victims:

The ages of the victims at the time of the abuse range from elementary school children to adults over 80 years old. It should be noted that in cases of repeated abuse, victims may fall into more than one age category.



The type of abuse⁶ :



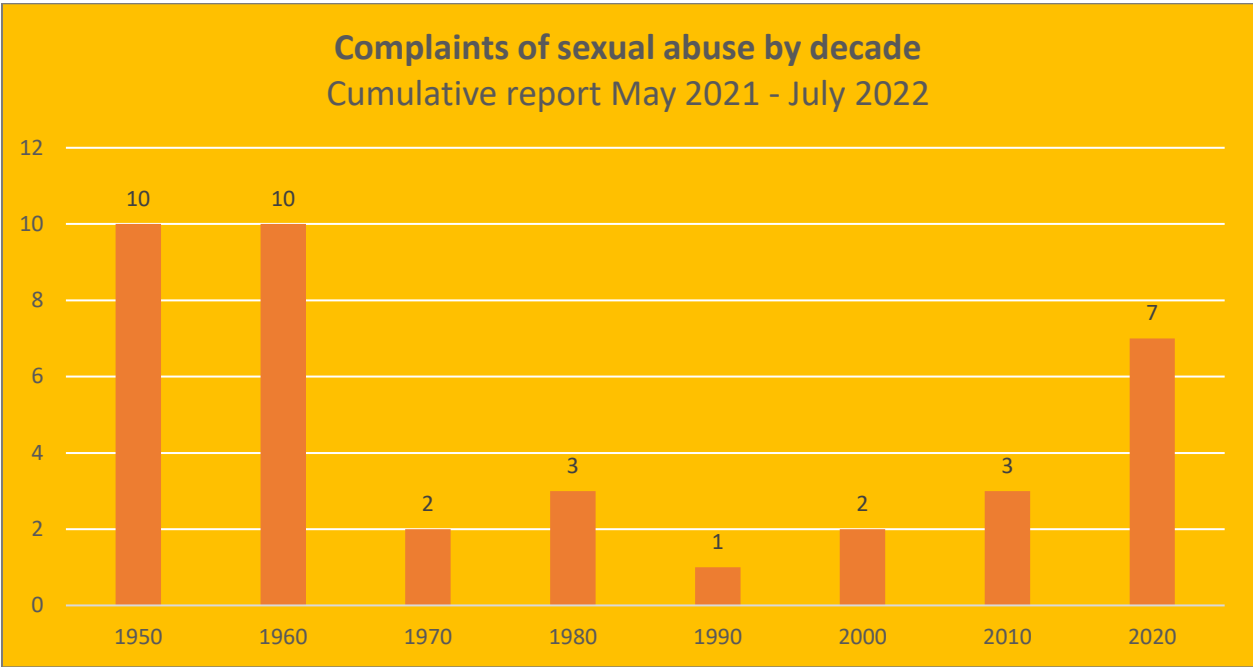
⁶ Please note that some complaints contain more than one form of abuse.

In the case of sexual abuse (3 cases or 56,9% of complaints received), **42,5%** of victims were victims of repeated abuse. In the case of physical abuse (10 cases or 17,3% of complaints received), **80%** of them suffered repeated acts of violence.

The specificity of sexual abuse

The decades concerned :

Sexual abuse reported by decade :



Age of the victims of sexual abuse:

As to the victims, their age at the time the abuse took place is as follows:



It is worth noting that the median age of the victims at the time the abuse took place is increasing, a shift from previous reports as illustrated by the following appendix:

Date of the report :	Minors	Majors
December 2021	66,7%	33,3%
March 2022	67,8%	32,3%
July 2022 :	55,9%	44,1%

As a cumulative percentage, the age groups of victims of sexual abuse in complaints referred to the Advisory Committee to date break down as follows:

- Ten years old and younger: 29,4%;
- 11 to 18 years old: 26,5%;
- From 19 to 30 years old: 14,7%;
- Over 30 years old : 29,4,0%.

One item remains constant, the abuses, whether sexual, physical or psychological perpetrated during the 1950s and 1960s were mainly committed by members of religious communities.

Complaints referred to the Office du personnel pastoral (OPP):

Since my last report, the OPP was seized of six (6) new complaints, for a total of 24 complaints since I became Ombudsman. They mainly concern issues between employees and members of the clergy or between the churchwardens of a *fabrique* and a member of the clergy.

The majority of these complaints have already been dealt with.

Complaints referred to the Vicars Generals :

Since April 1, 2022, the Vicars Generals were forwarded 16 new complaints bringing the total of complaints they have received since I took office to 41 complaints of various natures:

- problems related to funerals which do not involve members of the clergy;
- problems related to cemeteries;
- genealogical research;
- work relations;
- opposition to the vaccine passport;
- apostasy requests untreated (10) including 9 under the former Chancellor.
- ... *etc.*

They were all taken care of quickly. Some are still being processed.

Other Complaints or Requests Received

In my capacity as Ombudsman, I also receive requests that do not fall strictly within the complaint process, amongst other inquiries about the process for apostatizing. All of these people received the information requested to help them in their efforts, i.e., 17 in total.

Conclusion :

As can be seen, the complaints concern increasingly contemporary facts (42.5% in the 2020s). I see it as proof in particular that the change initiated with the establishment of this system is working and that together we can put an end to all forms of abuse.

Once again, I assure in advance all people who would like to contact me of my listening and my understanding of what they have lived or are still living and my unwavering support throughout the complaint process.

Me Marie Christine Kirouack, *Ad.E.*

Ombudsman for the Archdiocese of Montreal