

IRELAND'S SHIFTY "MASS GRAVE"

AUTHOR

The pushback against false accusations made about priests and nuns in Ireland has begun, but to really have an effect, those who have made sensationalistic charges must be held accountable. This would certainly include Catherine Corless, the Galway typist behind the "mass grave" hoax. She needs to explain herself. Just consider three inconsistent comments she made in June 2014.

On June 1, 2014, Irish Central ran a news story by Cahir O'Doherty, "Galway Historian Reveals Truth Behind 800 Orphans in Mass Grave." Corless is quoted about her discovery saying, "There's nothing on the ground there to mark the grave [in Tuam, outside the Mother and Baby Home], there's nothing to say it's a massive children's graveyard. It's laid abandoned like that since it was closed in 1961."

On June 13, 2014, the Guardian published a story that conflicts with the Irish Central account. Gone is the certainty about "800 Orphans in [a] Mass Grave." Amelia Gentleman's interview with Corless reveals much speculation. We learn, for example, that Corless "suggested that many of the bodies may have been put in a disused septic tank." She *suggested* that *many* of the bodies *may have* been put there. Why the tentativeness? That's not what she told O'Doherty.

Gentleman's story offers more unresolved issues. "The facts of the case remain uncertain." This is accurate, which calls into question Corless' cocksure comments about a "mass grave." Also, the reporter says, "Corless's theory is untested." Precisely. It was never more than a theory.

There's more. Gentleman says that only an excavation can settle this issue, because "no one knows if this really is

where the bodies lie.” So true. So why are Corless and Irish Central so sure they are right?

“The scale of the belated outcry probably has something to do with the way her research was reported,” Gentleman writes, “with much coverage glossing over the uncertainty and presenting the 796-bodies-in-a-septic-tank theory as proven fact, which Corless never claimed.” Corless is quoted as saying, “I can’t prove it.”

Then why did she tell Irish Central, and many other media outlets, a different story? As recently as March 4, 2017, Irish Central wrote a story based on her research that contradicts what Corless told Gentleman. The headline read, “Tuam Mass Infant Grave Confirmed.” The government report on this subject (it appeared March 3rd) did not even mention anything about a “mass grave,” so what was the basis of this accusation? On March 8, an Irish Central story said, “Just last week 800 babies were found buried, abandoned in an unmarked grave in Tuam.”

Neither Corless nor Irish Central has ever offered proof of this remarkable claim. Where are the pictures?

The third story from June 2014 that raises more questions about Corless’ shifting account was a YouTube interview that was posted on June 26 of that year. She said she was told by locals from Tuam that before the Home was demolished in the 1970s, there was a graveyard outside the Home, one with “tiny markers there.” There were “bits of stones left to indicate graves.” The area subsequently evolved into “an absolute wilderness.”

Those “tiny markers” suggest there was a cillin graveyard there—a graveyard for children. If that is the case, then there is no “mass grave.” More important, why did Corless on June 1 tell Irish Central that “there’s nothing in the ground there to mark the grave”?

Corless has been allowed to get away with her inconsistent renderings precisely because her most damning yarn about a “mass grave” is music to the ears of Catholic bashers. Her story only feeds more Catholic bashing. It’s time Corless was asked to explain herself.