

Juan Cuatrecasas, overcoming child abuses

escrito por Ane Lopez de Aguilera | febrero 16, 2023



Juan Cuatrecasas. Picture of Ane López de Aguilera
Today I was able to speak briefly with Juan Cuatrecasas at the opening of the exhibition on child abuse that will be touring Europe. On 12 August, he received a letter from the Pope, informing him of his decision to reopen his case before a new ecclesiastical tribunal. Eleven years earlier, she had been abused by a man who was sentenced by the Spanish Supreme Court to two years in prison. The exhibition that opened today in Bilbao, and which will

travel throughout Europe, gives us the opportunity for the whole of society to reflect and act on the prevention of child sexual abuse, whoever the perpetrator, as it occurs in all types of institutions and contexts.

There is always a beginning, and in it a very brave person who can be a woman, a man or of any gender, in this case it has been Juan. You can find a lot of information on the internet about his case, about the exhibition and the wonderful institutions and people who have supported him. Here I just want to tell you about what you have not been able to experience directly in the public act I attended as a collaborator of *Diario Feminista*. Although I am a researcher on this subject, I could not contain the emotion generated by the tears that came from the depths of each victim and survivor who were able to attend. Of course, I respected their wishes, some of them did not want any contact with the press and this usually happens not only because of fear but also because there is a press that sometimes treats them very badly due to sensationalism or, with no ill will, due to ignorance.

Juan was surrounded by journalists who will surely do reports today that will contribute to overcoming impunity for abuses, to start legislating and for us to act as upstanders, overcoming the isolating gender violence against those who support. He has treated me, he has treated us, very well. And the most important thing is his words, which I transcribe below because it is worth reading them directly, reflecting on them, discussing them and, as he asks, taking action.

DF: First of all, we admire your courage. What does society have to do to support people like you who have taken this step?

Juan Cuatrecasas: As soon as someone observes some kind of

strange behaviour that may indicate that something like this is happening, act and don't look the other way. On a professional level, above all, a lot of empathy and training in this type of issue because sometimes it is taken for granted that people know and they really do not.

DF: Do you finally feel today the support that victims deserve?

JC: Yes, my family and I and the rest of the victims have been silent for a long time, and today was a very important step, but there is still a long way to go because this, especially at the legislative level, needs to be closed and something more needs to be done.