

# Priest who molested boys gets three years' probation

By Lisa Wright Toronto Star

A 63-year-old priest who molested two boys from his Scarborough parish has been given three years' probation.

Rev. Angus Alexander McRae, a former associate pastor at St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, pleaded guilty yesterday to sexual exploitation and sexual interference for fondling the buttocks of the boys, aged 12 and 14, several times over the last year.

McRae often discussed erections and masturbation with the older boy, Crown Attorney Mary Hall told Scarborough Provincial Court.

"He would greet him with a slap on the bottom" and frequently squeezed his buttocks through his clothing, the crown said.

When the older boy began avoiding him after telling him to "keep his hands off," McRae started to get friendly with the 12-year-old boy and fondling his buttocks "whenever he had the opportunity." The incidents continued until this May, Hall said.

## Boys complained

The boys finally complained about the priest's behavior to church officials, which prompted calls to the Catholic Children's Aid Society and Metro police. After McRae was charged June 27, the Toronto archdiocese relieved him of his pastoral duties and asked him to leave the church residence.

Ontario Supreme Court Justice Alex Davidson said it was fortunate the children "were street-wise enough to know that these were the actions of a man who had some serious psychological problems."

McRae has since had a psychological assessment and will undergo continued care as recommended, defence attorney Frank Mar-

rocco said.

In the next few days, he is to return to a small farming community on the outskirts of Edmonton to live with his sister. He is barred from any more parish work for life, on the recommendation of Judicial Vicar Edward Boehler of the Toronto archdiocese.

The judge also ruled McRae is not to associate with anyone under the age of 18 unless accompanied by an adult.

It is the second known conviction for the former military chaplain, who had received a four-year sentence in 1980 after being convicted of three sex charges involving a boy. Metro police say he only served 10 months of that sentence and could have faced up to 10 years imprisonment for his latest conviction.

## Brief appearance

Wearing a rumpled blue blazer but no cleric's collar, McRae bowed his head and appeared flushed during the rushed court proceedings that lasted about 20 minutes.

The judge said it was in McRae's favor that he pleaded guilty, saving the victims the agony of a lengthy trial.

"The accused will no longer be used as an effective member of the church and will no longer have the opportunity to exhibit this kind of conduct," Davidson said.

The parents of the boys are convinced their children have received no long-term psychological harm from the incidents and are "very anxious to see the matter resolved with no further embarrassment," the crown said.

Toronto archdiocese spokesman Suzanne Scorsone said the church is satisfied the priest was brought to justice because it has cast a bad light on the Roman Catholic community.