

Priest will return to court for sentencing in September

From Front
Second Victim From Deep River

The second victim, now 55, was abused when he was an altar boy in Deep River. He was between 11 and 12 at the time. The statement said his parents were very involved in the church and Father Miller would visit the family residence. Since the family was not well-to-do, the priest would invite the boy to movies. Once, after a movie trip to Ottawa, they stopped to spend the night at Father Miller's mother's home in Renfrew. They slept in the same bed and while the boy was in bed, Father Miller began running his hands on the boy's stomach. He then pulled down the boy's underwear and felt his penis. The abuse went on for 15 minutes. This abuse occurred more than three times, but

less than seven times according to the court record. The victim believed he was the only one until he heard about the charges against Father Miller last year.

Third Victim

The third victim, now 52, was also abused when he was a boy in Deep River and Father Miller was at our Lady of Good Counsel. The boy was nine years old when Father Miller molested him. The boy had gone to Renfrew with Father Miller and was in bed at the home of Father Miller's mother. The priest began by asking him if he was ticklish and tickling him, eventually putting his hands to the boys genitals. According to the statement, the boy became catatonic at this point and Father Miller never asked him to touch him. However, the statement said Miller did tell him

he would get into a lot of trouble if he ever told anyone.

Fourth Victim

The fourth victim is now 45 and the incidents occurred when he was 10 years old and Father Miller was a priest at St. John Chrysostom in Arnprior. The boy's mother was receiving counselling from the priest and the priest would take the young boy on outings, including the fair in Renfrew and skiing in Calabogie. One time, when they went to Renfrew they spent the night at the home of the priest's mother. When he woke in the morning, the court record heard the priest had his hands over the boy's penis. The victim asked him to put his hand away. At this point, they were called down for breakfast. When the priest dropped the boy off at home, he told him, "some people do bad things and people who do bad things go to hell."

This victim continued to have dealings with Father Miller, who bought him his first legal beer when the young man turned 19. Eventually, the victim had serious substance abuse problems and tried to commit suicide in 2010. When he saw a media report about the charges against the priest, he came forward to police.

Fifth Victim

The fifth victim is now 49 and the abuse occurred when he was in Grade 5 and was about 10 years old. The abuse occurred in Renfrew at the home of the priest's mother. The priest began by drawing on the boy's back and then moving to draw on his chest. He put his hands down into the boy's underwear and asked if he knew what his testicles were. The boy told him they were his balls. The priest then asked the boy to draw on his stomach and go lower, but the boy refused. When he was a young man in the 1990s, he refused to get married in the Catholic Church and eventually told his mother about the abuse.

She would confront the priest, slap him and go on to speak to the bishop about the matter. He would later contact the OPP about the abuse.

Sylvia MacEachern, whose blog site www.theinquiry.ca deals with the trials of priests accused of sexually molesting children, said the atmosphere in the courtroom on Monday was highly unusual for a case of this nature.

Father Miller kept locking eyes with people in the courtroom and hallway and smiling, which is unusual, she noted. Most priests accused of a crime of this nature, or who have pled guilty, avoid eye contact with the public.

"He watched people coming and going and would nod and smile," she said.

Keeping the profile of these cases high is important to her.

"I just believe a priest sexually abusing a child has to be the most abhorrent crime on earth," she said. "It breaks my heart what these victims go through."

After watching the proceedings on several trials, she is also disappointed in how the justice system responds to a finding of guilt, she said.

"We have a judiciary who are soft on child abuse," she said. "I get tired of hearing this is an abhorrent crime and then they get house arrest for it."

A practicing Catholic, she has not let the actions of a few men hinder her in her faith. Rather she hopes by making these stories public, more victims will have the courage to speak up.

"It is educating the public so people are aware," she said. "It is confronting the men who do this."

The sentencing hearing for Father Miller will be held in Pembroke on September 17. Father Miller remains free until the sentencing hearing.



Father Dan Miller and Diocese of Pembroke Chancellor Msgr. Douglas Brydge walk to the Pembroke Courthouse on Monday afternoon. Father Miller pled guilty to five counts of sexual misconduct with pre-teen and early teen boys.

Photo courtesy Sylvia MacEachern.



Father Dan Miller and Diocese of Pembroke Chancellor Msgr. Douglas Brydge leave the Pembroke Courthouse. Father Miller, who pled guilty to molesting five boys, will return to court in September for a sentencing hearing.

Photo courtesy Sylvia MacEachern

Catholic board announces changes, locally, St. James will have a new principal

Eganville -- The first changes in administrative positions in Catholic elementary schools were announced last week by the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board and there will be a change of command at St. James School in Eganville. Principal Elizabeth Burchat, who was a .5 system

principal and .5 principal at St. James, will transfer to her home school community of St. Casimir's in Round Lake Centre effective this September. She

will continue on as a .5 system principal. Maureen McHale-Enright of Douglas, who has been a .5 principal at St. James and George Vanier School (GVS) in Combermere, has been named the new principal of GVS. Jody Weller, who is currently principal at St. Joseph's in Calabogie, will assume the position at St. James. In other changes, Scott Nichol, vice-principal at

Our Lady of Sorrows in Petawawa, has been named interim principal for Holy Name in Pembroke, and Shelley Montgomery, currently principal at St. Anthony's in Chalk River, becomes a .5 system principal and remains a .5 principal at Chalk River. The board will announce a new principal for Calabogie, a .5 principal for Chalk River and an acting principal for Petawawa at a later date.

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