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Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith **Prize-Winning Solo Show** **to get NY Premiere at Midtown International Theatre Festival**

Gad may forgive Michael Mack's abuser, but should Mack?

As a part of the 15th Anniversary Season of the **Midtown International Theatre Festival**, Michael Mack will perform the NY premiere of his acclaimed solo show ***Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith***, which will run from **Monday, July 14** thru **Saturday, August 2** at the **Jewel Box Theater** (312 West 36th St, 4th Floor). Spanning four decades after his childhood experience of clergy sexual abuse, Mack's award-winning solo play is his spiritual autobiography charting the crime, the damage, and his astonishing, redemptive return to the Catholic Church.

Written by and starring Michael Mack, and featuring direction from Boston stage veteran Daniel Gidron, the production premiered in Boston in 2012 at the 10-year anniversary of the clergy sexual abuse crisis. It won an Artist Grant for Dramatic Writing from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the state's most competitive and prestigious individual arts fellowship. Mack's autobiographical work goes where few have ventured on this topic – depicting one clergy survivor's odyssey full-circle from life-changing trauma to genuine reconciliation.

As a boy from a devout Roman Catholic family, Boston-based playwright Michael Mack wanted to be a priest. That dream ended at age 11 when his pastor first invited him to the rectory to help with "a project." Mack soon left the Church, haunted for decades by disturbing questions about spirituality and sexuality, but forty years later he landed on his former pastor's doorstep for the conversations of a lifetime.

Mack's play about his odyssey from clergy sexual abuse as a child to healing as an adult has received widespread acclaim for its "powerful conversations" (*The Washington Post*). Its complex, nuanced portrait has also netted rave reviews from Catholic parishioners, clergy, and even the Boston Archdiocese itself.

"The play is about healing," said Mack, who refers to his work as a kind of ministry. "I never became a priest, but I've always felt a spiritual calling. This play is my effort at reconciliation and social justice." To that end, Mack will present an audience talkback at **NYC's 2nd-largest Catholic church, the Church of St. Paul the Apostle**, joined by its pastor Father Gil Martinez, on Monday, July 21st at 7pm. Free and open to the public.

2014 marks Year 15 for the Midtown International Theatre Festival (MITF) and producer John Chatterton is celebrating in a big way. Chatterton has been a prolific fixture of the Manhattan theatre scene for two decades. For the past 15 years, his brainchild MITF has been celebrating the diversity of theatre and has become a leader in presenting powerful works from around the world – and one of the best reasons to come to New York in the summer. The once bachelor MITF now has a full family of arts programs: The Short Play Lab, which will be part of this year's festivities; Cabaret MITF – featuring Broadway and cabaret performers – will also be part of the festival; and the Commercial Division spotlighting works whose production values and subject matter are the stuff for Off- [and on] Broadway; and, of course, the founding Midtown International Theatre Festival itself. The Midwinter Madness Short Play Festival and the new MITF Children's Theatre Festival shared in the fun earlier this year.

Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith will run from **Monday, July 14** thru **Saturday, August 2** at the **Jewel Box Theatre** (312 West 36th St, 4th Floor) with performances on **Mon. 7/14 at 6pm**, **Sat. 7/19 at 8:30pm**, **Wed. 7/30 at 6pm**, **Thu. 7/31 at 8pm** and **Sat. 8/2 at 1pm**. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online at www.MidtownFestival.org.

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