

For Immediate Release

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Michael Mack as a boy dreamed of being a priest – until his pastor invited him to the rectory. Forty years later, Mack returned to reclaim his church and his ministry. A true story of betrayal, grace, and the power to heal.

Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith

Written & Performed by Michael Mack
Directed by Daniel Gidron
Previews begin September 17
The Bridge Theatre
244 West 54th Street, 12th Floor, New York

New York – On the eve of Pope Francis' historic visit to New York City, poet and playwright Michael Mack returns to NYC for a professional run of his "powerful" (*Washington Post*) and "profound" (*Times Square Chronicles*) one-man play **Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith**. In this spiritual autobiography, Mack recounts how a childhood trauma launched a 40-year search for healing – at first away from, and then back to, the Roman Catholic Church.

Mack, like many Catholic boys in the 1960s, wanted to be a priest. That dream ended at age 11 when his pastor invited him to the rectory to help make "a costume." In the decades that followed, Mack wrestled with haunting questions about sexuality and spirituality, imagining one day meeting his abuser for a conversation. Forty years later he had that chance, and landed on his former pastor's doorstep.

Directed by Daniel Gidron, Mack's lyric monologue premiered in Boston at the 10-year anniversary of the clergy sexual abuse crisis in Boston – the epicenter of the crisis. It subsequently played in nearby Roman Catholic churches before touring the northeast and enjoying an award-winning run (Best Script award, Best Solo Play nomination) at the 2014 Midtown International Theatre Festival.

Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith chronicles the events that drove Mack away from the Catholic Church, but also how the Church teachings he cherished as a boy gave him the strength and resilience to return.

Father Michael McGarry, CSP, as President of the Paulist Fathers – an order of Roman Catholic priests – called it "well-written, witty, insightful, engaging, and true... a powerful experience not to be missed."

Like Pope Francis in his historic visit, Michael Mack comes to New York on a mission of faith. Mack's pulpit is the stage, and his message is the reality of healing. The play itself explores the nature of reconciliation, forgiveness, and renewal, but the conversation continues after most performances with audience talkbacks that include Mack and guest speakers.

Previews begin September 17, with opening night scheduled for Thursday, September 24 – the day Pope Francis arrives in NYC. The Bridge Theatre is located 244 West 54th Street, 12th floor, New York, NY.

www.michaelmacklive.com

As part of the production, Mack is partnering with Voice of the Faithful, a Catholic lay group dedicated to supporting abuse survivors in their healing journey. VOTF will facilitate a daylong Healing Circle on Saturday, September 19th in the theatrical venue, in advance of the evening performance.

www.michaelmacklive.com

Poet, playwright, and performer Michael Mack graduated from the Writing Program at MIT. His poems and stories have aired on NPR and been published in *Best Catholic Writing* (both 2005 & 2007), *America*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and the *Beloit Poetry Journal*. Awards include First Prize in the Writers Circle National Poetry Competition, and Fellowships in Dramatic Writing from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (both 2005 & 2013) – the state's most prestigious and competitive individual arts grant.

Mack has performed at the US Library of Congress, Yale University, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, the Austin International Poetry Festival, the Times Square Arts Center, and at the FBI's 32nd Annual Hostage Negotiation Seminar. He has also performed at scores of venues for consumers and providers of mental health services, including McLean Psychiatric Hospital, the NAMI National Conference, and for faculty and students of the Harvard Medical School.