

## ***Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith*** **Presented in Catholic Church as Lenten Symbol**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In the Lenten spirit of reconciliation, poet, playwright and performer Michael Mack will perform his solo play *Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith* at 7:30pm on March 29th at his own Catholic church – St. Paul's in Harvard Square. Mack's autobiographical show brings him full circle from his childhood experience of clergy sexual abuse to his spiritual return to the Church decades later.

Mack, a Cambridge resident, received rave reviews for his new work, directed by Daniel Gidron, after the 90-minute lyric play debuted in January 2012 at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre at Boston University. St. Paul parishioners proclaimed as "brilliant" and "sensitive" his portrayal of a very difficult subject as he took them on an "unforgettable" journey of "remarkable beauty." Barbara Thorp, LICSW, Director of Pastoral Support and Children Protection for the Boston archdiocese called the play "a powerful journey of healing and reconciliation."

Now, with the support of several church groups, as well as Barbara Thorp and Father Michael Drea, pastor at St. Paul's, Mack will perform his dramatic memoir, which chronicles how his childhood experience of being sexually abused by a priest drove him away from the Church, but was also instrumental to his recovery and return.

"Lent is a time for self-examination in preparation for Easter's new beginning," Mack said, "a chance for Church members at all levels to own the past and reconcile with it. It's a fitting season for this play."

When he was 11, Mack was invited to the rectory by his favorite priest to help with "a project" – an event that would leave Mack deeply shaken. In the decades that followed, long after he left the Church, Mack wrestled with troubling questions about spirituality and sexuality. He imagined one day meeting his abuser for a conversation, and in 2008 had that chance. He landed on his former priest's doorstep, and what happened next was beyond anything he had imagined.

Mack's performances coincide with the 10-year anniversary of the spotlight series by *The Boston Globe* that sparked the clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Boston archdiocese. The crisis subsequently surged worldwide, reaching the highest levels of Church authority, and prompting unprecedented reforms.

"One of the biggest surprises was my return to the Church," Mack says. "What happened to me as a child profoundly shaped me, but life – like writing – is about discovery."

Mack, a graduate of the MIT Writing Program, is an acclaimed Cambridge poet best known for his multi-character solo play *Hearing Voices, Speaking in Tongues* – about his mother's life with, and recovery from, schizophrenia. Mack has been much in demand for the play, which he began while a student at MIT, and has since performed at the US Library of Congress, Off-Off-Broadway at the Times Square Arts Center, at Harvard and Yale universities, and for scores of mental health conferences – even at the FBI's 32nd Annual Hostage Negotiation Seminar. Learn more at [www.michaelmacklive.com](http://www.michaelmacklive.com)

Michael Mack will perform *Conversations with My Molester: a Journey of Faith* at 7:30pm on Thursday, March 29th in DiGiovanni Hall, Saint Paul Catholic Church, 29 Mount Auburn St., Harvard Square, Cambridge. Tickets are \$15 as a suggested goodwill donation, and may be purchased at the door, or reserved by calling Carol at 617-666-2855.