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## **Catholic Paulist Center Tackles Church Abuse Legacy Hosts "Conversations with My Molester" To Promote Healing**

**[Boston, MA]** In a remarkable alliance between the Catholic Church and a clergy sexual abuse survivor, Boston's Paulist Center community will host four performances by playwright Michael Mack of his autobiographical play "Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith" from January 11th to February 2nd. Discussions after each show will focus on healing, and will feature Mack and one of the Paulist Fathers -- an order of Roman Catholic priests -- welcoming into a "conversation" anyone scarred by clergy abuse.

"We open the doors of the Paulist Center to Michael Mack's fine play in the hopes that 'Conversations With My Molester' might open the hearts of those who have been wounded by the clergy sexual abuse scandal," Paulist Father Rick Walsh said.

In his solo play, Mack recounts the conversations that helped to restore his faith after being sexually abused as a boy. "Father Walsh is offering a remarkable opportunity for frank dialogue -- one that mirrors key conversations in my own journey. It's art come to life. The play at its heart is about reconciliation and social justice -- which is also the mission of the Paulists."

Fr. Rick Walsh agreed to be the face of the clergy in a candid question-and-answer session following each performance at the order's downtown Boston landmark location. He hopes that an empathic dialogue can help survivors find their way to their spiritual home -- whether in the Catholic faith or outside it.

"We have not forgotten," said Fr. Walsh. "This is a story that needs to be told -- and a story that needs to be heard."

"Conversations with My Molester: A Journey of Faith" is a 90-minute lyric play directed by Boston stage veteran Daniel Gidron. It portrays Mack's full-circle sojourn from his clergy sexual abuse as a child to his spiritual return to the Church decades later. The play netted rave reviews when it debuted nearly a year ago at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre at Boston University.

Two months later in March, Mack filled the hall of his own St. Paul's Catholic Church in Harvard Square with another moving performance. And now Boston's Paulist Center -- known for its focus on reconciliation and social justice -- has embraced Mack's play for a 4-weekend run.

When he was 11, Mack's favorite priest invited him to the rectory to help with "a project" -- an event that would leave Mack deeply shaken, and wrestling 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, 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)

"Conversations with My Molester: a Journey of Faith" will be performed over four consecutive weekends at the Paulist Center, located at 5 Park Street in Boston -- half a block from the Park Street MBTA station. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$15.

Friday, Jan. 11	7:30pm
Sunday, Jan. 20	2:00pm
Friday, Jan. 25	7:30pm
Saturday Feb. 2	7:30pm