

It is with fear and a very strong urge to do anything else but this, that I pick up a pen.

After many months of therapy and sleepless nights, I can now face these feelings of shame, abuse and anger. As a child, I thought what was happening was what God intended, and as I grew older I didn't think anyone would believe me, or care. I believed that in order for someone to love you it must hurt you in some way, love equaled abuse.

As a child I was sexually abused by a parish priest, Father John Cotter at St. Theresa's of Avila in West Roxbury MA. A man who to me, as a child being brought up as a catholic, was someone to respect, love, and aspire to be like. As a child I thought that a priest was the closest thing to God. And because of this admiration and respect that was nurtured in my environment how could I imagine that this priest could bring me any harm, suffering, or pain. They were supposed to be personifications of Jesus, and treat children with love and kindness, like little sheep.

One of the first memories of the sexual abuse was when the Boy Scouts had swimming time at Curtis Hall in Jamaica Plain. It was every wed. night I believe. What did not seem strange then but now is somewhat alarming is that it was swimming, it the nude, with private dressing booths.

Fr. Cotter would fondle me in the shallow end of the pool, and in the dressing

I was not a boyscout yet I was a weblow the stage between cubscouts and boyscouts My [redacted] brother and I were allowed to go because my older brother went.

Under the pretense of teaching me how to swim or float always got me toward the shallow edge of the pool, away from the older boys who were at the other end of the pool. He would play with my [redacted] while holding me on top of the water telling me to move my arms and kick my legs

Also I would be on my back he would hold my up and say he was helping me to learn how to float while he would put his finger in my [redacted] I remember that I wanted to get away and be with the other kids

I would tense up afraid that one of the other kids would see, or what they would say. But Fr. Cotter said I still wasn't ready to go into the deep end of the pool. I also was scared of what Fr. Cotter would say or do if I protested.

On occasions he would find a way to get me into a dressing booth while the other kids were still in the pool. He would play with my [redacted] and he would put my [redacted] in his mouth.

This was almost a weekly occurrence.

I can remember having rectal pains when my brothers and I would run to catch the bus home I remember sitting on the bus feeling flushed with shame hoping no one would notice and

the bus would hit a bump or pothole to
spare myself further rectal pain

On several occasions the abuse took
place in the storage room that the Scouts had
in the basement of the Rectory or in the
mens room there as well.

On one camping trip at the Blue Hills
called the "Deep Freeze" Fr. Cotter sexual
abused me a few times. Twice the abuse
where he fondled me took place in an abandoned
Adirondack, once in the adirondack we were
sleeping in and twice in a cabin that
was on the camp grounds. I remember there
was to be some kind of race between the
Scouts, but Fr. Cotter had me go with him
instead that's when he brought me up to
the empty adirondack, we were there for
a long time, I never got to see the race

On another occasion my parents,
brothers and I were at the [redacted]'s
cottage on Lake Suncook in New Hampshire.

I had been swimming and had gone upstairs
to change in the bedroom just above the
narrow stair case. Fr. Cotter came in while
I was changing out of my bathing suit.

He had me sit down on the bed naked
This time he played with my genitals and
pinched at my stomach rather roughly.

I remember being horrified with fright
because I could see my parents outside by
the edge of the lake. I was terrified
at the roughness in which Fr. Cotter was

close to people, who might find out what was going on.

At some point one of the [redacted] [redacted] came up the stairs. Fr Cotter threw a blanket or towel over my groin area as well as his. I remember being horrified because his erection was pointing out under the blanket and thought for sure the [redacted] had noticed. Fr Cotter told him something, what it was I don't remember, but he went back down stairs. Fr Cotter was now either angry or scared. He made me pull on his [redacted] and he inserted his finger in my [redacted]. He was very rough and stopped abruptly and left me alone.

I eventually went down to the lake front and sat down. My father came over and asked me something I don't remember the question nor the answer. I was so terrified that the [redacted] had seen something and told my father.

It is only now that I realize the [redacted] boy didn't see or suspect anything. Because if he had told my father, I'm sure my dad would have been upstairs very quickly.

Fr Cotter also tried to fool around up at the sand pit that was close to the cottage off to the right of the dirt road. I think he was afraid of people in the woods and on the road so he stopped after a while.

In July of 1973 I was at Adams Pond Scout Camp in New Hampshire, Fr Cotter took me twice to a cabin in the woods and had me take off my clothes he was naked as well he put his [redacted] in my mouth and told me to lick at it. He also inserted his finger up my [redacted]

I had a case of swimmers ear in both ears and I was in a great deal of pain. Fr Cotter took me to Dr Kelly in Pittsfield NH. Fr Cotter seemed very protective during the visit to the doctors. When I look back on it now I think maybe he was afraid that I would say something about the sexual abuse because I was so sick and in a great deal of pain.

When we got back from the doctor's in Pittsfield they were taking troop pictures across from the infirmary next to the mess hall. I was the only scout out of uniform. I was wearing a royal blue fleece sweatshirt when the photo was taken.

He took me to the infirmary where I was put to bed with the understanding that I was to be brought back to Boston in the morning. At some point I was woken and father Cotter took me back to his tent. He had me get undressed and get inside his sleeping bag with him. He was naked and he held me very close for a long time.

After holding me he rubbed my stomach in a circular motion for a while. He played

I was very sick and his touch felt
contacting at first. I felt something other
than his finger at my [redacted]. He slowly pushed
his [redacted] in my [redacted] while he held me by my
stomach. He whispered in my ear and told me that
it was alright and that it wouldn't hurt. Early the
next morning he woke me up and had me go back
into my sleeping bag and go back to sleep.
When I woke up I was frightened by
both the pain in my ears and the pain in
my [redacted]. Fr. Cotter comforted me and told me
to calm down and that everything would be
alright. I believed that as long as I was
with Fr. Cotter I would be safe.

He took me to a cabin where he
fendled me and put his [redacted] in my mouth.
We drove back to Boston after that
He drove a green Plymouth Station wagon.
On the way home he pulled my pants down
and yegged on my [redacted] and [redacted]. He
made me do the same to him. As we
got closer to home he made a stop.
He told me to pull up my pants.
As we drove along he repeatedly told
me to make sure I told no one about
our special friendship.

I rember going to the doctor with my
mother and Mrs. Donnelly and being poked
in the ears with instruments, the pain in my
[redacted] however seemed worse and I was so
frightend to say anything because of the
promise I made to Fr. Cotter not to

The medications for the pain helped to calm things down a bit in my mind and also helped with the pain in my [redacted]

I remember lying on the big blue sofa in our living room gasping in fear and pain, while the infection in my ears drained out.

I even burnt my ear on the heating pad because I was afraid to move from the position I was in, feeling very protected in my parents home and in my sheets and blankets.

I was afraid to tell anyone about what had happened with Fr. Cotter, because if I did I would lose his friendship and he would tell God I was bad and I would surely burn in the fires of hell.

It was after this that I would become someone else each time the sexual abuse happened. I would watch from far away what was happening and try to tell myself not to cry and that it would be over soon, be brave because God wants it to be this way.

I have very few happy if any at all memories of my last few years at St. Theresa's School and of my childhood at that time.

When I was in seventh grade I served a funeral mass at which I fainted on Jan 16, 1975. When I came to I was sitting on Fr. Cotter's lap in the sacristy.

He was generally concerned for my health but at the same time seemed very distant. I can remember thinking he would hold me and comfort me, but he did not.

for sure that I did something wrong to make him not like me any more. Fr. Cotter sometimes would fondle me in the garage or in the basement of the rectory after seeing mass with him. But this time he seemed angry with me and I was even more confused and hurt.

He would avoid me most of the time after this and I was sure that it was my fault that our special friendship had ended, and that I would surely be punished for making a priest angry.

I remember hating myself for not being like my brother or anyone else that I knew. I often wanted to run away from home, but feared that my parents would track me down and discover my reasons for running away.

So I lived in fear of discovery and became a superficial child living a lie and trying to cover my shame with lie after lie so no one would discover my terrifying secret. I believed that all that was happening to me was in some way my fault and that with all the Catholic guilt instilled in me I was sure to burn in hell.

With the discovery of what Fr. Cotter was doing Mr. Bill Reynolds stopped his abuse of me as well. I've often wondered if Fr. Cotter and Bill Reynolds were in some way a team.

When I was in 8th grade I can remember just wanting to get away from St. Theresa's and out of West Roxbury. I ended up going to Boston College High School in Dorchester MA. Far away from my friends and family, believing that the further away I was the safer my secret was.

When I look back on all of this and try to remember my childhood certain memories bring themselves to the front of my mind again and again.

I used to keep myself from going to the bathroom, until my stomach hurt. When I finally did I used to grip the sink or window sill tightly so that I wouldn't scream in pain. I hated the feeling of any entry or exit of my ~~body~~. I was a helpless child racked with fear that turned itself inward on me.

Some people may find this either extreme or hard to believe, but all you have to do is ask my family. It was a great joke in my house that when I went to the bathroom I would stop up the plumbing. Which would only add to my shame and humiliation.

I also remember the feeling of never being totally clean. I would take long showers trying to scrub myself clean. Before my father would screech that I was using too much water.

All of these horrible things that I experienced forced me to seek an escape from reality. Alcohol was my savior because it dulled my memory and pushed back my fears and made me feel strong. Booze gave to me all of the characteristics of being a man that I in real life lacked.

I started with my grandfathers Old Grand DAD when I was in 5th grade. I then went to taking booze from my parents storage cabinets in the cellar.

Booze allowed me to become the person I wanted to be and made me forget the person

I was,

I drank heavily from 1973 to 1988 when I started to get treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. It was during this treatment that I realized that I needed more therapy in a one on one situation.

The nurse at Reston Hospital gave me names of a few therapists

I went to see Rusty Lynn, and since our first meeting we have been working together to get to this point and beyond.

It has been through many sessions with Rusty that I've begun to come to terms with the horrible past I so wished to forget.