

LOG OF TESTIMONY — KATHLEEN M. DWYER

<p>Kathleen M. Dwyer April 7, 2005</p>	<p>My name is Kathy Dwyer and I'm a survivor of both incest and clergy spiritual, ritual and sexual abuse. I want to thank you for allowing me to record my experiences here so that they can't be swept under a rug. It's very important to me as a survivor, that that happen. Sometimes I think, it may not go under a rug but what file will it go into?</p>	
<p>The most devout families are often the most vulnerable.....</p> <p>Abuse creates vulnerability for further abuse.....</p> <p>Memories repressed, but not the effects.</p>	<p>I grew up in a very rigid, poor, working class Irish family. Church was family and family was church. There really was no difference between the two. I think it's pretty ironic because father was God and God was father and it all blurred. Church was the most important; even more important than being Irish, and that's pretty big, being Irish. My father used to take the poor box around and he strived to be in the K of C (Knights of Columbus) which he eventually did make. And that was partly at my expense I believe.</p> <p>He sexually abused me for a long time. As did my maternal grandfather. Sometimes you'll hear about people who are raped more than once. And I was one of those people, because I was also raped by some neighborhood boys.</p> <p>As I said, church was huge. We did the rosary at night in the house with Cardinal Cushing. I can still hear him, "In the name of the Father..." (K does great imitation). That voice just resonates.</p> <p>And there was something special to me about church. I loved the quietness. We lived very close to the church. I used to sneak through all these different places. Sometimes I would just go visit the church, even after the abuse, because I repressed what happened to me. And I also wound up on the scale of dissociation having different parts that would contain the abuse for me. They would carry it for me so I would walk without that knowledge. But I do want to say, not without the effect. The memories may have been repressed but the effect never was.</p>	<p>1:30</p> <p>2:00</p> <p>3:00</p>

<p>Between 5 and 7 years old.....</p>	<p>So when my father took me to the church I was between 5 and 7 ...</p> <p>(Kathy holds up a picture of herself as a child in her first communion dress.)</p> <p>... it wasn't my first communion but it was around that year. And it was also the year that I was...(Kathy sings)</p> <p>"Oh Mary we crown you with blossoms today." in the Mary procession. Well I was one of the little peasant kids and it was one of the really, really, really big honors. You put the crown on the statue of Mary.</p>	<p>4:00</p>
<p>Difficult to know exact dates of abuse...</p> <p>Ritually and ceremoniously abused by father...</p>	<p>That year they got me also. But that is irrelevant actually (when) it's just that it happened. To be exactly precise about the age is really difficult. I'm one of the few women who doesn't remember exactly when she started menstruating. And that's directly related to the abuse I suffered in part because there seem to be always blood. I've finally come to figure that out. So when was the day it was actually blood from me becoming a woman rather than from me being raped?</p> <p>I do know that when I actually reached puberty was the last time my father abused me. And he did it ritually and ceremoniously. He masturbated the evil out of me over and over and over again. And that was for God that he did it.</p> <p>So again, I just have to say that church and family, family and church. Although he was my biological father he was also church father in a very real way. The priest that abused me was also like family father. It's all, at least for me, just all a blur.</p>	<p>5:00</p>
<p>What happened at the church....</p>	<p>I believe it was a Saturday night and I believe I was seven. He (Kathy's father) came and he got me. It was about 5:00 o'clock. And he took me by the hand and took me where confessions were said and people were married, and where people were married from, and babies were baptized.</p>	<p>6:00</p>

<p>Memories of hooded white robes confirmed...</p> <p>Ritual sacrifice of Kathy's kitten, extremely distressful to recount.</p>	<p>He was holding me strongly by the hand. He was very tense, but that wasn't unusual for him. I guess I want to say, my father was abused also. I don't know the details of his abuse, but if you're kicked out of school in the 4th grade for making trouble, you know he hadn't had an easy life. The church was really his thing.</p> <p>He took me to the church and he was looking around. Then he whisked me downstairs to the basement of the church where the kid's masses were usually said and where confessions were said also. There was a closed section. It looked like an office. I had never been into it. There was a closed door. He took me into it. It was very white. It had in the middle of it what I now think of as a marble altar. It was very plain. And he sat me on the floor and he left. I just sat there. It's amazing how much detail I remember. I've been working on this ever since 1996-97. Anyhow he came back and he had me slip into a little white slip.</p> <p>And then all of a sudden a door opened and these 3 men walk in and they're wearing white, I call them, monk suits. But they weren't brown they were white.</p> <p>And I'll never forget....it was one of the ways I kept trying to think it didn't happen; that it couldn't have happened because I never remember seeing people in the church in these white things. And then I remember I was watching something on TV and all these priests were walking in these white robes with the hoods up. It was devastating. It's just that I didn't remember that priests wore those things.</p> <p>So they had these hoods on. They put me on the altar and took the slip off. NO, before they did that they had a box with them. This is really hard this part. Sometimes I think it's harder for me than the other parts.</p>	<p>7:00</p> <p>8:00</p> <p>9:00</p>
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<p>8-foot mural depicting the abuse made by Kathy.....</p>	<p>The priest reached into the box and pulled out my kitten. It was a white kitten. His name was Snowball. (K staring off into the scene with immense sadness.) I was sitting on the floor and he held Snowball up. He wasn't really...he was kind of, I mean, I now think they must have drugged him. They held him up and then they put a knife in him and opened him up wide. (K continuing to stare into this abyss). You can't see in my mind what I see but there is all this blood dripping into these bowls that were on the altar.</p> <p>(Screen now shows a photo of the 8-foot mural Kathy drew of the abuse.)</p> <p>The first scene shows my father bringing me to the church. The last 2 are of the sacrifice of Snowball.</p> <p>And then he almost like put Snowball on his hand and I could see all the insides. Then he laid him on the altar.</p> <p>(K seems almost in a trance, breathing slowly and deeply) Something I've been learning how to do is breathe. I realize I never knew how to breathe. I spent so much of my life holding my breath...I only breathed enough to sustain life, not live life. So I'm really working hard on learning how to breathe . I really need to breathe right now. I'm holding my breath and I don't even know I'm doing it.</p> <p>They picked me up and it was at that point I saw it was Father Luddy who was this really angry priest at our church. He's like mean; short and fat and angry is how I remember him. The 2 other guys were members of the K of C (Knights of Columbus). They laid me on the altar and they took my slip off. (silent) and they said all sorts of different words. But I want to be real clear. This was Christian it was not Satanic. They were talking about God and they were talking about Christ.</p> <p>Then they took the blood from my kitty and they put it all over my body. And they put parts of my kitty in my</p>	<p>10:00</p> <p>11:00</p> <p>12:00</p> <p>13:00</p>
<p>Christian, not satanic, ritual.....</p>		

<p>Dissociation...</p>	<p>mouth and every single fucking opening I have. (long long silence)</p> <p>All I could see was white and red and red and white. And I couldn't do anything to get anything out of anywhere. And then I went away.</p> <p>And then they brought me down to the floor (silence, staring off) and they made me bend over. And they raped me. They went inside me into my places, into my private places. And it wasn't nice. It was a bad thing to do. (child's voice) I think. (K holds her breath a long time.)</p>	<p>14:00</p>
<p>How can a child survive such trauma...?</p>	<p>And then one day we woke up and we were clean and we were outside playing.....and they weren't there and... and I not remember anymore.</p> <p>And I think then my daddy could get into Knights of Columbus and I don't know. Maybe it was after the next time they did it. I don't know what cat they used the next time. (long silence...going away)</p>	<p>15:00</p>
<p>Not understanding absences....</p> <p>Or your own behaviors...</p>	<p>(Andrea :“Kathy, You okay? Want to take a break?” Kathy: “I think we need to have a Kleenex.”)</p> <p>(It's hard to understand the next words. Deep sadness in her eyes that stare inward.) And you can't just go around thinking about it a lot. You're not going to live if you think about it. Kids can't live through stuff like that.</p> <p>That's why I split off. There's no way we could have lived through it. Plus maybe we always split off with what daddy had done. But it's like, That's what church is. That's what church does. That's what life is. That's what families are. And you just...and so we had parts and they carried it for us.</p> <p>(We see on the screen a drawing Kathy did, a self-portrait dated March 6th, 1997, showing 10 people, all her selves.)</p>	<p>16:00</p> <p>17:00</p>

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