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1. THE ACTS. 11.

Peter's exhortation, &c.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said, not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and I see know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

THE ACTS of the APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

1 THE former treatise have I made, O men of Israel, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When therefore these were come together, they said unto him, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judaea, and in

9 And Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

10 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

11 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

12 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

13 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

14 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels fell out.

15 And it was called in the Hebrew tongue, Akeldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

16 For he is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and so his bishoprick let another take.

17 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

18 Beginning from the time that he

GOOD ONLY KNOWS



Are the sexual abuse claims against Father Joseph Maskell true? Or are they just the flawed memories of former students? Either way, his case joins a staggering list of 500 others targeting American Catholic priests over the past decade, forcing all of us to wonder: What dark undermining of the soul might allow certain men of God to sexually terrorize our sons and daughters?

B Y P A U L M A N D E L B A U M



n October 1992, nearly three decades after realizing his childhood dream to become a priest, Rev. Joseph Maskell was summoned downtown to Baltimore's archdiocesan headquarters. Though the caller wouldn't divulge the meeting's agenda, Maskell couldn't help wondering: Was it time for him to be transferred

to another parish?

But waiting for him in the archbishop's office on that gusty Monday were two diocesan officials, two attorneys and the archbishop himself, William H. Keeler. They were seated at a round table, their faces grim.

Bracing himself, Maskell settled his large six-foot frame into a chair facing the others.

They got right to the point: A former student of Archbishop Keough High School, where Maskell had served between 1967 and 1975, was accusing him of having sexually abused her some 20 years earlier.

Now a 38-year-old mother of two, the Baltimore woman had only recently remembered these alleged abuses, and contacted the archdiocese in late June in search of an apology and some spiritual help. Church-hired private investigators had since failed to corroborate her allegations; nonetheless, officials wanted to confront the 53-year-old priest directly. Perhaps the show of force would prompt a confession.

But Maskell professed his innocence. He denied ever abusing anybody, and, according to a family member, even offered to take a lie detector test.

The archdiocese, says this family source, countered with more restrictive choices: Either check in to a Connecticut psychiatric facility, or step down from the pulpit.

Maskell looked to the archbishop. "What do you want me to do?" he asked.

Go to Connecticut, said Keeler.

Escorted back to Holy Cross, his parish in South Baltimore, Maskell was given just hours to pack a bag and leave the rectory. His disappearance from Baltimore was cloaked in secrecy; even fellow priests were denied details. Maskell's mother learned something was wrong only after receiving phone calls asking the whereabouts of her son. (To this day Maskell believes the

ranks, the pressure was on for a show of self-prosecution.

Even given the prospect that Maskell might be unjustly accused, he would have to fight for himself under the new rules—without the protective embrace of the institution that had nurtured him for his entire adulthood.

SEXUAL ABUSE BY PRIESTS HAS ROOTED LIKE a cancer within the body of the American Catholic Church, eluding most public detection until the early '80s. More than 500 priests have since been accused, prompting legal actions that have drained Catholic coffers of up to \$500 million.

The crisis contains disturbing truths about the power of human denial. And it has forced a nationwide soul-searching both inside the Church and out, all of it eventually arising from one profound question: What mechanism of the mind could so effectively suppress the conscience—especially the presumably higher conscience of a priest—that a man might permanently injure children entrusted to his care?

The recent publicity has also forced policy reviews within Catholicism's fraternal citadel: What is the proper Christian response to accusers? To an accused brother? To the parish community? And does the priesthood's celibate nature attract men who are earnestly fleeing their inappropriate urges, only to leave them ill-equipped in moments of temptation?

In heavily Catholic Central Maryland, these are no academic questions. Within the past decade, more than 12 area priests have been publicly implicated in the sexual abuse of minors. Most of these men have been stripped of their collars; one committed suicide.

Even against this grim backdrop, the allegations against Father Joseph Maskell reveal the Catholic crisis in its extreme. If the claims are true—and several of them defy belief—they portray a man suffering from more than a dangerous disorder; they show the quintessen-



LINDA DAY

Accusers like Eva Cruz say Maskell coerced them into sexual acts during counseling sessions some 20 years ago.

emerging scandal hastened his mother's death months later.)

In an earlier era, a concerned archbishop might have taken the accused priest aside, chastised him and transferred him discreetly to another diocese. But with charges mounting nationally that the Catholic church lacked the fortitude to police its own

*Asterisks denote pseudonyms. Paul Mandelbaum is a former Baltimore senior writer and a contributor to The New York Times. His book, *First Words: Earliest Writing from Favorite Contemporary Authors (Algonquin)*, is now available through Dove Audio. This article is the result of more than 100 interviews conducted over a nine-month period. Accounts from legal plaintiffs named Jennifer* and Tracy* are taken from their court appearances and public documents. Research assistance was provided by Baltimore intern Wil Hylton.

tial authority figure, operating with a badly damaged moral compass, committing creatively diabolical acts against the innocent for years without correction.

Two of Maskell's accusers allege rape and other sexual batteries, and have filed a multi-million-dollar civil action.

Operating on one plaintiff's testimony, county police have quizzed Maskell about his knowledge of a murdered nun whose body was found in 1970, though they have since generally discounted him as a suspect. Meanwhile, city police are still puzzled over why Maskell ordered the graveyard burial of a small mountain of psychological tests and other documents he'd compiled during years of pastoral counseling.

Still other Maskell critics have emerged, with more than a dozen of them telling *Baltimore* magazine in recent months that the public allegations of sexual misbehavior fit a pattern. Many of those interviewed remember Maskell for his imperious, manipulative or lewd behavior. A group of Towson lawyers claims that, in addition to their two plaintiffs, they've met with 15 people who say Maskell subjected them to one or more sexual violations. And a third alleged rape victim, the first willing to be publicly named, has stepped forward to share her story with *Baltimore*.

Should the charges against Maskell eventually prove little more than faulty 20-year-old memories—some of them retrieved after a long period of alleged amnesia—the simple damage of public accusation may have already made it impossible for Maskell to pursue his vocation again.

While declining to be interviewed for this story, Maskell has repeatedly maintained his complete innocence. And a large group of friends and former parishioners feels that—but for the tragic misaccusations that have ruined his life—Maskell would have continued to be an exemplary priest. His sister, Maureen Baldwin, puts it most emphatically: "My brother has done nothing—repeat, *nothing*—wrong."

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, SHORTLY AFTER his exile to Connecticut, it looked like

Fr. Joseph Maskell's nightmare might go away.

As a follow-up investigation, two diocesan representatives met with Maskell's first accuser, Jennifer*, who by now had gotten herself an attorney. When pressed for the names of witnesses or other victims, Jennifer chided her questioners to prove the case without her, and began naming at least a dozen other people who'd allegedly abused



Even if the charges prove little more than faulty memories, the public accusations may have already made it impossible for him to pursue his vocation again.

her sexually—including a former Baltimore city politician. In the church's eyes, her credibility diminished with each new allegation.

Jennifer and her attorney soon parted ways, while the archdiocese continued to search for corroboration without her help.

According to diocesan spokesman William Blaul, investigators talked with

"dozens" of other Keough students and came away empty-handed. (Though during the years that Jennifer was in high school, some 1,500 students attended Keough.)

Meanwhile, doctors at the Connecticut psychiatric facility, the Institute of Living, conducted a nearly six-month course of evaluation, after which the archdiocese determined Maskell was "able to return to ministry," says Blaul.

After hearing from canon lawyers that his clerical rights had been violated, says his sister Maureen, Maskell demanded a parish assignment. And with no legal grounds on which to refuse, the diocese gave him an administrative post at St. Augustine in Elkridge.

The reprieve was short-lived. Some St. Augustine parishioners, tipped off about Maskell's circumstances, protested his arrival. One woman is even said to have handed out anti-Maskell fliers in the parking lot.

Diocesan representatives tried to smooth things over with the parish leadership. And Maskell himself addressed the issue from his new pulpit one

Sunday morning, assuring the congregation that he would not run from these untrue allegations.

Maskell knew Jennifer had not let the matter rest, but he clung to the hope that his vocation would endure. "If I lose this parish," he told his half-brother Tom, "I don't know if I'll be able to handle it."

SINCE CHILDHOOD, ANTHONY JOSEPH Maskell seemed destined for the priesthood. Born in 1939 and raised in Northeast Baltimore near Clifton Park, his favorite childhood game was "Mass." In child-sized vestments his mother had sewn for him, Joe would gather neighborhood children into the family's basement, where he would dispense the body of Christ in the form of white Necco wafers.

His mother, Helen Maskell, was very keen on her son becoming a priest, recalls childhood friend Bill Heim. "I always wondered if he was going to revolt at some point," Heim says. "But he never did."

When young Joe was old enough to join in sandlot baseball games, he

would dress in black and take his position of choice behind the plate, calling the balls and strikes. According to Heim, Maskell liked having the authority to say: "This is right; that's wrong."

A fastidiously clean kid, a teenaged Maskell one year spent so much time immersed in his bathtub ritual, Heim recalls, that his father announced his displeasure over it. Joseph Francis Maskell, an office-furniture salesman with Lucas Brothers, was known for his short fuse.

At 14, Maskell went off to St. Charles Seminary in Catonsville, but returned after about a week because he was homesick. When he tried seminary again, after high school, he liked it fine, and revelled in the privileges that came with being a third-year sacristan, which included free social time after mass while the congregation prayed. The perk seemed to appeal to his ego. "He used to say with a smile, 'We're sacristans. It is our place to be back here,'" recalls long-time friend and fellow seminarian William Kern.

Once ordained, Maskell was known for delivering thoughtful homilies with a compelling bass voice, and for excelling in the heroic moment. When Holy Cross parishioner Lynn Gerber Smith gave birth to an ailing baby, the priest rushed to the hospital and performed an emergency baptism. When Maskell's friend Albert Griffith called to say he was depressed and thinking of "blowing my brains out," Maskell drove to Severna Park within 15 minutes.

Maskell chaplained for the Baltimore County Police, the Maryland State Police and the Maryland National Guard. He was in his element holding an improvised mass on the hood of a jeep, or cheering up troops in the rain, or walking over to a county police station with one of his own pistols to target shoot with the boys.

Maskell's police credentials made



More than 500 priests have been accused of sexual abuse since the '80s, prompting litigation that has cost the church \$500 million.

their greatest contribution on January 4, 1987—the night of the Chase Amtrak crash that killed 16 people. Maskell had been monitoring his police radio and was on site and past the barricade within 45 minutes. Kneeling in the gravel by the railroad ties, he administered last rites and tried to comfort those still alive, including a woman who had been carried from the wreck-age without one of her legs.

"I could tell by the arch of his back that he was personally feeling the suffering that was in front of him," remembers Chaplain Robert K. Shaffer. "That woman was dying and Joe knew it."

Tired and distressed by what they'd witnessed at the crash, Shaffer and Maskell left the scene around 11 p.m. Shaffer, a Protestant, went home to his wife of 36 years. As a Catholic, however, Maskell had long ago forsaken any such comfort.

THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF CELIBACY, in theory, is to demonstrate a priest's religious commitment—and his link to Christ. One of the Church's most controversial codes, clerical celibacy has long been a time-honored tradition, but it's hardly a founding doctrine. Indeed, some popes, including the very first, Saint Peter, enjoyed the worldly pleasures of family life.

In their 1993 book, *A Gospel of Shame: Children, Sexual Abuse, and the Catholic Church*, authors Elinor Burkett and Frank Bruni characterize the ascent of celibacy—between the fourth and 12th centuries—as an attempt by leaders of the Western European Church to maintain control of Church property and power, which might otherwise have passed to clergy members' offspring. As far as the authors are concerned, this power play endures. "Mandatory celibacy allows the Church tight control over its priests, who have no dividing loyalties to wives and offspring and thus require minimal salaries," they write.

Although the Church demands celibacy of its priests, it does little to prepare them for the rigors of that life, says Lutherville psychotherapist Richard Sipe, one of the nation's foremost experts on the subject. A retired Catholic priest, Sipe is the author of *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy* and the just-published *Sex, Priests and Power*.

In the comfortable home he shares

CHURCH POLICY: TO EACH BISHOP HIS OWN?

The Vatican can issue edicts on everything from abortion to Friday's diet, so why can't America's Catholic dioceses get together on how to stop sexual abuse by priests?

The answer, apparently, is the autonomy enjoyed by the nation's 188 dioceses, each of which has been allowed to draft, or fail to draft, its own policies. "We cannot mandate what happens in a certain diocese," says Bishop John F. Kin-

ney, chairman of a national church committee that has tried to address the issue. "The strongest thing we can do is to make reasonable recommendations to the body of bishops."

There is movement toward solving the problem, but after more than a decade of increasing public awareness about sexual abuse by priests, 21 American dioceses have yet to develop policies for reform. And the dioceses that do have

policies often don't address sexual harassment, exploitation of adults or financial compensation to victims.

During the 1994 review of existing policies, Kinney's ad-hoc committee of the National Council of Catholic Bishops found that 188 dioceses were vastly inconsistent on the issue, and offered a list of 28 suggestions, including guidelines for prevention, legal procedures, victim therapy, reas-

ignment of accused priests and media relations.

The committee also recognized the moral issue at hand: The report from Kinney's committee a year ago said, "While we are all in need of redemption and forgiveness for our failings, there is a special harm and injury given to those who are victim survivors" of sexual abuse by priests.

Yet without the power to establish a binding and stan-

with his wife, psychiatrist Marianne Benkert, Sipe recalls one seminarian's experience. Confused about his commitment to celibacy, the student asked his rector for advice. "Don't worry," the rector replied. "Once you get ordained, it all falls into place."

But it doesn't, says Sipe, who believes that celibacy—when followed out of a well-examined, internal commitment—is noble, but that it is ill-suited to institutional obligation.

Fr. Raymond F. Collins, dean of the Catholic University's School of Religious Studies, believes seminaries are much better able to prepare students for celibacy today than during the era when he and Sipe (as well as Maskell) were enrolled. Seminarians, he says, need "to be aware of themselves as sexual beings and to realize that their sexuality is going to affect their fashion of dealing with other human beings in each and every instance. The seminary has to help the seminarian realize that he is not a disembodied or angelic being."

How qualified was Maskell for this difficult course? If his developmental years were any indication, Maskell displayed little outward interest in any sexual life at all.

According to Maureen Baldwin, her brother was so intent on becoming a priest that he never had a date in his life. When a girl he knew in high school told him he had the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, he had no idea how to respond.

Friends from his teen years can't recall Maskell ever expressing a libido. "I never saw him with a girl the whole time we were in school," says Dennis Rogers, "outside of his mother."

As an adult, recalls Bill Heim, Maskell admitted that, when he was about 10, he'd had a crush on a pretty neighborhood girl. Maskell raised the subject, Heim believes, as a way of saying that at this one point in his life, he



In recent years, the credibility of recovered memory has raised some eyebrows among researchers and the public.

had experienced romantic love.

Though it may seem odd to reach so far back for such a memory, the priesthood is filled with men who—bound for the seminary from an early age—never reached psycho-sexual maturity, write Burkett and Bruni. When such a priest breaks with his vow of celibacy, the authors add, he might seek involvement with his "emotional peers . . . teenagers." Some men can be drawn to the mantle of celibacy in the hope that it will shield them from disturbing ele-

ments of their sexuality, and are disappointed when it does not.

Sipe has interviewed or reviewed the histories of more than 2,000 Catholic priests. Six percent, in his estimate, have had sex with minors; two percent with pre-pubescents. This represents significantly higher rates, he believes, than among clergy of non-celibate denominations.

According to Sipe's formula, 3,000 of the nation's nearly 50,000 Roman Catholic priests pose a threat to the children under their influence. From figures in a report commissioned by the Archdiocese of Chicago, priest-sociologist Andrew Greeley also estimates the current national figure of child-molesting priests at between 2,000 and 4,000, with each one of them likely to victimize an estimated 50 minors over the course of a career.

Diocesan spokesman William Blaul counters that celibacy does not pose an inherent problem, and that the paramount issue is screening out potential abusers. (Toward that end, he says, today's seminarians undergo criminal background checks and a battery of tests designed to ferret out character flaws, though no test is completely reliable for detecting a predisposition to sexual abuse.)

Nonetheless, for some celibate priests, the fact that *all* sex is forbidden arguably blurs distinctions among different *types* of sexual behavior. As one deacon told Sipe, "I don't see what difference it makes whether I use my hand or somebody's vagina to have an orgasm." This sort of naive, all-or-nothing thinking, when flamed by the loneliness of the celibate life, according to Burkett and Bruni, can leave a priest primed for bad behavior.

IN 1966, ABOUT 16 MONTHS AFTER HIS ordination, a young Father Joseph Maskell became associate pastor at St.

standardized statement of procedures, the committee's suggestions may be shelved by some bishops.

In Baltimore, the Archdiocese has not revised its own policy since the national committee report. The Baltimore policy fails to meet several committee guidelines, including the emphasis on victim support.

The Baltimore policy also includes no mention of financial compensation for victims of a convicted priest. "Each case is different," says local diocesan spokesman William Blaul.

"What we have in place is offers of spiritual and psychological counseling."

The question of compensation is a sensitive one for the church, addressed in euphemisms, not in written policies. "Cost issues are there," says Blaul. "If or when there is a conviction, our position is to cooperate with the ruling of the court."

One national recommendation that the Baltimore archdiocese already had in place was the appointment of an independent review board. Made up of eight local lay people of varied

religious backgrounds, the board evaluates how the archdiocese handles cases of alleged sexual misconduct. "They're here to see that we live up to our word," says Blaul. Since its inception in late 1993, the board has disagreed with the archdiocese on only one of 20 cases.

Priests accused of sexual misconduct in Baltimore, according to the archdiocese policy, are to be suspended from active pastoral duty until the matter is resolved. If substantial evidence of abuse is

present, the priest would be permanently removed from any position dealing with minors, or possibly discharged. The Baltimore archdiocese also now emphasizes the use of a screening process to prevent potential abusers from entering the priesthood.

"We want to be proactive, rather than reactive," says Bishop Kinney. "We want to address the issues before they become issues. People need to know that they can have complete confidence in the clergy."

• WIL HYLTON

Clement in Lansdowne. There, 13-year-old Bill* felt like a bigshot whenever the priest would call him out of class at the parish school to chat, usually for several hours at a time, two or three times a week. They often started out talking about sports, but invariably wound to the subject of male anatomy, alleges Bill.

One day, Maskell took Bill and two other boys target shooting. On the drive home, Bill sat up front with Maskell, and as the car rose over a bump in the road, Bill alleges, Maskell reached over, grabbed Bill's crotch, and said playfully, "Hold on to your balls."

Bill says he began to feel cautious around Maskell. One afternoon when the school baseball team was changing into new uniform pants, Maskell told Bill that he needed a jockstrap to play. Bill didn't have one, but Maskell did, back in the rectory. The priest sent Bill to get it, giving him the key to his bedroom. Bill dashed to the rectory, leapt into the jockstrap, and was dressed in record time, he says, just before Maskell arrived.

Bill began telling his friends to be careful around the priest. Word of this filtered back to Maskell, who called Bill into the rectory, several days before graduation, Bill says. Allegedly, the priest confronted him: "Listen, you little m----f---r. If one more person says something to me that came from you, I'm gonna make sure you don't graduate."

At home, Bill told his mother (since deceased) that Maskell had threatened him. She phoned the archdiocese to complain, he says. Bill graduated on time, and within three months Maskell, though continuing to reside and perform some duties at St. Clement, was assigned to Archbishop Keough High School for girls.

AT KEOUGH, MASKELL WAS KNOWN BY at least two contradictory personae. One was a gruff militarist who barked out commands in the hallway and might search a girl's locker for drugs or even cut open the hem of her skirt if he believed she was showing too much thigh.

The other was a chummy confidant who developed a following among some of the girls by offering his office as a smoking lounge in a school where smoking was grounds for suspension. Girls pretended to need his counsel so they could get out of class. After hearing his invitation to light up, they'd smoke until they got dizzy, spinning their tales of parental misunderstanding, or boyfriend problems, as the



Lutherville psychotherapist Richard Sipe estimates 6 percent of priests he surveyed have had sex with minors.

priest would nod appreciatively and take notes.

Many women today recall his being genuinely helpful. "He was my mentor," says one. Says another: "He helped me to put my life back together. He let me cry on his shoulder."

But while dispensing such comfort, others claim, Maskell also sometimes crossed a line.

"My parents fought a lot and embarrassed me," says one alum from the class of 1972, who mentioned this to Maskell during a smoking session. "He homed in on that. And he said, 'Come sit on my lap.' I sat on his lap, and he rocked me back and forth until I started getting weird feelings. As he was rocking me, he said, 'Your father isn't affectionate enough with you.' I was upset because he was saying stuff about my father, and it made me cry," she says, adding that her mother called the school to complain about the incident only to have her call transferred directly to Maskell. "She told him to just leave me alone."

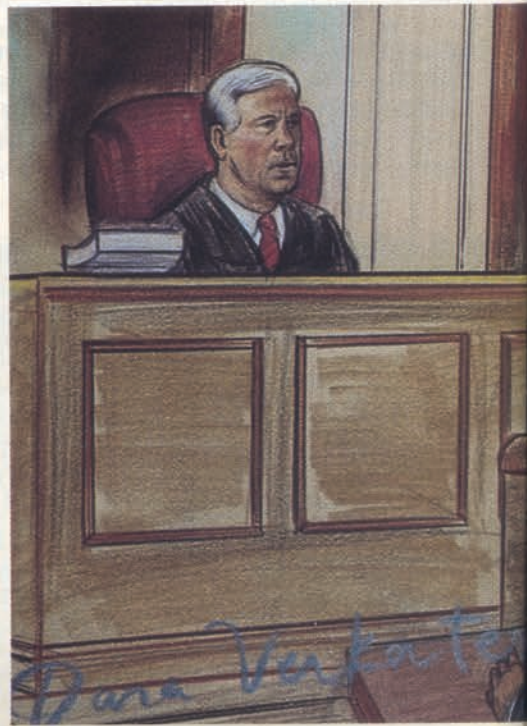
Deborah Wisner, of Keough's class of '74, also went to see Maskell to smoke and discuss family problems. She says he showed her a series of ink blots, diagnosed her as "sexually frustrated," and recommended further counseling. She avoided his office from then on by walking up an extra flight of stairs.

Former Keough student Karen* says Maskell called her into his office one morning and told her that someone had seen her with her boyfriend naked in a parked car. "I told him that it couldn't have been true," she recalls. "No matter what I said to him, he said, 'I understand, dear. Now let's talk about it.'" According to Karen, the priest had specific questions about her boyfriend's anatomy. For six hours, she says, he interrogated her. "He told me my problem was that I was frigid," she claims. "He took his big pocket watch out. He said he could hypnotize me and help me."

Other Keough alums also recall that Maskell presented himself as a sexual healer. Several women even say that the priest claimed to be an actual gynecologist. ("He's always been a frustrated doctor," says his half-brother Tom).

One of these women adds that Maskell was so taken with himself that, as part of her counseling, he put his face within a few inches of hers and asked her to look into his eyes and tell him how beautiful they were and how good looking he was.

Stacy* knew Maskell from both St. Clement and Keough, where she was a member of the class of '72. She claims that one day during ninth grade, Maskell summoned her to his office to mention that her reading aptitude was below par. He sat on his desk, perched above her. "He said that I wouldn't have gotten into Keough unless he'd pulled strings. I was kind of frightened. I said, 'Gee, I thought I got in on my own merit.' And he said, 'No, you have a



reading disability, and you would never have gotten in if it weren't for me.' And then he asked me if there was anything that I could do for him. I said, 'No, not that I can think of.' I didn't know what he was getting at," says Stacy.

Ann*, who doesn't wish to be named because "I still have a fear of the man," says Maskell invited her on a boat ride with some other girls. As they drove along the Beltway, she asked him where the other kids were and was told they couldn't make it.

They arrived at the boat, docked in the Dundalk area, and after helping her aboard, Maskell suggested that they just sit around and talk. At some point, she says, he told her about a church renovation project that unearthed, behind an old radiator, dozens of desiccated condoms.

"I really don't think you should be talking to me about these kinds of things," she told him. He changed the subject, but after he lapsed into a description of sights he'd seen on lovers' lane, Ann says she asked to be taken home.

She stayed away from the priest, but about a year later, she discovered to her chagrin that Maskell was sitting opposite her in a confessional. She claims he quizzed her about her sex life, which, at 14, was nonexistent, and as she tried to answer his questions, she squeezed her eyes tight in the vain hope that he wouldn't see her. That was her last confession for 20 years.

BY EARLY 1993, JENNIFER HAD RESUMED her quest against Maskell through



Rev. Robert Hawkins got a church scolding after he took Maskell in for several weeks. Says Hawkins: "I think [Maskell]'s really a casualty of the times."

Towson lawyer Phil Dantes, who enlisted a colleague familiar with Keough to see if there was enough support for Jennifer's claims to justify an investigation. They quickly decided there was.

But what about Maryland's three-year statute of limitations for civil com-

plaints? Could the recently recovered memory of a long-forgotten offense become grounds for a proper lawsuit?

To bolster their proposed legal maneuver, Dantes and colleague Jim Maggio ran an anonymous ad in *The Sun* seeking other alumni who might have memories from their days at Keough. Copies of the ad were also mailed directly to Keough alums. And for good measure, the attorneys tipped off a *Sun* reporter about the probe, hoping publicity would scare up witnesses.

Jennifer, meanwhile, allegedly suffered more new images of past sexual abuse, a painful process that had begun years earlier, when she first came to believe an uncle had abused her as a child.

Then, in the spring of 1992, a series of new images convinced her she'd been sexually abused by others, as well. In the first of these alleged abuses, she recalls confessing to a Keough priest that her uncle had urged her to let a dog lick her sexually, and that the dog later died. She claims the priest then began masturbating, saying that if she told anyone, she would go to hell.

Distressed at the memory, Jennifer examined her 1971 Keough yearbook and recognized the face of the priest she remembered in the confessional. Surprisingly, however, it was Maskell's name under a nearby photo that caused in her "an ugly stir."

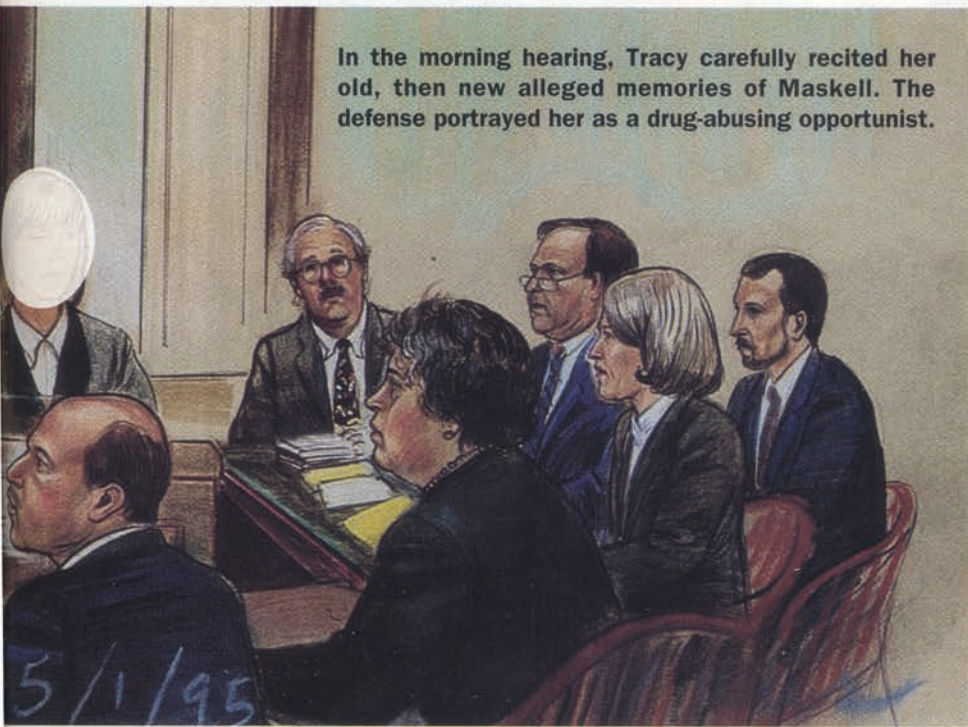
In the following months, Jennifer waded into a stream of increasingly chilling convictions. She claims the two priests instructed her to perform oral sex on them, because "the Holy Spirit was coming through them. . . . It was like the Eucharist." She saw Maskell for counseling sessions during which "he was praying that I would stop being bad."

Over a three-year period, she says, she and Maskell had vaginal intercourse four times, including once during which he called her a whore. She alleges Maskell once forced her to have sex with a uniformed police officer and at least once to have sex with someone who gave the priest money. Other alleged memories involve a brother from Cardinal Gibbons, anal intercourse and coerced enemas.

In 1993, she says, she recalled that Maskell allegedly hypnotized her: "He would use a certain phrase and everything would just stop." The phrase, she says, was, "I only want what's best for you, just what's best for you." She

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In the morning hearing, Tracy carefully recited her old, then new alleged memories of Maskell. The defense portrayed her as a drug-abusing opportunist.



says he told her that before divulging a certain incident to anyone, "I was to kill myself."

Jennifer also claims Maskell once put a gun in her mouth. On another occasion, she claims, he held an unloaded gun to her head and pulled the trigger, allegedly warning that her policeman father, if he ever learned "what was going on," would surely do the same thing with a loaded gun.

But it was an episode Jennifer says she recalled in January 1993 that alerted Baltimore County police.

Jennifer says that in the spring of 1969, her sophomore year at Keough, she talked with Sister Catherine Cesnik, a popular young English teacher, who asked how Jennifer liked Keough. "I told her I had a hard time with my studies and didn't like Keough a lot," Jennifer says. Cesnik asked if she could help, but Jennifer said there were things she couldn't talk about.

Was someone making her do things she didn't want to? the nun asked. Was somebody hurting her? Was it somebody Cesnik knew?

To each of these questions, Jennifer says, she nodded yes.

"[Jennifer], is it the priests?"

Jennifer indicated that it was.

"Oh, God," Cesnik allegedly said. "I suspected as much."

Jennifer says Cesnik hugged her and told her to enjoy the summer; the nun would take care of everything. But when Jennifer returned in the fall, Cesnik had changed jobs. Maskell, though, was still at Keough, and Jennifer claims he told her someone had approached him during the summer and accused him of "hurting the girls."

That November of 1969, Sister Cesnik left the apartment she shared with another nun in Southwest Baltimore, went out on some errands, and never came back. The following January, hunters found her body—bludgeoned to death and partly consumed by animals, her clothes in such disarray as to suggest sexual foul play. The field where she lay was four and a half miles from her apartment, but not far from Maskell's former parish, St. Clement, in Lansdowne.

Jennifer claims she now remembers a cold day—Maskell was wearing gloves; she, a coat—when he took her to visit Cesnik's corpse. It lay in an open, barren place, next to a Dumpster. As she bent over the body, she claims she heard him say, "You see what happens when you say bad

things about people."

"When I first remembered Sister Cathy," says Jennifer, "I felt that I had killed her. I know now that I was led to believe that I killed her."

She says Maskell and a religious brother would show her items—a necklace, for example—that had supposedly belonged to Cesnik. The men pretended to have discovered the items in Jennifer's school locker, she says. Eventually, Jennifer claims, she was able to recall the religious brother telling her that he had beaten Cesnik to death.

A private investigator hired by Jennifer's attorneys contacted county police and asked to look through the old Cesnik file, but was denied access. After police met with Jennifer in the spring of 1994, they reactivated their investigation, but were unable to verify her account, which differed from the original crime scene, says Homicide Commander Captain Rustin Price. There was no Dumpster in the field where Cesnik's body was found, for example, says Price. A newspaper account from the time, however, describes the field as a "dump."

And county detective Sam Bowerman, an FBI-trained expert in criminal personality profiling, believes Cesnik's murderer was a stranger. "Father Maskell would have been more meticulous," he maintains. "I don't think Father Maskell's connected to her death in any way."

THE NEWSPAPER AD MAILED TO KEOUGH alumnae arrived at the Howard County home of Tracy* in the fall of 1993. She cried. She laughed. She ran around her yard. "I was confused," she says, "yet excited that someone out there was going to take action."

Unlike Jennifer, whom she claims never to have met, Tracy says she has always remembered some of her encounters with Maskell but that certain graver abuses she recalled only recently. But even the things she says she's always remembered were bad enough that, for part of her adult life, she kept track of Maskell's whereabouts with the thought of killing him.

Petite, blonde, with doe-brown eyes and a hawk nose, at 41 Tracy recently graduated from community college with honors and is pursuing a bachelor's degree. She wants to go to law

school and become a criminal prosecutor. Her face has changed since high school: Her features are sharper, her gaze more penetrating.

Tracy first went to counseling with Maskell on October 5, 1970. Her parents were upset at finding drug paraphernalia in her purse, and Tracy hoped the priest would talk with them. She was crying when her friend Lisa* brought her to Maskell's office, she says, adding that the priest then led Lisa out the door and locked it.

Tracy claims Maskell hugged her and told her that, although he wasn't supposed to touch the girls, they found it calming. He pulled his chair around to the front of his desk and allegedly removed her clothing, piece by piece, until she was completely naked, she says. The priest then massaged her breasts and asked if her boyfriend touched her similarly, she claims. Allegedly, Maskell reassured her: "I am touching you in a Godly manner."

This session led to a series of meetings in which, Tracy claims, she was naked, sometimes sitting on his lap. On one occasion, she says, her friend Lisa was present while Maskell conducted an explicit anatomy lesson with Tracy as the model. (*Baltimore* magazine's efforts to contact Lisa have been unsuccessful, though Tracy's attorneys say Lisa corroborates their client's account.)

Maskell also took Tracy to a gynecologist, Tracy asserts, and watched her examinations. When the doctor prescribed a thrice-weekly douche, Maskell offered the private bathroom adjoining his office for that purpose. She claims the priest watched her administer douches, as well as enemas.

She says she implored a different priest at Keough to take over her counseling, because Maskell "was a pervert." "Please help me," she remembers saying.

"I'm sorry. I can't," he allegedly replied. The priest advised her to stay away from Maskell and shut the door in her face, she says.

Years later, after her mother died in early 1993, Tracy claims she had several new memories about Maskell, in which the priest had not merely observed her gynecological exams and treatments, but had allegedly helped administer them.

Within a week of receiving the

In November of 1969, Sister Cesnik left her apartment to run some errands and never came back.

lawyers' anonymous ad in the fall of 1993, Tracy wrote to them, and got a letter in return explaining that the attorneys were seeking corroboration of alleged sexual abuse at Keough.

Tracy called Dantes associate Beverly Wallace late one afternoon and asked, "Who are you talking about?"

"Why don't you tell me?" Wallace asked.

"Joseph Maskell," Tracy said.

"Bingo," replied Wallace.

Tracy offered to be a witness, she says.

Her next alleged memory came to her in early March 1994, as she was lying in bed at night. Remembering the second time that Maskell had taken her to the gynecologist's office in 1970, she suddenly came to believe she had been raped by both men, she says. "I screamed that I had been raped and woke up my husband," she recalls.

The next morning, Tracy called Beverly Wallace and asked for the name of a therapist.

New alleged memories continued to surface: Maskell and two policemen raping her in the back seat of his car; Maskell hypnotizing her; Maskell spraying her and himself with a feminine hygiene product before raping her as Irish music played.

Tracy says she had talked to friends back in high school about Maskell, even about going to the police, but abandoned that plan because Maskell was a "police priest."

"I had been warned sternly by Father Maskell that I would not be believed—that I was a druggie slut and no one would believe me over a priest," she says. "He also slapped me about the face, and he showed me his gun."

Not only did Tracy's growing cache of allegedly recovered memories support those of Jennifer, but she also decided to become a plaintiff herself. The Dantes legal team assembled their civil case while sharing information with the state's attorney's office for a criminal investigation. And by summer of 1994, they were ready to play hardball with the archdiocese. They gave the Church one month to come up with a serious monetary offer, or they would file the civil suit.

At St. Augustine, as the deadline approached, Maskell grew withdrawn. A tabloid TV show was rumored to be interested in the story. Despite his earlier declaration to parishioners, he asked the archdiocese if he could return to the Institute of Living, citing stress from the ongoing ordeal. In August 1994, with Maskell back at the Connecticut facility, the archdiocese waited out the attorneys.

The hammer came down in two seven-count complaints, asking for a total award to Jennifer and Tracy of \$40 million.

WORD OF THE MASKELL LAWSUIT QUICKLY became a hot topic in the Catholic community, and it even prompted some tongue-clucking one afternoon among four middle-aged women at a parish crab feast. "Do you believe those girls trying to accuse Father Maskell of such outrageous behavior?" one of them said.

Overhearing this, 38-year-old Eva Nelson Cruz felt rage, and she snapped back: "Don't be surprised if someone right here at the table had a problem."

The group fell silent. Later, during the car ride home, Cruz asked her mother, Babe, what she remembered about Maskell.

Babe Nelson brought up the time when Eva, at age 12, had collapsed at school. Taken to St. Agnes Hospital, she drifted in and out of a coma for two weeks, while doctors struggled to come up with a definite explanation.

One day, Nelson opened the door to Eva's hospital room to find Maskell, bent close over her daughter, his arm resting on the edge of her bed. Nelson claims Maskell jumped up and said he was hearing the girl's confession.

But Babe Nelson doubted her daughter was lucid enough to make a confession; the girl even seemed to be asleep. And there was something about Maskell's posture and his surprise that made Nelson uncomfortable. She didn't quite believe the priest, but she didn't want to disbelieve him.

"I wonder why I didn't say something earlier," Nelson now said on the car ride home, crying quietly.

"Yeah," her daughter said numbly as she drove. "It would have been helpful."

Over the next few days, Eva Cruz became consumed with the sound of water slapping against the hull of a boat and the idea that something had happened between her and Maskell.

EVEN BEFORE AGE 12, EVA NELSON HAD been tormented by two thoughts whose origins mystified her. She was

certain that God didn't love her. And sometimes, at random moments, she would hear a little voice in her head, her own voice, imploring Jesus to have sex with her. Immediately after hearing this little voice, she says, she would briefly pass out.

The parish crab feast called up a series of fragmented impressions: Maskell's car, the floor of a boat, water slapping. Physical pain. Being dropped off at the St. Clement rectory.

At the urging of a priest friend, she arranged to meet with archdiocesan officials in her therapist's Columbia office in October 1994. Cruz brought her mother. Father Richard Woy and attorney Thomas Dame represented the archdiocese.

Cruz told the group that Maskell had taken her to a boat and that she was convinced the two had had intercourse, and also that he had penetrated her with an object she couldn't picture.

Woy was quiet and a bit awkward as Dame took furious notes. They asked whether Cruz intended legal action.

Cruz told them that she wasn't planning to sue, but she was interested in some empathy, which seemed to her in short supply. "You'll never understand the hurt, the pain, the anxiety, the loss of self-esteem that's happened for most of my life," she shouted at Woy.

The church administrator appeared unsure how best to respond; nonetheless, he told her to contact him if she remembered anything else.

Efforts by *Baltimore* magazine to speak with Woy and other church administrators have all been referred to diocesan spokesman Blaul, who generally refrains from comment in matters of ongoing litigation.

BY MAY 1995, NEITHER THE CITY'S criminal investigation of sexual abuse—limited by the narrower laws of 1970—nor the county's investigation into the murder of Sister Cesnik had brought any indictments against Maskell. But he faced the multi-million-dollar civil suit filed in city circuit court.

In his search for relevant information, Judge Hilary Caplan, a 12-year

Jennifer testified in the trial that there were other Keough teachers who'd abused her as well, as had two of the nuns.

veteran jurist, had personally sorted through the load of papers that Maskell had ordered buried four years earlier in Holy Cross cemetery—ostensibly to protect parishioner privacy without violating a ban against outdoor burning. Most everything, however, was waterlogged beyond recognition.

This first week in May, Caplan was holding a preliminary hearing to consider whether so-called “recovered memories” constituted a justifiable exception to the state’s three-year statute of limitations in civil suits.

To focus on the narrow legal issue at hand, both plaintiffs’ allegations were to be accepted for now as truthful, and no corroborating witnesses were to be called. What was on trial now was memory itself.

None of the defendants—Maskell, the archdiocese, Tracy’s gynecologist or the School Sisters of Notre Dame who operated Keough—were present except for a quartet of charcoal-suited attorneys.

At the plaintiffs’ table, Phil Dantes, sporting a deep rosy suntan and mustache-in-progress, was accompanied by Maggio and Wallace.

They called Tracy to the stand, where she carefully recited her old, then new alleged memories of Maskell.

During cross-examination, the attorney for her high school gynecologist portrayed Tracy as an opportunist with a history of drug use. After some wrangling over the dates on which Tracy’s new alleged memories occurred to her, the lawyer argued that all but one of them were remembered *after* Tracy’s first meeting with attorneys.

“Were you told that you couldn’t sue for your abuse because it had happened such a long time ago?” the lawyer asked, in a series of such questions.

Tracy regarded the attorney coolly. “I don’t recall,” she said.

Jennifer testified in the afternoon, reciting a number of alleged memories of abuse by Maskell. There were other Keough teachers who’d abused her as well, Jennifer said, as had two of the nuns, including a high-ranking administrator of the school, who “was with Father Maskell, and they were using the vibrator, and she went down on me.”

During the 10-minute break that followed, *Sun* reporter Robert Erlandson buttonholed Dantes in the back of the courtroom. Could these new allegations possibly be true? the reporter wondered.

“I just ask the questions,” Dantes replied, his back near the rear wall of the courtroom.

“You know whether she’s telling the truth,” Erlandson insisted, towering

over Dantes. It had been Dantes, after all, who’d brought Jennifer to *The Sun* in the first place.

During Jennifer’s cross-examination, a defense lawyer pointed out that Jennifer could not recall any teachers from Keough who had *not* abused her. He then referred to Jennifer’s memories of abuse outside of school, at a pub to which her uncle had taken her. “At the same time that you remembered these eight or nine people, you began to have the recollection of Father Maskell.”

“Yes,” said Jennifer.

“Then there was a Brother [Ron*]. Was he on more than one occasion?”

“Yes. Quite a few.”

“You also mentioned Brother [Fred*]? Was that on more than one occasion that [he] abused you?”

“Three that I remember,” she said. “One occasion he just spanked me.”

“OK. Now, there was Brother [David*] also?”

“It’s Brother [Gavin*]”

The silver-haired lawyer went on to list six additional male abusers, including the city politician who Jennifer claimed had given a pretend political speech while she was required to perform oral sex on him.

Moving on to the next claim, the lawyer asked if the two nuns Jennifer had named “were merely present? Or did they participate in the abuse?”

“They participated.”

“Didn’t you testify that you found that memory absurd and almost impossible to accept?”

“Yes.”

“Lastly, we have the Bishop. What was his involvement?”

Jennifer recalled visiting Father Maskell’s office only to find a bishop

there instead. “And he gave me final absolution,” she said. “He spit in my hand. He told me that was my bond with the devil and before I was to wash my hand, I was to consider breaking all bonds with the path that I was on. And to go a new road.” That was Jennifer’s last memory of her high school days at Archbishop Keough.

As she left the stand, Dantes gave her a supportive hug.

Later in the hearing, psychotherapists testified that Tracy and Jennifer were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from their alleged abuse by Maskell. But neither mental health professional who testified for the plaintiffs was an expert in memory.

In contrast, the defense had four expert witnesses, three in the field of memory and at least two national power hitters, including Dr. Paul McHugh, director of the Johns Hopkins department of psychiatry. McHugh is on the board of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, a national support and advocacy group that helps parents whose children are purportedly misled in therapy into believing they were abused. In recent years, the mutability of “memory” and the related legal implications have ignited tremendous controversy among researchers and the public.

Chronicling one of the most infamous of such cases, Lawrence Wright, in his gripping 1994 book *Remembering Satan*, goes so far as to argue that a Washington state policeman “remembered” abusing his daughters in a series of bizarre cult rituals only because overzealous interrogators convinced him of it.

Judge Caplan, after listening to the experts on both sides, did not believe there was sufficient scientific foundation to support the contention that Jennifer and Tracy had lost and then somehow recovered their memories of abuse. “It is a leap of faith that this court cannot make,” Caplan concluded.

At the pronouncement, courtroom 201 became very still. Beverly Wallace frowned openly.

Caplan continued that he was not judging the plaintiffs’ credibility—merely the empirical evidence of repressed memory. “The court is going to grant a motion to dismiss, welcome an appeal, and let the chips fall where they may.” (As of this writing an appeal has been filed and will likely be heard in early 1996.)

Outside on the courthouse steps, Maskell lawyer and friend J. Michael Lehané said the ruling clearly “vindicated” his client.

Others remained unimpressed. One

During Jennifer’s cross-examination, a defense lawyer pointed out that Jennifer could not recall any teachers from Keough who had *not* abused her.

Finksburg woman, a friend of Jennifer's who had abandoned Catholicism over the Maskell case, wrote bluntly to Cardinal Keeler: "Through a technicality in the law, this archdiocese has succeeded in avoiding any responsibility to the victims of Joseph Maskell May God's justice be visited upon you."

DURING THE YEAR AFTER HER FIRST meeting with Father Woy and diocesan attorney Dame, Eva Nelson Cruz says she avoided media accounts of the Maskell case because she didn't want to contaminate her own memory. She had been having additional revelations about Maskell.

She recalled that he had encouraged the children of St. Clement to come to him with their "deepest problems," and that she'd given him her first confession, around age 10. In the confessional, she'd revealed that she used to sit on her grandfather's lap while he would masturbate her in front of neighborhood children. Maskell asked her to explain the abuse in detail, she says, and prescribed five Hail Marys and two acts of contrition. He also allegedly made this unorthodox pronouncement: "He told me that God did not love me anymore. But that he would make it so that God would love me again through him. But that we'd have to do it alone. No one else could be around. And that he would have to take me somewhere."

She remembered meeting him in front of the small green rectory on First Avenue and driving out to his boat, a cabin cruiser. (A friend of Maskell's says he used to lend his 22-foot cabin cruiser to the priest around the late 1960s and later sold it to him.)

Cruz believes there was a second man on the boat: stocky, with a round face and thinning hair. "I remember kicking somebody in the mouth. Hard."

While recently walking along First Avenue in Lansdowne, she recalled visiting Maskell at St. Clement. In her mind's eye, she saw him wearing the black clerical cape that he often favored during the winter, and she claims that he asked her to look deeply into his eyes and told her: "You won't remember. You won't remember. If you do remember, you'll die." She could picture him twirling fiercely—the cape flapping around his head.

Taking Father Woy up on his earlier invitation, Cruz called him at the archdiocese to say she had additional memories and wanted a second meeting in her therapist's office. They scheduled one for June 2. Dame was present

again, and this time so was Beverly Wallace, even though Cruz still had no intention of suing.

For one thing, her therapist had cautioned her against it. "A lawyer would have a field day arguing that she's confusing issues of her grandfather with Father Maskell. And that's possible," concedes her therapist, Kenneth Ellis. However, Cruz's memories about her grandfather were very accessible, Ellis says, and yet "there was always something else that was bothering her that she could never get to."

He brings up some of her dreams from the 1980s: a soldier shoots a nun and then rapes her while Eva watches numbly; Eva skates through a cathedral and is taken aside and raped. "It's not unreasonable to interpret Eva's dreams as tapping into repressed memories of her experiences with Maskell," says Ellis.

Since the previous group meeting in Ellis's office, Cruz concluded that it had been on Maskell's instruction that she would ask Jesus to have sex with her. It was part of Maskell's prescription for re-establishing her in God's grace, she says. Maskell had insisted that in order for her to be completely cleansed of the incestuous sins with her grandfather, it was necessary for her to disrobe, she says. Allegedly, the priest then opened a vial of holy water and sprinkled some on her vagina, reciting a blessing in Latin. "The final cleansing process was for him to penetrate me with his penis, because Jesus worked through him," says Cruz. But first he penetrated her with some object—she felt sure, but couldn't remember what it was. She remembered pain and bleeding.

As she tried to figure out what the object might have been, her breathing became heavy and panicked. She needed to pause for several minutes to regain composure. Then, it appeared to her: wooden, perhaps 12 inches long, an inch and a half thick, with a metal figure attached to it. "A crucifix," she announced.

After the meeting, Cruz asked Wallace to linger an extra moment. "Are other people remembering things like this?" she asked the attorney.

With the exception of the cape, everything Cruz brought up had been reported to Wallace by someone else.

"PEDOPHILIA," THE SEXUAL ATTRACTION to pre-pubescents, and "ephebophilia," the attraction to young adolescents, are often regarded nowadays as biological compulsions—no more changeable than, say, adult heterosexuality. As sexual orientations, they are not curable, only containable, usually through a combination of drug and talk therapies as well as eternal vigilance. Certainly many cases of sexual abuse by priests are committed by certifiable pedophiles acting out an unchecked craving.

But other cases are better explained as the consequence of narcissistic personality disorder, according to some experts. "A wise man once said, 'We're born selfish and we grow out of it,'" quotes Dr. Frank Valcour, medical director of St. Luke Institute in Suitland, Maryland, one of the country's leading facilities for priests with sexual problems. But narcissists *don't* grow out of it and can become "a law unto themselves," he says.

Often the object of abuse in their own childhoods, abusers

with narcissistic personality disorder are extremely difficult cases, because they are unable to see their own actions from another's point of view. The narcissist tends to develop a self-concept as entrenched as it is deluded. One priest who admitted to intercourse with a girl saw the act merely as a "reserved embrace," because he did not ejaculate or display passion, according to Burkett and Bruni. Through reinterpretation, the priest was able to maintain that his action was not "a sin."

The priesthood can provide a dangerous domain for the narcissist, who might be overeager, for example, to embrace his appointed role as the sign of Christ's presence in the world.

One especially perilous aspect of the vocation, according to Richard Sipe, is confession. Because sexual deeds outside of marital intercourse (and even "impure thoughts," in some cases) are met by damnation unless confessed, the priest becomes the repository of a tremendous number of sexual secrets. Week in, week out, he is exposed to the lusts of his congregation. This puts men who often lack sexual self-knowledge or perspective, and who are barred from *any* sexual life, in the dangerous position of having to interact with other people's sexuality.

County Detective Sam Bowerman believes Cesnik's murderer was a stranger.

WHERE TO TURN

Few American Catholics in the early 1970s were willing to accuse a priest of sexual abuse. When they complained at all, parishioners were apt to let the church resolve the problem, and the doctrine of forgiveness provided a theological basis for doing so.

But the famous case of former Massachusetts priest Father James Porter in the early 1990s changed all that. The scores of victims who came forward against him created such shockwaves that sexual abuse by priests became a household topic. The tide of new cases, modern-day litigiousness and the recent national embrace of "survivors" have all encouraged mistreated parishioners everywhere to seek redress.

Still, victims in conservative Baltimore remain unusually shy about speaking out. "I don't know of any other place where people are so reticent to come forward," says Dennis Gaboury, himself a Porter victim and a former president of The LINKUP, an international survivor network. "Part of the healing process is letting the secret out. And a higher motive is to protect the children today who may be at risk. When you go public, you are declaring to yourself that you have nothing to be ashamed of—and that's a mighty big step."

Here are some places to turn, whether you are an accuser or have been accused:

The LINKUP, Tom Economus. National support network. 1412 W. Argyle St., Suite 2, Chicago, IL 60640. 312-334-2296 fax: 312-334-2297.

SNAP. Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests. Baltimore representative Joe Toher: 410-672-5177.

Archdiocese of Baltimore. 320 Cathedral St., Baltimore, 21201. Chancery's office: 410-547-5446. Secretary of Human Resources: 547-5556. Secretary of Catholic Education Ministry: 547-5384.

Eva Nelson Cruz is creating an informal support group for survivors of alleged sexual abuse

at the hands of Father A. Joseph Maskell. Write to: P.O. Box 586, Hampstead, MD 21074.

Child Abuse Unit, Baltimore City Police. 500 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore 21201. 410-396-2042.

Survivors of Incest Anonymous, Inc. (which defines incest broadly to include sexual abuse by priests): P.O. Box 21817, Baltimore, MD 21222-6817. 410-433-2365.

FMSF. False Memory Syndrome Foundation. A support network and advocacy group for those who feel falsely accused of sexual abuse. 3401 Market St., Suite 130, Philadelphia, PA 19104. 1-800-568-8882. *P.M.

The priest who is apt to be corrupted by this process might rationalize that in the service of cleansing others of their sins, he needs to examine that sin in great detail, Sipe postulates. Or even, for therapeutic or other reasons, he might need to re-create that sin—as though his priestly presence would somehow transform the act.

There is yet another path of thought down which a narcissistic or otherwise maladjusted priest can be led astray, according to Sipe. And it goes something like this:

To be male and celibate, as seen through the long lens of traditional Catholic perspective, is superior to being female and sexual, says Sipe. In fact, female sexuality is the scapegoat for a lot of earthly misery, from Adam's fall on, acknowledges Catholic University's Fr. Collins.

"When you blame one group for something," asserts Sipe, "and you declare another group superior, and then thirdly you reserve the power to this superior group, it lines up the inferior group to be used at the service of the superior group." The temptation for members of the elite, he continues, is to hold themselves blameless for breaking certain codes of behavior, and even for thinking themselves above such codes.

While Catholic University's Collins is amply willing to accept this as a sociological truism, he is uncomfortable with the next extension of Sipe's argument, calling it "inflammatory."

Sipe raises the extreme analogy of S.S. officers who, after a busy day killing homosexuals, purportedly indulged in homo-erotic behavior amongst themselves. "Sexual abuse is just a *symptom* of a system of declared superiority, power, the use of other people," Sipe maintains. "I do believe that there is a connection between this and the roots of the Holocaust."

In his 1986 study *The Nazi Doctors*, noted psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton

turned to the Holocaust as well in his quest to understand how evil can function in a presumably moral soul. Lifton coins the term "doubling" for the mechanism through which a person, especially one of elevated moral standing, is able to reconcile his misdeeds with his conscience by creating an additional perspective. This new perspective does not deny the act itself, but reinterprets its *meaning* as benign or even heroic. The Nazi doctors killed, but, by their lights, did not murder. Any daily atrocities were reinterpreted as part of the larger, supposedly higher, mission of cleansing and healing Europe. As the Nazi doctor in Martin Amis's novel *Time's Arrow* puts it, "Because I am a healer, everything I do heals, somehow."

in for several weeks last year, and got scolded by the archdiocese for doing so. Says Hawkins of Maskell's plight: "You'd be surprised how your phone stops ringing. People who you knew, all of a sudden they're not talking to you. I guess people figure it's like a death." He pauses to catch his breath and dry his eyes. "I think he's really a casualty of the times. He's dead. He can't function as a priest around here anymore."

Nonetheless, Maskell is hoping that, after the civil appeal, the Archdiocese of Baltimore will reinstate his priestly faculties, so that he can once again shepherd a flock in some faraway place and reclaim his youthful ideal of being the one to say: This is right; that's wrong. ■

Through this warped looking-glass, anything a priest might do is, by definition, holy—a view that often has been adopted by parishioners. And in 1960s Baltimore, as elsewhere, many Catholic children were conditioned to accept this simplified distortion, sometimes at their own peril.

To the victims of sexually abusive priests, mere explanations such as "craving disorder" or "narcissism" or "doubling" surely provide thin solace indeed, and a wholly inadequate foundation upon which to repair one's spirituality. Sadly, the long-term damage to religious faith remains the cruelest irony of abuse by priests. As one alleged survivor pointed out in a recent confrontation with the archdiocese: "God's not happy about that."

AS THE MASKELL CASE approaches winter unresolved, the beleaguered priest remains largely invisible. Some rumors have placed him abroad. His sister Maureen says he's simply "up north."

Wherever he is, Maskell feels tremendously isolated, reports his longtime friend Rev. Robert G. Hawkins, until recently pastor of St. Rita's in Dundalk. Hawkins took Maskell