

## **Deny Deny Deny**

*[In the following article the names of three young men have been changed to protect their identity. The names Bob, Jack, and Jerry are fictitious. The names Bob and Jerry reference two individual who were sexually molested by Father Keeler. The name Jack references a young man who testified at the trial, was a close friend of several of the boys who were molested by Father Keeler, and was himself molested by Pat Brennan.]*

By: Sylvia MacEachern

The local media termed Father Kenneth Keeler's change of plea to guilty as "abrupt." That it was! For three years the popular Ottawa priest had denied charges of sexual molestation of young boys. When the case finally came to court, lawyers had anticipated that the trial by judge would take a minimum of two and maximum of three weeks. But by the 13th January 1993, a mere two days of testimony had transpired when a startled courtroom was informed that Father Keeler would now change his plea to "guilty" on three charges of indecent assault. The charges date back to the late 70's and early 80's when those testifying against the priest were 12 to 15 years of age.

The scandalous story and charges which induced the clerical abuser's sudden plea of "guilty" hadn't changed for three long years. The same story was related when, during the Christmas season of 1990, four young men met with Father Keeler. On that occasion, the group wished to confront the priest with their painful and embarrassing memories of his sexual molestation ten years previous. The four were not intent on seeking revenge. In fact, as strange as it may seem, sworn testimony during the trial made it clear that Father Keeler's accuser's still held him in very high esteem, both then and now. Rather, the 1990 meeting was arranged with hopes that Father would acknowledge his wrong-doing; admit he had a problem; and seek help. Above all, the four had hoped that the issue could be dealt with privately, thereby averting public scandal and protecting the "good" names of both Father Keeler and St. Brigid's Camp (a summer camp in Quebec — founded and directed by Father Keeler — for needy children). As Bob — himself molested by Father Keeler — testified regarding that meeting, "We loved the man and the camp" and wanted to deal with matter but still "maintain the friendship" with the priest.

But Father Keeler denied any sexual wrong-doing. Instead, he bluntly told Bob, "Just because you got your life messed up don't blame it on me."

Acting on advice from a local priest, Father Bob Bedard, the story was related by Bob (accompanied by Jack, a friend and former camp employee) to Archbishop Gervais in early January 1991. During that meeting, Archbishop Gervais was said to have told the young men he was glad they had brought the story to his attention and promised to look into it.

In early May 1991, Bob was finally summoned to relate his story and charges to a diocesan appointed commission of two priests. It was understood that the commission would report its findings to the Archbishop. Around the same time Jerry was requested to relate the story to a priest at Saint Paul University.

Throughout those months Father Keeler steadfastly denied the charges of sexual abuse.

Around mid-May 1991 (two weeks after Bob and Jerry were interviewed), Bob contacted Archbishop Gervais to find out what was happening and what the next step in the process would be. By this time *five months* had elapsed. Now, Bob testified, "My version of events was dismissed by the Archbishop as being untrue." In fact, the young man's testimony indicated that Archbishop Gervais summarily dismissed the charges of sexual

molestation against Father Keeler saying, “We have no reason to believe what you guys are saying and that’s it.” The Archbishop was said to acknowledge only that Father Keeler had a “slight” drinking problem.

By late summer 1991, Bob decided he had no option other than to approach the police. It took little time for law enforcement officials to lay formal charges of indecent assault against Father Keeler. As the charges of the priest's lewd behaviour became public knowledge, a total of six charges of indecent assault were laid against him: three in the province of Ontario where the priest is employed; and a further three in the province of Quebec where St. Brigid's Camp is located.

Father Keeler’s denial continued. Meanwhile, parishioners at St. John the Apostle (Father Keeler’s parish) were routinely invited and reminded to pray for their "innocent" pastor. Gradually a ground swell of “Father Keeler is innocent” support grew and gave way to a veritable ground swell of antagonism towards Father's accusers. Fellow parishioners and boyhood friends turned against the young men who were accused of lying and tarnishing Father's good name. Still Father Keeler’s denial continued. The antagonism grew.

Now, three long, painful and trying years after the story of clerical abuse first saw the light of day in Father Keeler’s living room, Father had decided thankfully — and inexplicably — to plead guilty. His denials had finally ceased. Why?

### **The Scandalous Testimony**

For two days the testimony of four witnesses had led a small group in the courtroom through the gamut of human emotions - disgust, sympathy, anger, revulsion, disbelief and sadness. Much of that testimony centred around activities at St. Brigid's Camp in Low, Quebec. Most Ottawa Roman Catholics are familiar with St. Brigid's Camp. For years they have been encouraged to dip deeply into their pockets to support this "charitable" operation. For years they have heard the virtues of both Father Keeler and his camp extolled.

But a different portrait of priest and camp was emerging in the courtroom. For those two short days, I and others listened in stunned silence as witnesses related accounts of a priest and a summer camp which are the antithesis of all that is good, holy and befitting the needs of any child, let alone the Roman Catholic child, and let alone the needy child.

Witnesses told of Father Keeler’s partiality for “rockets” (two fingers of Canadian Club) which he drank throughout the day; of his fixation with the appearance of body hair in the armpits and on the chests of young boys; of his peculiar habit of giving the boys “purple nuckles” (twisting a nipple until it turns purple); of his custom of appointing “cute” boys as cabin boys at the camp (cabin boys were assigned to look after Father Keeler); and of his reprehensible practice of sleeping with and sexually fondling young boys — usually cabin boys — at the camp or in the rectories of St. Brigid’s, St. Martin de Porres and Holy Rosary parishes. One witness related that, when he was a thirteen years old boy, he had been masturbated by Father Keeler: he recalled that Father had later told him that he “was getting bad spirits out of me.” We heard testimony of young boys at the summer camp growing increasingly uncomfortable with Father Keeler’s sexual advances and arguing at bed time over whose turn it was to sleep with him.

Testimony told us that the camp was known among the boys as “a place to go and party.” There was testimony that there were parties, and “always a lot of drinking going on,” and of camp staff driving to a local tavern when drunk. We heard testimony of drug use and of “drugs [done] on the stove.” One witness told of adults at the camp who “appeared” to be “becoming romantically involved and weren’t married to each other.”

We heard testimony regarding Pat Brennan, an associate of Father Keeler who acted as camp cook and disciplinarian at St. Brigid's Camp. Witnesses related that Brennan also sexually molested young boys at Saint Brigid’s Camp and was known to justify his

deplorable acts by telling the young boys "It's just my way of showing affection." Many of the boys were molested by both Brennan and Father Keeler.

Audible groans rippled through the small gathering in the courtroom as one witness told of a party where Bishop Beehan "was chasing everyone there," and that, during the said party, a barricade was set up at a door by one young boy to keep the Bishop at bay. Groans and muffled gasps were evoked by testimony that Father Keeler was seen masturbating Bishop Beehan at the camp. (Bishop Beehen, now deceased, was an auxiliary bishop of Ottawa. He died two weeks before facing personal charges of sexual molestation).

The court was also told of the absolute trust that parents placed in Father Keeler and of the excitement of some parents to have their sons around this priest. The extraordinary honesty, credibility, integrity, lack of collusion and lack of animosity on the part of the witnesses was impossible to dismiss. And the picture slowly unfolding in the courtroom was revolting, repugnant and depraved. As each witness in turn related his sworn account to the judge, it became increasingly difficult to believe in Father Keeler's professed innocence . . . or to think of St. Brigid's Camp as a safe and reputable spot to send children. . . . or to understand why the diocese had failed to act after having five solid months to scrutinize and investigate the stories and charges of these witnesses. Those who followed the media accounts of the trial were rapidly drawing the same conclusions.

Then came the sudden change of plea to "guilty" as charged. There was one addendum. The plea of "guilty" specified that it did not include an admission by Father Keeler to the comments made by witnesses regarding Bishop Beehan.

The guilty plea evoked mixed response. Father Keeler's supporters were shocked. The witnesses for the prosecution and their families were quietly and tearfully relieved. Others were suspect. Had the diocese urged Father to change his plea to prevent the release of further damning information? Was a clerical homosexual "underground" on the brink of exposure?

We may never know the answer. No matter, for Father Keeler's victims the painful saga of denial was finally over.

Or was it?

### **And more denials**

On Friday, 15 January 1993, Bob Harvey reported in *The Ottawa Citizen* that Father Pat Powers, acting spokesman for the Archbishop, denied that Archbishop Gervais had ever dismissed the complaints against Father Keeler. Said Father Powers, "At no time did the Church communicate to the complainant that it had drawn any conclusion in the case." Readers quickly concluded that the Archbishop's denial carried with it an implication that Bob had perjured himself. Once again Bob found himself in the awkward position of having his account of the father Keeler saga denied by a member of the clergy.

On that same day, Paul Cantin (*The Ottawa Sun*) reported that Bob had asked Archbishop Gervais to release the report of the diocesan investigation: Bob believed this alone would clear the air about how much the diocese knew about Father Keeler's conduct. The request was denied. Diocesan officials stated that their investigation had ceased once the case was taken to the police and hence no final report was prepared. It was Bob's word against the bishop's.

Meanwhile the young men became the recipients of a multitude of harassing and irrational phone calls. They were accused of lying and tarnishing Father Keeler's "good" name by taking the case to court. So bad did the harassment become that their lawyer appealed to the public to put an end to it.

The irrational thoughts, actions and denials of Father Keeler's supporters didn't stop there. On Sunday, 17 January 1993, the parish bulletin of St. John the Apostle (Father

Keeler's parish at the time charges were laid) appeared. Under the caption "SANCTUARY LAMP" was the following text: "The Sanctuary Lamp is being lit this week for the Special Intentions of Father Ken Keeler." Aside from the fact that the sanctuary lamp is NOT lit for special intentions but solely to denote the Real Presence of Our Lord in the tabernacle, it goes without saying that one should seriously question affirming the unknown intentions of a priest who has just entered a plea of guilty to several counts of indecent assault. Interestingly and sadly, no mention whatsoever was made of the needs and intentions of all the young boys — known and unknown — who have been subjected to Father Keeler's homosexual advances.

On the same day the bulletin appeared, Archbishop Gervais read a prepared text to parishioners of Saint John the Apostle. The Archbishop took the opportunity yet again to deny he had ever dismissed the charges against Father Keeler: "I never dismissed the charges: I took them seriously."

Two days later the Archbishop returned to the parish to address and field questions from an estimated crowd of 250 gathered in the parish hall. The subdued assembly listened politely and intently to talk of healing and apologies. It was a genteel and refined throng. There was no outrage. No righteous anger. No inkling of the gross and perverse betrayal of God, Church, parent and child which had transpired in assorted bedrooms throughout Ottawa and Low, Quebec. No "naming" of the homosexual dimension to "Father Keeler's recent difficulties." No talk of perversion. No promise to put an end to the diocesan silence regarding Church teaching on homosexuality. No vow to ensure that professors at Ottawa's University of Saint Paul teach sexual ethics in a manner consistent with and obedient to the teaching of Roman Catholic Church or get ousted from their post. No vow to get pro-homosexual AIDS and sex ed programs out of the schools. No promise to defrock those priests who have so sorely abused their vocation and their fellow man. Just a slightly uncomfortable but amiable little chat — a courteous listening session between a bishop and his flock.

Oh, in truth there was one moment of true grit emotion throughout the otherwise dignified and serene evening. When a woman introduced — for the first time — the topic of St. Brigid's Camp and attempted to ask for a full scale investigation into the facility, a young man in the crowd flew into a veritable rage. He bellowed out that he had promised to keep quiet but he couldn't any longer; that he was sick and tired of hearing the camp dragged through the gutter; and that the camp was wonderful and a great place for children. The young man is known to all as Father Keeler's "adopted" son. He denies the camp has a problem. He denies Father Keeler has a problem.

And, O yes, . . . Archbishop Gervais did say he had told Father Keeler's victims that they had the right to go to the police, and the young men said "no," they wanted to keep the matter private. And he said he realized "the pace of the proceedings did not meet the expectations of those involved" and that the victims had probably gone to the police because they didn't know the Archbishop and therefore probably didn't have confidence in him.

And the Archbishop — who is currently president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishop (CCCCB) — did take the opportunity to recommend *Breach of Faith: Breach of Trust: Child Sexual Abuse in Church and Society* for parish use. Simply said, *Breach of Faith Breach of Trust* is a CCCB produced and published study guide which is a pro-homosexual feminist-imbued anti-Church, anti-hierarchy, anti-patriarchy, consciousness-raising tool.. Will this spiritually-bereft piece of psychobabble (1) prevent homosexual priests from executing their homosexual fantasies? (2) facilitate an understanding of the absolute depravity of clerical homosexual molestation? or (3) assist victims of clerical homosexual abuse to retain or restore their faith in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church? Of course not! To the contrary, it is guaranteed to ensure that more and more

Father Keeler's and Bob's and Jack's will be compelled to work their way through a degrading, humiliating and scandalous process of denial.

Sad indeed this alarming problem of clerical homosexuality — the lies, the deception, the pain, the betrayal, the harassment, the depravity, . . . . . the denial.

*On 29 January 1993 the three charges of indecent assault against Father Keeler in Quebec were transferred to the Ontario courts. At that time Father entered a plea of "guilty" to all three charges.*

*On the 15th March 1993, Father Keeler will be sentenced on six counts of indecent assault.*

## **The Orator Vol. 4 No 3/4 May-August 1993**

### **A travesty of Justice**

*[In Vol 4 No. 1 The Orator recounted the trial of Father Kenneth Keeler, an Ottawa priest charged with sexually molesting young boys in the late 70's and early 80's. The molestations occurred in various rectories throughout the diocese and at St. Brigid's Summer Camp, a facility in Low Quebec founded in 1971 by Father Keeler.*

*Despite attempts by those pressing charges to settle the matter out of court, the priest consistently denied the charges thus forcing the young men to take legal action. However, on day three of the trial, Father Keeler suddenly changed his plea to guilty. Despite this, the priest's support within the community was such that his victims found themselves and their families ostracized, ridiculed and harassed for causing trouble for this very popular priest. Their pain was compounded when Archbishop Marcel Gervais — contrary to sworn testimony — publicly denied that he had dismissed their allegations against Father Keeler.*

*Prior to sentencing, Father Keeler entered a plea of guilty to an additional three charges of sexual molestation. In total, this priest pled guilty to six charges of molestation filed by five young men. He was sentenced to eight months in jail. Two months later Father was out of jail and comfortably nestled in a half-way house. At the time of this writing, Father Keeler is "free."]*

By: Sylvia MacEachern

**15 March 1993: Ottawa:** As Father Keeler and his supportive entourage celebrated the court's tolerance and mercy towards homosexual molesters, Mr. X,\* an anguished and distraught father left the courtroom. Tears welled in his eyes. He couldn't understand what had transpired. Was this justice?

First Mr. X learned the shocking news that a priest whom he trusted had molested both his sons. As if that wasn't enough for an immigrant father to deal with, he then had to cope with the failure of Archdiocesan officials to respond to the charges of molestation against Father Keeler. Next he had to witness the agony of the preliminary trials, the gossip and whispering, and eventually the three days of testimony in court: his boys baring their souls before a roomful of strangers. The humiliation. The shame. And yes, the guilt.

Things should have improved after Father Keeler's guilty plea; they did not. More whispering and accusations, but worse . . . the Archbishop's denial of sworn testimony that he (Archbishop Gervais) told one of the victims "we have no reason to believe what you guys are saying."

It was all over now. "Justice" had been served. Father Keeler "got" eight months.

But for Mr. X there was more to deal with. Within a matter of weeks his son, Keith, one of two of his sons who were molested by Father Keeler, would be deported — for life. Unlike Father Keeler's other victims, Keith had resorted to a life of crime after he was molested. No one says that's what actually caused Keith to "go bad." But then again, no one

knows for sure that it didn't, and everyone knows for certain that it didn't help the troubled youth who was sent to summer camp for help.

Regardless, Keith has finally come to terms with the molestation. He wants to get his life back in order.

But for Keith it's too late to get his life in order *in Canada*. The fact is that Keith was brought to Canada with his family as a very young child. He is a landed immigrant — with a criminal record. Because of that criminal record Keith cannot become a Canadian citizen. He is being deported; separated from his family and friends — for life. And the priest who destroyed his innocence and betrayed his childish trust has been meted out an eight-month jail sentence! Is this justice?

So, yes, Mr. X was anguished — and angry. Angry that this priest had betrayed his trust and the trust of other parents. Angry at what the priest had done to his sons. Angry with himself for not realizing what had happened. Angry with the diocesan centre and the Archbishop for their failure to deal with the situation. Angry with the Archbishop for making the boys look like liars. And angry with the charade that had just been passed off as justice. And indeed it was a charade.

### **The “good character” charade**

It would seem an oxymoron to have witnesses testify to the “good character” of a self-professed child molester whose “good character” was the very attribute which permitted his molestations to continue undetected and unreported, and even permitted him to secure and groom his young victims. But that is precisely how Father Keeler's sentencing hearing got under way.

Five Roman Catholic character witnesses were paraded to the witness stand to testify to Father Keeler's “good character,” kind deeds and charitable works. Some appeared to have a little difficulty with the task at hand. Not that they were repulsed by the priest's deception, and denials, and facade. No. To the contrary — they just wanted to get on with the “healing,” tell the court what a wonderful man and priest Father Keeler was, and overlook all the dirty deeds. And, in truth, how else could one justify defending the “good character” of a child molester. A child molester who also happens to be a priest?

First on the stand was the Pastoral Assistant at St. Brigid's Church (Ottawa), one Sister Eleanor Hennessey. This elderly Grey Nun has gained infamy at home and abroad for her pivotal role in initiating and achieving the ouster of four orthodox “Oratorian” priests from St. Brigid's parish in 1989.

Sister brought with her to the witness stand this proven lack of discernment for the common good.

Once on the stand, Sister told how “we” had founded St. Brigid's Summer Camp (1972) and nostalgically recalled the years that “Father Ken” served as pastor of St. Brigid's parish as “a wonderful period for St. Brigid's, our very best.”

One would be hard pressed to say that Sister shone under cross-examination. She didn't. In fact, Sister was more than a trifle uncomfortable. Her lengthy pauses frequently had the court breathlessly waiting for an answer — or even a word. In short, Sister had to be pressed to acknowledge the truth:

**Crown:** “. . . I suppose that you were surprised to hear that [Father Keeler] had committed these acts?”

**Sister:** “Well, yes, I guess I would say that. But, I -- I -- it doesn't -- we want to be on with the healing now.”

**Crown:** “Yes. But, were -- were you surprised to learn that he had committed these acts?”

**Sister:** “Yes”

**Crown:** “And, do you believe that he committed these acts?”

**Sister:** “I'm not here to judge, that is not my position.”

**Crown:** “You heard him plead guilty to the charges?”

**Sister:** “Yes. And I respect his -- his statement.”

**Crown:** “But, apart from respecting it, do you believe that he committed these acts?”

**Sister:** “I don't think that's my -- that's my part in being here. I have not really gone into that. I'm -- I'm more inclined to -- to see what we can do now for the young people, for Father Ken, for the community.”

**Crown:** “Are you refusing to answer the question ma’am?”

And after all of Sister’s barely audible stammering and stuttering and hesitation, finally. . .

**Sister:** “Well, I -- I would have to take Father Keeler’s word. He has given his word. So I would have to take it.”

**Crown:** “So you believe he committed these acts?”

**Sister:** “Yes.”

The shock at seeing Sister Hennessey testify was closely matched when Mr. Paul Fortier took the stand. Mr. Fortier is Vice-Principal of Kanata’s Holy Trinity Roman Catholic High School.

Mr. Fortier testified that he first knew and worked with Father Keeler when he (Fortier) was principal of an elementary school and Father Keeler was pastor at St. Martin Des Porres parish. Fortier reported that Father Keeler developed “a very strong positive relationship” with the students and parents of the school, was “most definitively approachable in terms of problematic situations,” and that the feedback regarding Father Keeler’s role was “extremely positive.”

Under cross-examination Fortier agreed that he was shocked to hear that Father Keeler had molested young boys, but added — with an holistic approach worthy of a devout New Ager — that he (Fortier) felt he had an advantage as an educator in dealing with this because, “it’s a requisite for me to look at the whole person and I must do this and, in so doing, I must reflect on that total person in terms of my total experience with them.”

The fact that Father Keeler was in fact guilty of molesting young boys who were often in “problematic” situations, and of abusing the “very strong positive relationships” he built with his victims and their parents seemed to have floated right over Mr. Fortier’s holistic mind.

The shock at seeing Sister Hennessey and Mr. Fortier take the stand was replaced by disbelief at the insolence and impudence displayed after Father Keeler’s foster son, Chris Campbell was sworn in. But insolence aside, Campbell’s cross-examination divulged a most interesting piece of information.

Mr. Campbell told the court that he went to live with Father Keeler in 1980 after a truant officer asked the priest to take Chris “under his wing.” What Mr. Campbell didn’t reveal was the name of the truant officer: Pat Brennan. Mr. Brennan, who assisted at Saint Brigid’s Summer Camp as a camp cook and member of the Board of Directors, was also charged recently with sexually molesting young boys at St. Brigid’s Summer Camp.

So went this bizarre charade of promoting Father Keeler’s “good character.”

The next stage of the hearing proved as bizarre as the first.

### **Guilty your honour, but I don’t remember committing the crime**

A report by a Dr. Bradford of the Royal Ottawa Hospital (psychiatric hospital) regarding Father Keeler was filed with the court. The report included recommendations for rehabilitation based on Dr. Bradford’s interviews and sessions with Father Keeler. Fair enough. But no. There seemed to be some sort of a problem with the report. At least in the eyes of Father Keeler. How else to explain the following confusing intervention?

The defence attorney, Mr. W. J. Carroll Esq., commenced his afternoon submission with a request to strike from Dr. Bradford’s report all statements which suggested that the molestations may be attributed to “physiological and metabolic processes that occur while one is asleep.” What this seemed to boil down to was a case of Father Keeler telling the psychiatrist he did not recall committing the offences and they must have happened in his sleep! The report was dated 9 March 1993.

So, on 13 January 1993, after two days of court testimony, Father Keeler entered a plea of “*guilty*” to charges of molestation. Then a psychiatric report dated 9 March 1993 indicated Father didn’t remember committing the crimes and thought they must have happened in his sleep. Then on the 15th of March 1993, at his sentencing hearing, Father Keeler decided that although he still had, according to his attorney, “a lack of recollection” of the events he (Father Keeler) no longer wanted to “hide behind the concept” that the events

may have happened while he was asleep. Mr. Carroll explained on his client's behalf that when Father Keeler spoke to Dr. Bradford he "was struggling for possible explanations as to how something could have happened like this. He has now come full circle to the point where he accepts, notwithstanding his lack of accurate memory of the events as they occurred, that they did occur in the manner as described by the complainants. And he does not fall back on any sleep induced kind of behaviour as a defence or as a mitigating circumstance."

Bizarre? Yes. But successful. The judge briefly queried if this turn of events entailed "prior concealment from the doctor of the facts as Mr. [sic] Keeler reports them to be" and whether Dr. Bradford's recommendations would now have to be mitigated. When the judge said he felt "left in the air" wondering what Doctor Bradford's reaction would be to this, the defence quickly assured him that the doctor's recommendations would probably remain the same. That was the end of that! The sentencing hearing continued. Dr. Bradford's report was filed as Exhibit Six. The defence utilised the Bradford report to conclude that Father Keeler, "presents no current danger to the community save and except should he re-engage in the consumption of alcohol or -- and combine that with the being in the presence of young persons."

### **A preferential option?**

As the hearing proceeded there was growing apprehension that the scales of justice were tilting favourably towards a homosexual priest molester. This was heightened when, after the defence stated that there was "a dark side" to Father Keeler's character, the judge interjected dryly, "None of us are perfect, Mr. Carroll." Such commentary was followed by other interjections or statements which, to the non-legal observer, appeared to favour leniency for the accused. In addition, there was the defence's classification of the molestations as "serious" but "at the lower end of the scale." This was presumably because none of the boys had been actually sodomized and no violence was involved. Such diminution of the severity of the crime of homosexual molestation — perpetrated by a priest — was apparently shared by the judge. When the Crown attorney, Mr. Marin, referenced the sentencing of a Big Brother who assaulted a nine-year-old boy, the judge interjected "they're talking serious assault." On the other hand, when the Crown referenced several sentences dispensed in cases involving fondling without violence or penetration (cases which presumably wouldn't classify as "serious"), the judge intervened in a rather exasperated manner, "these were young children . . . there's a considerable difference between ten and twelve [years of age]." Add to all this Mr. Justice Soubliere's constant shuffling of papers, fidgeting, glancing at his watch, and checking the clock throughout the Crown's summation and one was prompted to speculate that: (1) the judge's mind was set, (2) our legal system discriminates against male abuse victims over the age of twelve (read victims of homosexual abuse), and (3) the accused — Father Keeler — would get a mere slap on the wrist for being a bad boy and having a few too many drinks.

The latter speculation has proven true.

Justice Soubliere said he was impressed by the character witnesses. He noted that it was "tragic" reading the Victim Impact Statements (see insert). He finally concluded that Father Keeler's plea of guilty was a plea of remorse and sentenced the priest to eight months in jail with two years probation. Father is to refrain from alcohol and refrain from the company of those under 16 years of age unless he is accompanied by another adult. There was no indication that Father Keeler cannot be in the company of young people if he is accompanied by another adult molester (i.e., Mr. Pat Brennan). Nor was there an order preventing Father Keeler from visiting or working at St. Brigid's Summer Camp.

By 3 May 1993 — less than eight weeks into his sentence! — Father Keeler was out of jail, living in a half-way house and freely roaming the streets of Ottawa by day. By early August he was out of the half-way house and vacationing in the Maritimes.

### **The Archdiocese**

What of the diocese you ask? Well, there was a promise that Archbishop Gervais was going to make a return engagement to speak to parishioners of St. John the Apostle (Father Keeler's parish). First a date was set. Then it was rescheduled. Then there was word that the

Archbishop would simply address the people during a Mass. Next there were rumors that only parishioners of St. John the Apostle could attend the Mass! Then it was all cancelled.

As far as diocesan contact with Father Keeler's victims is concerned, *there has been none*. Media reports of apologies were inaccurate. To date the Archbishop has not offered an apology to any of the young men, either in person, by phone, or by mail. Lacking too has been any glimmer of "loving, sharing and caring." No member of any diocesan team of sexual abuse "experts" has contacted the victims or their families to initiate any of the "healing" we hear so much about. There seems to be no indication of concern for the abuse — sexual, emotional and social — that has been heaped upon these families. And not so much as an iota of pastoral concern for their spiritual well-being. All of these appalling omissions of charity and pastoral concern occurring in a diocese headed by the past-President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), an organization which spent its two years under Archbishop Gervais' tutelage talking endlessly about its concern for victims of abuse! Perhaps however, this should come as no surprise when one realizes that Father Peter O'Hanley, a member of the CCCB Committee on Child Sexual Abuse which produced *From Pain to Hope*, was himself convicted of molesting three teenage boys (he was sentenced to three months! *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 9 July 1988). *From Pain to Hope* lists Father O'Hanley's credentials as a "priest actively involved in issues relating to sexual abuse and pastoral care." As one appalled gentleman wryly commented: "They've got that right!"

In this era of preferential options, it all boils down to a preferential option for homosexual child molesters. It's a travesty of justice. . . .

- The CCCB publishes and promotes pro-homosexual materials to deal with the issue of sexual abuse.
- The bishops of Canada consistently fail to condemn pro-homosexual legislation.
- A nun and a Vice-Principal of a Roman Catholic High School defend the "good character" of a priest who is a self-professed molester of young boys.
- The courts of the land reflect the tolerance of Roman Catholic hierarchy, religious and educators toward homosexuality.
- Father O'Hanley is "actively involved in issues relating to sexual abuse and pastoral care."
- Father Keeler is "free."
- A young man is deported.
- An anguished father weeps.

. . .

\* Names of the victims and their families have been changed.

### **Excerpts from two victim impact statements**

#### **Jerry:**

" . . . This has taken a real hard effect on my parents. They feel guilty for trusting Keeler! They feel it was their fault. My family has been through so much disappointment that this was the last thing they needed. The times where I feel most hurt and upset about this is when I think of what my brother Keith has gone through. I feel so guilty because I'm the one who suggested he go to Father Keeler for guidance and leadership. I'm not saying that Keeler made my brother a criminal, but he definitely didn't help him. Keeler had all the charisma, charm and power to really help my brother but instead he chose to manipulate him — he took advantage of a desperate boy! For that I hate him. It's sad and funny that I don't hate him for what he did to me — but to abuse someone who went to him for help! . . . [M]y brother has struggled with his sexuality and has spent most of the last twelve years of his life behind bars. For that, Ken Keeler, I hold you partly responsible. I can find it in my heart to forgive you someday for what you did to me and how you lied about it and how you put me through two years of hell, but I doubt I can forgive you for what you stole from my family, the company of my brother! You had no right to steal away the innocence of my brother, my

family, my best friends and me. . . .

“I’ve lost the love and respect of people I once thought were my friends. I worry about running into people who might harass me or confront me about this. I’ve had people call me a liar. I’ve also had people tell me I’m just looking for a reward. These are all painful things to hear because I’ve always prided myself on being trusted. No one had too many reasons not to trust me until Father Keeler started denying the allegations! Now even old friends don’t trust me. This is the power that Keeler possesses. This is the same power that he abused.”

**Doug:**

“Once I wanted to be a priest like Father Keeler, today I don’t know a church or church community which I could securely feel I belong to. . . . This has been extremely tough on my father’s and mother’s faith. They no longer go to church. Mom was an active member in most parish functions but was outcast by the congregation as a result of her son telling the truth. My parents had to suffer both the hurt of their son being abused by a priest and then through being abandoned by the Church.”