

*final final*

①

01/08/18

To whom it will concern.

This page is to be read by my three children who have my complete confidence.

The notes refer to the year (1951) when I was 3<sup>rd</sup> form student at Saint Patrick's Secondary School at Silverstream, Upper Hutt.

I had suffered an accident about two months into my first term at the college. I was in a team of student helpers supervised by Father Pat Minto to gather fire wood for the school heaters. The wharf strike was restricting supply of the usual fuel for the boilers. I was on one side of a log, Minto on the other, and I reached out to clear the cut which I had made, the same instant as Minto dropped his axe for no particular reason into the cut. The top of my middle finger was hanging. This incident led to a closer association between Minto and myself than perhaps should have been.

While my finger healed I was privileged to sit by the heater in Minto's study. He was Discipline Master for the school. His study room had a heater which was supposed to help my finger heal. He very soon began to kiss me. Lights out, door locked. Long, lingering. He would persuade me to sit on his lap, he below me, both of us on his easy chair. This very soon would become lying, with me on top, facing upward. This way he could whisper sermons in my ear. I later reasoned that if no clothes were removed then that was o k, - he was genuine. This way he could sermon me, whispering about Saint Augustine and how disappointed Minto was when he realised God had made Minto different to most men. I had no clear idea what homosexuals did for a living. I discovered later that when the good saint was my age (12yrs) St. Augustine was living it up with a clique of modern-day homosexuals, whoever that was and whatever they were.

Shortly after the second term began I was summonsed into the Rector's room. The Rector was Father Francis Durning, known to everyone as Fred. He hardly gave himself time to lock the door before he started fiddling with my belt explaining; "I just want to inspect things down there." He dropped my trousers and gruts and knelt in front of me. I thought this must be the boarding school equivalent of paternal advice about puberty. I noticed the perfect circle his hair made on his pate, invisible to normal students. "Hold your stones up so I can see", came the order. However, it was not visibility he was worried about, it was getting his nose into my crutch. I wondered, if I dropped my "stones" onto the shiny patch on his top would they leave a dent. I had not heard my testicles called "stones" before this man got into my middle.

It didnt stop there.

One night around lights out Durning directed me into his bedroom saying he was waiting for Father MacDonnald to come. He locked his door, so I should have suspected something. He lay face down on the bed, naked once his dressing gown was pushed aside. He indicated the area where he had the cramp, where his upper leg joins his trunk about two inches south of his anus. I had never sseen anyone's anus before. "Here's some liniment, get massaging." I did his cramp no good at all of

**GRO-C**

that I am sure. Before releasing me he made sure I understood what would happen if I told any-one about 'our secret'. I remember checking for two things. I had wondered if he had testicles or not, - "What are you gawking at. Boy?." - I had heard that some people have 'em some dont, and I checked whether or not he got a hard up from my ministrations. I only ever touched his 'cramp area'. I think the answer to the first was 'yes', and 'no' to the other question so maybe he was telling the truth about cramp.

I did not tell any one for many years. Shame at my idiocy was a permanent attachment.

But time caught up with Father Durning.

He had let it be known around the school that he expected to be named "Provincial" (the head) of the Society of Mary next change. I learned that one of the senior students had complained to someone about Durning's peculiarities, and as a reward Durning had been posted to a school down south.

Of Minto I suspect that I may have been his only peccadillo, if that is the right word. The objectionable proclivities of both priests must have been known to their fellow priests, but when I did finally approach the Society of Mary I was surprised to discover there was no individual file on any member. Nobody knew, or was prepared to admit, anything about anyone. I have since confined any request from me to the removal of the pictures of the two priests from the school's assembly halls. Minto at St. Pats (town) where he had become rector, and Durning at St. Pats Silverstream. The presentation of the pictures is especially galling, lighting placed as if they are angels, a demeanour of superiority as if they have a direct line to God. A sickening hypocrisy to anyone who knows better. Not the least hurtful was the adulation given the priests by the Church for us ignorant fellows to swallow.

Some of the benighted priests at Silverstream enjoyed cultivating a reign of terror. Father Fred Durning leaned out the upstairs window and promised 6 of the best canings each to half a dozen youngsters sneaking a smoke below. Every day for a week. He was only stopped when one smoker had to reveal his bare backside to the nuns at the Home of Compassion to stop the smoker's bleeding. Father Pat Minto was so imbued with the need for a perfect smack-up he kept a cupboard of the canes just to house the things. Father "Foxy" Maher was living a lifelong battle with the bottle but still had time for a bit of drunken biff on a live corpse. One time when all's ready for the king hit, - he fell over. Father "Goo" Johnson had been known to hit the light shade as he launched himself at the unfortunate penitent. Kids preferred to present themselves for Goo to cane because when he couldn't see he couldn't hit. I'm sure the kid's parents never gave permission for such harsh treatment.

Once I reached 5<sup>th</sup> Form things got better for me. I had learned to get the measure of these homosexuals and that I was not one of them. And I got into a decent football team.