

## Father Donald C. Bolton, C.S.S.R.

### Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1926
YEAR OF DEATH:	Unknown
ORDINATION:	1952

### Employment/Assignment History

1952 – 1954	Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, NY
1954 – 1959	Bela Vista, Mato Grosso, Brazil
1959 – 1962	Campo Grande, Mato Grosso, Brazil
1962 – 1967	Bela Vista, Mato Grosso, Brazil
1967 – 1969	Monte Alegre, Parana, Brazil
1969 – 1970	Rocio, Parana, Brazil
1970 – 1974	Notre Dame Retreat House, Canadaigua, NY
1974 – 1984	St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, North East, PA
1984 – 1987	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Basilica, Brooklyn, NY
1987 – 1990	Holy Family Retreat House, Hampton, VA
1990 – 2003	St. Alphonsus Villa, Redemptorist Fathers and Brothers, New Smyrna Beach, FL
2003 – 2006	St. John Neumann Residence, Sarasota Springs, FL
10/27/2006	Death

### Summary

In 1986, the parents of a seven-year-old girl came forward to the Erie County District Attorney's Office with a complaint that Father Donald C. Bolton molested their daughter. They came forward after they discovered that Bolton was working with children in New York. They had been promised by Bolton's holy order, The Redemptorists, that he would never again be in a position to harm children. As a result of this complaint, Bolton was charged with indecent assault and corruption of minors. He pled guilty in 1987 and was sentenced to three years' probation. Records from that arrest also noted that several other girls were molested as well, but the statute of limitations had already expired, thus prohibiting further prosecution.

One of Bolton's victims would later file a lawsuit and received a settlement of \$100,000. This victim was labeled Jane Doe 1 in court records. Jane Doe 1's lawsuit named the following defendants: The Redemptorists Mission of the Baltimore Province, Most Reverend(s) Kevin Moley and Joseph Kenan (Redemptorists), The Diocese of Erie, Bishop(s) Donald Trautman and Michael Murphy.

Jane Doe 1's abuse began in 1976 when she was seven years old and continued until she was eleven years old. In 1976, Bolton came to her house to console her family over the death

## Summary

of a grandparent. Jane Doe 1 reported that Bolton held her on his lap and rubbed her back, legs, bottom, and rear.

Bolton's second assault on Jane Doe 1 occurred in 1977, when she was eight-years-old. This time, Jane Doe 1 was preparing to make her First Holy Communion at St. Gregory. When she was practicing confession, Bolton entered her side of the confession booth. He then slid his hands up her dress and pulled her panties down. He fondled her and rubbed his penis against her. When Bolton was done, he instructed Jane Doe 1 not to tell anyone because no one would believe a child's word against his word. Jane Doe 1 recalled this type of abuse occurred for nine months, at least every other week.

Beginning in 1977 and continuing into 1978, Bolton took Jane Doe 1 and her five friends to the Peak 'N Peak ski resort in New York on several occasions. Bolton would take the girls to the swimming pool at the resort. Once they were done swimming, Bolton towed the girls off and drove them home. Jane Doe 1 explained that while Bolton drove, he assaulted her in the front seat. She described how Bolton would rub her genitals and poke her with his finger as though he was trying to put a hole in her pants. Jane Doe 1 recalled this as a physically painful experience. She recalled that it happened to her at least twice when she was eight or nine years old.

In 1978 and 1979, Jane Doe 1 attended Confraternity of Christian Doctrine ("CCD") classes at St. Gregory. Her classes met every Wednesday night during the regular school year from September to June. Jane Doe 1 reported that Bolton would have the nuns pull her out of class and send her to Bolton's bedroom in the rectory to help him with assignments. This happened approximately every other week. Once in Bolton's bedroom, he would take off her pants and put her on his lap. She recalled that she would be in a position that her back was to him. When in this position, Bolton would rub his penis back and forth on her buttocks and vagina while he moaned and groaned. Bolton told Jane Doe 1 that he was preparing her for womanhood. She added that while he would rub himself on her, he often had his hand and fingers inside her vagina. When Bolton came close to ejaculation he would simply move Jane Doe 1 slightly forward with his hand inside her vagina being careful not ejaculate on her.

Bolton's last series of assaults on Jane Doe 1 occurred when she was eleven-years-old at Lake Chautauqua in New York. Her parents rented a cottage in the resort town and invited Bolton along for the family vacation. Her family was vacationing with at least two other girls. These were two of the girls who had accompanied her and Bolton on the trips to Peak 'N Peak. One day when Jane Doe 1 was done swimming with these two friends, Bolton found her alone in her bedroom. Bolton closed the door behind him, proceeded to pull off her bathing suit and turned her around. Bolton began to masturbate himself while inserting his fingers into Jane Doe 1's vagina. Jane Doe 1 recalled this incident in particular because Bolton placed his fingers far enough inside her to hurt her. She recalled that the assault only stopped when he thought he was going to be discovered by a passerby. Once again, Bolton instructed Jane Doe 1 to be quiet about the abuse because she was a lying child and nobody would believe a lying child over a man of God's word.

## Summary

Jane Doe 1 finally began to disclose the abuse in 1993. That year, while attending a funeral for an in-law, Bishop Michael Murphy was introduced to her in the funeral home lobby. Jane Doe 1 had an emotional breakdown. She thereafter sought counseling. Bishop Donald Trautman's handwritten note documents that Bolton's Redemptorists Order paid \$50,000.00 and the Diocese of Erie's insurance carrier paid the balance.

Jane Doe 1 reported that she never witnessed Bolton assault any of her friends, but believes they were also abused. She believes several, if not all, of her five friends with whom she travelled to New York in the company of Bolton were assaulted in the same fashion as she was. Diocesan records confirm part of her suspicions. The complainant in Bolton's 1987 conviction was indeed one of Jane Doe 1's friends. Other victims of Bolton's predation came forward years later and also proved to be childhood friends of Jane Doe 1. The Diocesan records show correspondence with some of these victims. One female victim was with Jane Doe 1 on her trips to Peak 'N Peak and also with her on the family vacation to Lake Chautauqua, New York. This young victim was approximately the same age as Jane Doe, between seven and eleven years old, when Bolton preyed upon her. The Diocesan records documented the efforts the Diocese of Erie and the Redemptorists Order went through to get this victim and her son counseling. As of 2003, both religious orders were in correspondence with this victim to assist her. No mention of a lawsuit or cash settlement was found in her file.

In another file, the mother of five children alleged that Bolton may have sexually assaulted four of them. No details of their assault were provided to the Grand Jury; however, as of 2004, the Diocese of Erie's representative, Monsignor Robert Smith, on behalf of Bishop Donald Trautman, was corresponding with the family to offer them counseling assistance.

Bolton's only other documented victim was a fourth grade boy who was abused between 1976 and 1977. Diocesan representative Monsignor Mark L. Bartchak made contact with him in 2001 and reported his findings back to Monsignor Robert Smith and Bishop Trautman. This victim reported that Bolton sexually assaulted him. Internal documents from Bartchak to Smith record the Diocese's preparation for a lawsuit and their intention to notify the Redemptorists of this victim's possible course of action. The Diocese made arrangements to have a representative from Catholic Charities counsel the victim and to arrange for various agencies to assist him and his family financially and by providing food aid.

In 2001, Monsignor Smith met with this victim in person to record his complaints. When asked about Bolton's abuse, this victim reported that he had a desire to be an altar server and went to Bolton's office one day to inquire about it. The victim explained that when he opened the door without knocking, he saw Father Bolton with a young girl whose tights were down around her ankles. He told Smith that this girl was crying and that Bolton yelled at him, "*What the hell are you doing here?*" His only other answer to inquiries about Bolton was to say that Bolton "*Wanted me to do things to him.*" He implied that these things that Bolton suggested were sexual and that Father Bolton asked this victim to touch him.

In the Diocese response to the John Jay College Study in 2003, the Diocese of Erie listed this last victim as "*Not Verified*".

## **Summary**

Ultimately, the Diocese of Erie returned Bolton to his religious order. The Redemptorists continued to place Bolton in ministry until his death in 2006.