

Preamble: Although we have not been ritually abused-tortured we place our story in this section of our website for three reasons. Firstly, this section was developed because the reality some priests/clergy are perpetrators of ritual abuse-torture (RAT) has been largely a silent reality; secondly, our paper makes connection with how priests/nuns used spiritual beliefs and practices as tools, as forces, of oppression, misogyny, abuse, and RAT and how these forces impacted on our childhood; and thirdly, this paper is written as a response to a request by Bostonian activists who are seeking to collect personal stories and poems—experiences and reflections—from people who have been involved in the movement to hold pedophilic priests accountable for the violence they have inflicted against children and youth, as well as lobby to have clergy with positional power—Cardinals—account for their actions. Actions which focussed on keeping the victimization and traumatization of children/youth covered-up so as to protect the image and the wealth of the church. The activist’s goal is to collect sufficient stories and/or poems so these can be combined to become a book. *Relationships: A Truro-Boston Connection* is our contribution to their efforts ...

Relationships: A Truro-Boston Connection

Jeanne Sarson, RN, BScN, MEd & Linda MacDonald, RN, BN, MEd

Walking down Berkley Street heading for Holy Cross Cathedral we wondered aloud ... would folks still be picketing ...who would we meet at the Cathedral? Discussing and expressing our feelings—concerns mixed with the hope we were not too late to make connection with some of the courageous activist spirits we had seen on TV. Before leaving Nova Scotia we had been following the clergy abuse scandal and decided that one of our goals when we were in Boston for the *Learning from Women* conference was to make connection with the protestors to give our support to the movement. Rounding the street corner our steps quicken, exited, for we could see “Law must go” placards. Introducing ourselves ... being welcomed ... connecting with genuine people and the pleasure such connections create comes across in this photo of Linda and Dara Zapata holding the “Cardinal Law Must Go!” bumper sticker!



Photo by Jeanne April 28, 2002

Indignation ... Anger ... Grief ... Determination ... A demand for justice!

Talking, sharing, discussing the injustices—the abuses of power and the abuses of trust—personal shock ... the struggle to understand how child sexualized abuse by priests could happen ... for so long ... by so many ... the spiritual abuse ... of so many innocent children and youth. How? Why? And the children ... victimized repeatedly ... the cover-ups ... for how long? For centuries? How could this happen?

Our memories are a mixture of these conversations. Remembering Philip de Alburquerque struggling with his quest for understanding pedophilia committed by priests and realizing the extreme spiritualized violations that would automatically occur ... a direct result of the “priestly” positional power of the pedophilic priest! People struggling to re-conceptualize reality ... to re-conceptualize their worldview ... it is such hard work!

Relationship connections happened that day, seeping into our beings like the rain ... imprinting into our consciousness, into our spirits, into our memories ... forever. Relational memories ... a moment-in-time memory that is reflected in Dara’s comments when she reviewed the above picture: “Why are we smiling so broadly at such a solemn event? I guess it was the joy in meeting one another.” A relational gift, moments of value to celebrate even in solemn times. These are some of our memories of the Truro-Boston connection of April 28, 2003.

Closing down the day of protest, like all who had stood in the rain, we began our walk back to the YWCA Berkley Residence. Turning around to imprint one lasting image we noticed a lone man standing, intently staring at the Cathedral. We went over to him. He spoke of his suffering ... the loss of an intimate partner relationship because he could not cope ... ordeals of hospitalization ... suicidal attempts ... emotional agony ... he then asked us who we were and what we did. We explained that our work was focussed on the reality of ritual abuse-torture. He looked at us and said ... “then you know ... you know.” Was there horror in his eyes ... of “priestly” horrors of long past ... yet, consuming him in the present? It seemed so. His image ... his eyes ... lie imprinted in our memories and surface when we speak of that day.

Sitting on the plane we wondered, what support can we give? What can we contribute from afar? More than we ever imagined! On our return to Nova Scotia the first task we undertook was to write a paper *The MO: The Modus Operandi of Pedophiles Insights About Pedophiles from the Victim’s Perspective* to share with folks in Boston. In this paper we integrated case examples from the media that described some of the tactics used by pedophilic priests as they hunted for child victims. Our lives grew busier with e-mailing back and forth to many Bostonians. E-mailing interspersed with telephone conversations helped us stay connected, providing support, and sharing our activism knowledge and experience. We wrote many letters, for instance, a letter to a Governor’s Task Force to identify the Canada-US cross-border tactics that were/are used by church officials “to hide” pedophilic priests; and letters explaining the reality that child trafficking and exploitation occurs when a pedophilic priest transports a child from one location to another for the purpose of committing sexualized assaults. We wrote to Rep. Eugene L. O’Flaherty, Co-Chair of Judiciary Committee, Boston, in support of House Bill No. 1895. Another example was writing and telephoning a California police force to protest their actions of appearing in uniform to give support to a priest alleged to have perpetrated sexualized crimes against a man when he was a boy. We have passed on relevant media articles and connected Canadians with Americans working for justice. We are members of STTOP! Cardinal Law Must Go! Bumper stickers “graced” our vehicles. Since our return from Boston we have developed our website with links to

many Boston/US sites doing tremendous work relating to the reality of clergy abuse. Presenting our work about ritual abuse-torture to Christine Dolan resulted in a section entitled ritual abuse-torture in her *Report on the Sexual Exploitation of Children within the Roman Catholic Church Globally* (pp. 54-58). We have created a specific section on our web site dedicated to persons who report enduring acts of torture or ritual abuse-torture perpetrated by religious men and/or women who hold positional power as priests, nuns, ministers, or rabbi, for example. It is a space where they can speak and be heard!

Just as the exposure of pedophilic violence by priests challenged the faith of many as well as their sense of trust and worldview—a reality that exposed the culture of silence and deceit within the Roman Catholic Church that permitted the on-going and, at times, the serial pedophilic abuse of children by some clergy; a reality exposing that Church leaders “... chose to protect the image and reputation of their institution rather than the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to their care ... [and] acted with a misguided devotion to secrecy;”¹ and the reality that a Vatican doctrine supported such secrecy world wide²—we were, in 1993, hit with the reality that there walked among us persons who inflict ritual abuse-torture (RAT). Acts of human evil we had never encountered before—the reality that persons from all walks of life, including religious persons—commit acts of ritual abuse-torture for pleasure and entertainment, to exert and fulfil their all-powerfulness needs and desires over another human being—a child/youth victim—and/or for financial gain—to fulfil their emotional greed needs often by making and selling pedophilic pornography, for instance. This reality of ritual abuse-torture came to us when a woman reached out to us for help—a woman who reported she had been born into a RAT family/group and who remained connected to the family/group as a “captive” adult. This meant she was experiencing on-going RAT victimization at the same time as she was attempting to heal and exit—to exit and heal. With our support and under her own volition she gradually and “safely” worked at exiting from both her reported RAT family/group perpetrators and from perpetrators of a secretive destructive women’s group whom she reported also tortured and ritually abused-tortured her.

Explaining in detail the struggles we encountered as we provided caring and educative support to the woman is beyond the scope of this paper. However, our experiences had a ring of the familiar as we read of the blockage tactics used by the Church against the activists. When we attempted to report and expose wrong-doings and all forms of alleged abuses by health care professionals to persons with supervisory and positional power within the health care system and within our professional nursing association we were generally lied to, dismissed, ignored, and given the silent treatment. Responding to our letters of concern we also received letters with “no comment” statements, and/or lawyers were used by the system as an intimidation tactic to write” legal” letters to us stating we

¹ Lavoie, D. (2003, July 24). Likely 1,000 victims in Boston diocese sexual abuse case. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*, p. D 14.

² Barnett, A. (2003, August 17). Vatican told bishops to cover up sex abuse Expulsion threat in secret documents. *The Observer*. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1020400,00.html>;
Washington, R. (2003, July 30). Lawyers eye former pope's blueprint to shield clergy. http://www2.bostonherald.com/news/local_regional/vati07302003.htm

were not to write any more letters to the particular person in authority to whom we had been writing. Our letters of concern to an institutional board also went unrecorded in the board minutes—a vanishing of evidence tactic. Such acts of oppression were meant to silence us. It has not. Such acts of oppression were/are meant to wear us down so fatigue would set in and we would disappear. We are still here eight years later!

Although we understand oppression and how oppressors work—persons with positional power who abuse their positional power to cover-up wrong-doings in an effort to protect them-Self or the system they control—it is always a reality shock to us each time systems that are suppose to care fail to care about those they are responsible and accountable to serve. Experiencing a systems failure to care causes secondary re-victimization responses—anger, frustration, more injustice—our feelings in response to the realization that our professional nursing association and the health care system failed to care or covered-up so much wrong-doing. We watched, read, and heard of the church’s failure to care and the violations—the anger, frustration, and injustice feelings of the activists, their sufferings of secondary re-victimization being expressed as they demanded justice, accountability, and transformative change.

Daring to mention RAT generally meant we were professionally isolated, unable to find support for our-Selves or for the woman. Other professionals wanted to deny or reject the reality of human evil—of RAT. The woman’s alleged perpetrators attacked us professionally as the woman reported they were intent on destroying us professionally and had the intention of harming our families, for instance financially—if we lost our professional licences then our families would suffer. Refusing to back down we won! They lost! Just as in Boston—Cardinal Law did resign—the activists won! We were confronted with massive doses of “white-wall” oppression from within the health care system and from our professional nursing association—abuses of power and violations of trust, cover-ups, lack of accountability, lies, deceitfulness, and actions focussed on discrediting us, for instance. Themes and situations all too familiar to our Bostonian connections—all of whom were repeatedly confronted by the “black-robed” wall of oppression, abuses of power, and violations of trust by church officials.

Power is not freely relinquished by an oppressor. It is not shared! It is not based on values and beliefs of equality, truth-telling, and justice. An oppressor’s needs and desires and their greed to maintain positional power and support the system that supplies them with positional power is their prime interest. Knowing this, like our friends in Boston, we have settled in for the long journey. For us this means working to expose the reality of RAT and how RAT is a violation of the victimized person’s human right; to work to prevent tomorrow’s children from becoming victims of the RAT family/groups; and it is a journey seeking social transformation, truth, and justice! Like our friends in Boston who started the wave of exposing a culture of cover-up about pedophilia in the church we are working to be part of the growing wave that has been building to expose the regional, national, inter-national, and trans-national co-culture of persons/families/groups who inflict ritual abuse-torture on innocent babies, toddlers, children, youth, and/or captive adults, such as the woman who sought our support.

During the darkest hours in our journey we needed to find ways to nurture our-Selves, as we are certain our Boston friends did also. As we were immersed in the visions and sufferings inflicted by the unconscionable brutality and cruelty inflicted by the RAT torturer, two a.m. readings on the clock became all too familiar. Using these quiet hours to twist our minds around the actions of the human evil doers until we understood their modus operandi helped us design how to care more effectively—this was cognitive Self-care. Translating the horrors we were hearing into educational models we could use to educate others helped us Self-care as it kept us from being pulled into the chaos and confusion RAT perpetrators intentionally inflict on the mind-spirit of their victims. Reading, researching, talking, caring and being supportive of each other emotionally helped sustain us. Writing ... writing this story has become part of our Self-care and healing journey. As did going to classes so we could design our web site that focuses on RAT which we define as:

intentionally planned and organized kin and/or non-kin brutal group ritualisms; acts of human evil that terrify and horrify; acts of pedophilic, physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit tortures; acts that can include modern day slavery (pornography, trafficking, sexualized and labour-intensive exploitation); acts that cause life-threatening torment; acts that distorts beliefs and values, thoughts, emotions, perceptions, behaviours, and world-view of the victimized person; dehumanizing and despiritualizing acts that have the capacity to destroy the personality of the infant, toddler, child, youth or “captive” adult victim; the actions of a co-culture that can be inter-connected regionally, nationality, internationally, and transnationally; and, criminal acts that are a violation of the victimized person’s human rights.

We know that had we been working alone we would not have survived—our healthy partnership was vital to our survival (and to the woman’s survival). Working as a team, our relationship has endured and flourished ... a gift that grew from our commitment to survive ... to be caring persons ... to connect with other like-minded persons ... a gift that is reflected in Dara’s comment about “the joy of meeting one another” as stated on page one. Partnerships have also been invaluable to the achievements that occurred in Boston when people stood together and said NO MORE!

In the previous pages we have written about our Truro-Boston connections and of the themes common to all of us who have battled against oppression, abuses of power, abuses of trust, and against the victimization of the vulnerable—children, youth, or captive adults. In keeping with the theme of this book the remaining part of this article is dedicated to sharing some of our personal experiences of being harmed by family violence and child sexualized abuse. More specifically though, we will focus our attention on the impact spiritual abuse and oppression by the church had on our development. Both of us are of the opinion that our histories of being exposed to and/or being persons victimized by violence were complicated by the oppressive forces of the Catholic Church. Healing from these ordeals have been fundamental anchors of our abilities to stay present with the reality of human evil and the reality that some religious persons are not only pedophilic perpetrators but are perpetrators of RAT.

Jeanne's story

My knowing disquieted me! Having an intuitive sense of knowing about human evil, an intuitive knowing and understanding about deep spiritual and personhood suffering was bothersome because I did not know how to explain it. Where did my sense of intuitive knowing about human evil come from?

Backtracking into my past, means revisiting the terrors of being a child in a home filled to capacity with daily alcoholic rages and my father's near-death battering of my mother. It means knowing the terror of fleeing into the darkness of night, using the darkness of the woods for hiding and sheltering my brother, my mother, and I as we waited for the alcoholic rage to transform into an alcoholic stupor so we could sneak back into the house; and listening to my father rape my mother ... crying with the knowledge the "consensual" sex was the only tool she had at her disposal to quiet him for those moments in time. Seeing my father's dog cringe in fear ... crawling on his belly when my father commanded him "to come" ... too terrified to run away ... watching the dog frothing at the mouth, dying of distemper ... lying dead in the kitchen ... my father's bizarre acts of sitting on the kitchen floor wailing as he hugged and cradled the dead dog in his arms ... off and on for two days. Too terrified to speak or make a sound, all my mother, my brother, and I could do was watch. These were "family" events to which the community of the time responded with indifference, oppression, or with more abusiveness.

As a pre-schooler I remember distant moments when I started developing a knowing about the reality of social indifference, oppression, and abusiveness. Of course, I did not have the theory or the language but I knew! Moments of knowing filtered into my mind when the priest came to our home and told my mother she had to stay with my father ... I knew he was wrong. Wrong, also was the \$20.00 my father slipped to him, that the priest slid into his right pocket as he walked out the door. Partners-in-crime ... the priest and my father ... the bribed and the briber ... I knew their actions were wrong!

When my mother bundled my brother and I up to flee, my father would send the priest after us to tell my mother what a sinful woman she was and that she belonged with my father, her husband! Partners-in-misogyny—my father and the priest—the abuser and his supporter! I said "he's wrong!" I knew. The times between leaving and returning were littered with crisis ... my mother becoming seriously ill and bed-ridden. I close my eyes and see my three year old brother's vulnerability transform into the pallor of his face and fear in his eyes ... such fear that he would not leave my mother's side ... he stayed on her bed with her ... watching. Her recovery was followed with her standing up for me demanding actions be taken against two teen-agers who had sexually assaulted me on my way home from school when I was five. At a time before child sexualized assaults were even considered a crime!

Returning and leaving came to an end when all was about lost. My brother, at five, became emotionally over-whelmed, unable to cope with home violence and violent teachers who used the strap to beat or threaten to beat children such as him and me for not having our homework done. Bad children ... whack ... whack ... sounds of terror ran through the air as children like us needed to be kept in line with the threat of the leather strap. My mother was hospitalized and given one insulin shock “treatment” to help her emotionally. Once was enough ... she ... we left forever. I knew I was thankful!

There was no priestly or medical ownership from priest or doctor that they were “treating and blaming” the wrong person. When the policemen had come to investigate the disturbances in our home I watched my father manipulate them ... using his and their position as kindred spirits ... men ... male oppression ... misogyny ... a home is a man’s castle ... they left. Imprinted forever on my mind is the look of pleasure, satisfaction, and power that was written on my father’s face. He had gathered more allies ... he had us trapped or so he thought. I knew ... I understood ... the developing wisdom of a five-year-old traveling in a culture of injustices. Somehow I knew society was wrong ... I knew!

Leaving was an act of courage, determination, and a demand for justice as my mother took my father to court as living on her \$810.00 a year salary in the early 50’s meant poverty. My father, he did not pay, rather he came “visiting” with gifts ... bribes ... a big doll for me ... an attempt to win my support ... but I knew it was a bribe ... I knew he was trying to manipulate me. But I knew my father did not care ... it did not matter to me ... I knew I was lucky. I knew.

Monsignor came to visit my mother, brother, and I in our new town. Driving up in his big car to tell my mother that she could not receive communion because she was living in sin ... living as a woman separated from her husband. The priestly grape vine of oppression had come to deliver its fruits: of sinner, eternal damnation, and hell. He was wrong, the Monsignor! I was older ... all of ten! And, I knew! And my anger grew ... at him and at the cruelty of the church!

Searching for spiritual answers, one last time and at the request of my mother, I sought out the Monsignor, at seventeen. Why do you tell my mother she is a sinner? Why do you refuse her communion when it is important to her? Why did you not hold my father accountable for his behaviour? Why did you not think it was important that my mother, my brother, and I be safe? Why do you tell me that only Catholics will go to heaven? Why do you try to make me believe that all other people’s gods are loser’s ... why? Tell me how you justify your and the church’s beliefs and behaviour, biases, hatred, and the oppressive disregard for women? No rational answers ... I knew this was wrong! I said, “Good-bye!”

All these acts of socio-cultural, medical, and religious acts of oppression—the devaluation of the harm violence inflicts unto children, genderism (sexism), female servitude, being labelled a sinner, and/or the label of being mentally ill, for instance—were almost as hurtful as the violence inflicted by my father (research today is beginning

to show that exclusionary tactics hurt the excluded³). My healing was about surviving the darkness of feeling my victimization and traumatization and not internalizing that which was not my fault. Building resilience and healing was about understanding how social oppression organizes culture ... it was about not believing in myths about the good old days ... it was about accepting that even though my father hated me because I was a female person this never ... not for a second ... had anything to do with my value of my-Self as a female person. Healing meant owning my history, of never having shame for that which was not mine to be shameful about. It was a solo journey. A journey of determination that I would make it ... an awareness that came at the age of three when, locked in a room by my father's mother, I experienced feelings of being surrounded by white lightness, and at that moment in time a knowing set in ... an awareness ... a promise to my-Self that I would survive. I had no language ... no words to express that which I knew ... simply a three-year-olds wisdom ... that is what I knew!

In sharing how "I" developed spiritually I speak mainly of overcoming the harm inflicted by the church because this religious violence was, in a lingering way, my most painful. For me, the oppressive injustices and spiritual harms the church inflicted took the longest to resolve. Violations that caused spiritual as well as life-threatening harms came when the beliefs and practices of the church and the priest were rooted in gender and positional inequality—the value of my father with the devaluation of my mother as a person at life-threatening risk—and the devaluation of children—my brother's and my well-being was never a consideration. Additionally, spiritual harms were delivered when my mother became "the sinner" and we were preached to about evilism, hell, and damnation. Priestly efforts that failed ... thankfully! Never having internalized evilism beliefs has been, to my surprise, a gift of tremendous proportions. I realize by not internalizing evilism beliefs or evilism anxieties armoured my spirit so when I was confronted with human evil, the evilism beliefs and practices of those who practice RAT, I was not fearful. And, I realized as I listened, at first to the connections made in Boston, then to the world reality about the pedophilic violence embedded within the culture of the church, that the church had used religious evilism beliefs to drill evilism anxieties into the spirits of many, inflicting spiritual harm on thousands of innocent children and youth. The concept of manipulating a child's developing relationship with/to them-Self and with/to others by tricking—forcing—they to avoid spiritual evilism by doing as the pedophilic priests demanded is, in my opinion, the ultimate tool used by pedophilic priests in their hunt to place the child victim in a no-win victimizing and traumatizing situation—dammed if you do and dammed if you don't!

Linda's story

I was told that my father kicked my mother in the stomach before I was born. I have no doubt this is true as I seem to remember fighting for my freedom as far back as I can remember. I watched my father beat my mother weekly while misogynistic words spewed from his mouth. I knew as a tiny person that this was not a good way to live and

³ Eisenberger, N. I., Lieberman, M. D., & Williams, K. D. (2003, October 10). Does rejection hurt? An fMRI study of social exclusion. *Science*, 290-292.

that my father was very wrong to treat my mother the way he did. As a toddler I stepped in trying to help him understand that his violent behaviour was hurtful to my mother and to me. I remember spending countless hours trying to get my father to see that he really needed to stop drinking alcohol. In my little child's mind I thought that the liquor was making my father act this way because when he was sober he was not physically violent. I did not know then that violence perpetrated by an adult is a choice and can be heightened by drinking alcohol. I learned much later in life that the main driving force behind an adult choosing violent behaviour is a desire for power and control.

When I was two years old I remember my first sibling being born and I also remember the violence escalated. A move to another province and the birth of another sibling escalated the violence another notch. As a preschooler of four I began to stand against my father, demanding he stop his abusive behaviour. All I got back from him was misogyny, verbal attacks, and horrible hurt. He turned on me because I was no longer his talking buddy and this broke my heart. Screaming obscenities, punches, begging, hurling objects, running from room to room, fearing for my mother's life, crying, no sleep, constant stress, terror, feeling very lonely, being heartbroken—and more just not capturable in words—were all an everyday reality of my life. At the age of four I can remember being so emotionally overwhelmed that I walked out onto the sidewalk of my new town—frantically searching—just trying to find an answer as to how I would survive. I can remember standing under a beautiful umbrella tree, feeling very calm and warm with white light all around me ... and an inner knowing moved through me that I would survive ... I would make it ... and that someday I would have a good life. This pivotal *relationship with my-Self experience* has been a guiding memory and guiding force for me my entire life.

My mother told me that because she found me in a neighbourhood church at four she decided she would start taking me to church. Since my father was Catholic she enrolled me in the only Catholic school in my town and my social reality of abuse of power and abuse of trust by the church began. My outstanding memories in this school include, in primary, being hit with a yardstick on the back of my legs for forgetting to take off my pyjama bottoms ... because I was sleepy when I had gotten dressed for school as I had been up all night with my father's violent rantings; of being told, as a ten year old, I was below receiving a strap and forever shunned by a nun I respected because she was given a note a friend of mine had sent me about kissing (normal growth and development for this age ... not a sin); watching my peers being shouted at and thrown across the classroom during the weekly "discipline" visits by the priest; being subjected to weekly confession before church, by this same cruel priest, without even a screen for privacy. I remember hating this priest and thinking "I bet he doesn't tell anyone about all his cruel actions of throwing and screaming at kids when he goes to confession." I also remember fainting often in regular Friday school church services and having to be carried out. Looking back on it now the incongruencies between the words and actions of so called religious persons were just too much for me and fainting was a sign my little girl spirit was suffering. I had thought school would be a place of peace to learn and feel safe ... how wrong, disappointed, hurt, and violated I was.

Always hopeful and proud of being a good student, I still had a goal of being a good Catholic and studied catechism very diligently. The nun taught us we had a soul by drawing a circle on the board coloured in with chalk. All the time telling us as innocent children that we were sinners and showing us our sins as erased black dots in the circle. That image will stay with me forever. I used to have fear as a child about how many black dots ... sins ... I had on my soul at anyone time. I was taught to memorize phrases about the power of the devil and was groomed on what to say if a protestant asked me why I adored false idols. I accepted all this dogma to a point ... until ... one lucky day a nun taught me as a Catholic I was superior to all other children of other religions. This is when my life in relation to religion transformed forever. I asked questions and challenged this nun at length until I was told I was being very disobedient with my disagreeing behaviour. I can remember saying to my-Self, "This is enough ... I refuse to accept I am superior to anyone." This was a very liberating day for me and I am very proud I chose a belief of equality versus superiority as such a young person.

All the while I was learning about my church I was telling my nun teachers that my father hit my mother, called her names, and drank lots of alcohol. I can remember in grade four sitting on a nun's lap sobbing about my difficult reality at home and her saying how sorry she was for me. Her pity is all the comfort she offered me. No one ever approached my parents with questions about family violence. No one ever helped me stand in the agony of the unending ordeal of surviving a violent family reality. No one from this school helped me get out of the cycle of family violence. No one did anything but expect me to be a good student ... of which I was. No one did anything but ... pity me ... shame me ... scare me ... and distort my spirituality. I was the one who stayed with my-Self during these very difficult years of my life. I was the one who had a goal of graduating with good marks to gain independence for my-Self by getting a good job. And I was the one who guided my-Self to be a good honest person despite all the lies and cruelty I witnessed at school. And I succeeded!!!

I grew up telling my-Self that all the focus on the devil, evil, sin, and fear were not healthy messages to carry within one-Self about spirituality. I thought I had these spiritual teachings and beliefs out of my mind until I started working with a woman who had survived ritual abuse-torture. I will never forget the feeling of fear I had as I sat across from her on the floor (we spent lots of time on the floor, it was often the only safe place for her as we helped her attend to her massive pain and suffering) as she determinedly told Jeanne and I she was the devil. Despite my adult knowing that this was impossible my childhood teachings flooded in and I felt like a cat hanging from the ceiling for dear life.

These teachings of evilism anxiety so carefully grilled into my brain as a child were a liability in my helping work and I was determined to rid my-Self of these irrational fears and beliefs forever. And I succeeded in letting go of the emotional burden of evilism anxiety through thinking, talking, and Self-awareness work. I realized my own spirituality had been harmed by the spiritual abuse I received in Catholic teachings. I had a distorted sense of evil and I realized in order to be present for survivors of RAT I had to do my own work and clarify for my own Self what I believed evil truly was. Now I know

that evil is not the devil, not a metaphysical force, not an unseen spirit that swoops in during the night but rather, evil is hardcore human behaviour such as what we have witnessed by pedophilic priests in the Catholic Church. I clarified for my own beliefs that evil persons can be perpetrators with positional power such as “religious” persons and that they have a very intentional goal of destroying another person’s personality and mind-spirit. In my opinion this is the worst of human behaviour.

After all this learning about human behaviour and spirituality I have taken on a life goal of exposing atrocities inflicted onto children by adults—in particular through ritual abuse-torture. That is why I went walking to the Holy Cross Cathedral that rainy April morning. To find like-minded people who had chosen the same life’s goal of helping innocent children to grow up safely in society. I am so pleased to say I did find kindred spirits in Boston that day and I know I will cherish these important relational connections the rest of my life.

In conclusion

And, how did our connection with the Boston movement help us? As we listened intently to the persons victimized by pedophilic priests speak of their spiritual sufferings we spent more time thinking about the impacts religious-based spirituality has on a person’s development and on our development. Our relationship connections with Boston offered an opportunity to review our childhood relationships with the church and reflect on how we each dealt with the spiritual violations it inflicted—or attempted to inflict! It has been a time to reflect and clarify how we each stood against the abuse of power exerted by priests within the church. It has helped us to know that when standing against human evil-doers there is no room for doubt about their spirituality ... there is no room for finding excuses for their actions for perpetrators who perpetrate acts of human evil such as the RAT torturer they do intentionally. Their intent is Self and group pleasure, entertainment, and gratification and the attempt to destroy the personality of their victims. The Boston connections reminded both of us of the gifts surviving brought to each of us: the opportunity to reflect and appreciate our work to heal our-Selves—to heal our spirits; the satisfaction of sharing what we know and have experienced with others; to speak out against violence against infants, toddlers, children, and youth; and the chance to offer support and hope to others.

From a relational and historical perspective relationships are embedded in a socio-cultural process that has organized endemic relational power and control—the dominate oppressing the subordinate. Power and control is maintained ultimately by the expression of violence—universally throughout our global communities—male over female, parent over child, oldest over the youngest, the wealthy over the poor, the white over the blacks, the strongest over the weakest, or in the situation of the pedophilic priests, the use of “next-to-god” positional power over his victims who frequently are from vulnerable single-parent families. Every time this fundamental socio-cultural equation of relational domination and subordination is challenged it is future-altering. The voices in Boston started a wave that challenged and has altered the balances of relational power within the

church this is a fact. Your collective voices and the wave of transformations you started have been added to our memories gleaned on that rainy day of April 28, 2002. With the warmest of relational respect we celebrate all of you!

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