



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Priest acknowledges himself to be “an evil, sick, cunning and sneaky man”



“Father” Michael Gerard McQuillan

A Roman Catholic priest has been jailed for 12 years for sexually abusing five children, including a brother and sister. “Father” Michael Gerard McQuillan, whose address was given as Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey in Portglenone, admitted a total of 40 charges.

They included indecent assault, gross indecency and four charges of serious sexual assault. A judge said he “deliberately seduced and breached the trust” of his victims, four boys and a girl. Newry Crown Court heard on Friday he met his victims while he worked as a chaplain at a County Armagh school. The abuse took place between 1986 and 1993 and much of it happened at the parochial house and during trips to a private swimming pool. The abuse came to light two years ago when McQuillan was approached by one of his victims. The priest admitted to the victim’s mother what he had done, the court heard.

McQuillan was assaulted and later when he was interviewed by the police, admitted the abuse had happened. His victims were at the court to hear a lawyer for McQuillan say he apologised “unreservedly” for his actions. He held his head in his hands as the details were read to the court.