



Woman who accuses nun of indecent assaults says she was abused by man

WED, 21 NOV, 2012 - 00:00

PADDY CLANCY

The woman told the jury of seven women and five men that 18 years after the assaults by the nun in 1976 and 1977 she was treated in a hospital psychiatric unit in 1995.

She also attended an abuse and rape crisis centre.

She agreed with Geraldine Biggs, defending the nun, Sr Mary Theresa Grogan, that she saw a psychotherapist 109 times.

She told the psychotherapist of an occasion, when she was aged 10, when a male friend of her parents brought her into a room at a party and asked her to touch his genitals.

On another occasion, when she was eight, a male neighbour requested her to touch him.

Ms Biggs noted at Sligo Circuit Court the woman, who accuses the 63-year-old nun of touching her beneath her underwear on her bottom, did not accuse the sister of child sexual abuse.

Ms Biggs reminded the woman in main evidence she said the nun, known as Sr Peter in class, was very nice and very sweet.

Ms Biggs said court documents showed the woman said she had a fear of beatings from Sr Peter.

The woman told the court that she was on heavy medication at the time and did not remember using the word "beat".

Sr Mary Theresa Grogan denies 63 charges of indecent assault against seven pupils in her class between 1973 and 1977.

The court has heard that the nun, a Sister of Mercy, stopped calling herself Sr Peter and reverted to Sr Mary Theresa Grogan when she moved to the missions in Zambia in 1990.

The trial, transferred following a defence request to Sligo from the Midlands town where the offences are alleged to have happened, is in its second week.

Another witness yesterday, who is also now aged 45 and a mother of two, told of her horror when she was trapped inside the school library with the accused nun.

The woman said she was bending over a press in the library when she looked around and Sr Peter was there and she pressed her against the wall and fondled her breasts.

The woman fought back tears as she told the court: "I thought 'how am I going to get out of this?'".

"She grabbed me and started fondling my breasts. I don't know how I got out."

The woman told the court she was a slow reader and, in class, Sr Peter called her up to read out loud and put her hand down her pants while the other children had their heads down on the desks after being instructed in Irish to go to sleep.

The abuse she received in third class had "left its mark on me".

The case continues.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-20214596.html>