

Ex-priest gets 18 to 20 years for child molestation

By KATHARINE WEBSTER
Associated Press

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. — Former priest James Porter was sentenced yesterday to at least 18 years in prison for child molesting after 22 of his victims spoke of the pain and embarrassment they quietly endured for three decades.

Before the sentencing, Porter, 58, tearfully begged for leniency, but one victim told the judge: "I would ask the court to show the same amount of mercy that Mr. Porter showed us, and that is none."

Prosecutors urged that Porter be imprisoned up to 40 years. The victims asked for sentences including life imprisonment, stoning and castration.

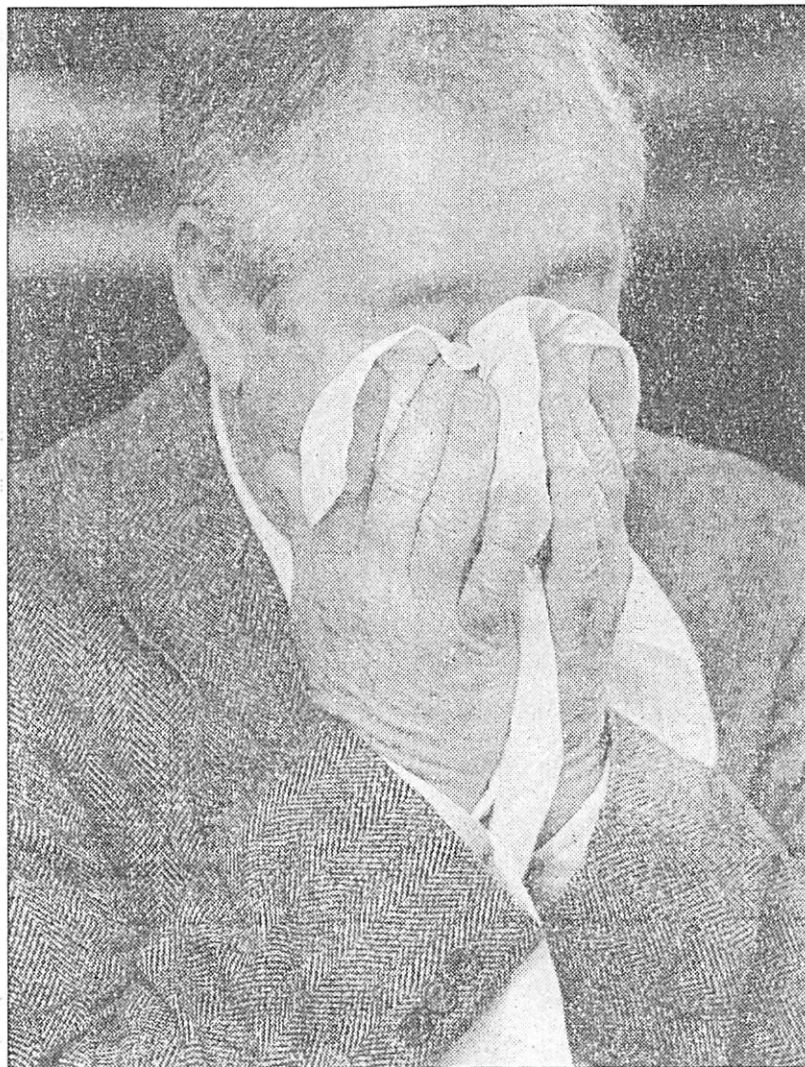
The former Roman Catholic priest pleaded guilty Oct. 5 to 27 charges of indecent assault and battery of a child under 14, as well as 14 related charges stemming from the 1960s, when he was at parishes in North Attleboro, Fall River and New Bedford.

Porter, who served six months in jail in Minnesota for molesting a baby sitter, admitted he was still a pedophile.

"What led me to do the things that I did is still somewhere in me," he said. "Every time I look into the mirror, my mind makes me see the monster that I was. My conduct will stain my life until I die."

Porter had pleaded for treatment in a center near his wife and four children in Minnesota but was countered by 22 victims.

Daniel Lyons told how Porter



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James Porter cried yesterday during his sentencing for child molestation in New Bedford, Mass.

raped him, and "when I would scream, he would put his hand over my mouth so no one could hear. Today, I am heard."

Victims told of nightmares, depression, drug and alcohol addictions and attempted suicides.

"As I look at the faces of my fellow survivors, I see the pain we suffered. There is no punishment imaginable that can erase our pain," said John Warburton.

Porter was sentenced to concur-

rent prison terms of 18 to 20 years for four counts of sodomy, and concurrent 3- to 5-year sentences for 27 counts of indecent assault and battery against children under 14 and seven counts of indecent acts against children under 16. He will be eligible for parole in six years.

Porter's sentence also stipulates that, upon his release, he serve 10 years' probation, during which he must undergo treatment for pedophilia.