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Former priest receives maximum punishment

By JACK MOORE
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Former Roman Catholic priest David A. Holley was sentenced to the maximum term in prison Friday for the sexual abuse of eight Alamogordo boys during the early 1970s. The sentences were handed down by District Judge Robert M. Doughty II in an emotionally-charged three-hour hearing.

Five of the victims, now men in their 30s, asked the court to be allowed to speak at the hearing.

Robert Curtis, 33, told the court that Holley repeatedly sexually molested him when he was a child.

"It's difficult to think of him in any other way than as an animal," Curtis said.

Noel B. Clark, 32, asked Doughty to sentence Holley to 21 years in prison — a year for every year of anguish Clark and his family have had to endure since Holley molested him.

Gary M. Sanchez, 32, said Holley "is a very sick individual," and "needs to be off the street."

Mark R. Sanchez, 35, recommended that Holley be locked up for life.

"He's a predator," Sanchez said.

Ed Francis, 32, was just 10 when Holley sexually abused him. "I was an altar boy at the church where he was a priest," Francis said.

"I want to see him put someplace where he cannot get out. The man's sick."

Holley, 65, entered guilty pleas on March 23 to five counts of aggravated sodomy, two counts of sodomy and one count of sexual assault in connection with the sexual abuse of the eight boys during a period from 1972 until 1974. During that period Holley was temporarily assigned to St. Jude Catholic Mission in Alamogordo while undergoing treatment for pedophilia at the Servants of the Paraclete in James Springs.

Although only eight victims were named in the indictments handed down by an Otero County grand jury on Jan. 28, officers for the agencies investigating the case said Holley sexually assaulted nearly 30 boys in Alamogordo during the two years he



Ron Guerke/Daily News

UNEMOTIONAL AT SENTENCING — Former Roman Catholic priest David A. Holley exhibited no emotion Friday as he was sentenced to not less than 55 years and not more than 275 years in prison for the sexual abuse of eight Alamogordo boys in the early 1970s. Holley was sentenced by District Judge Robert M. Doughty II, who allowed five of Holley's victims testify at the three-hour hearing.

was assigned to St. Jude.

Because Holley was charged under the existing criminal statutes of the period, he also had to be sentenced to the prison terms called for under those statutes.

Aggravated sodomy, a second degree felony carried a maximum term of not less than 10 years and not more than 50 years in prison. Sodomy, a third degree felony, carried a maximum sentence of not less than 2 and not more than 10 years in prison.

Sexual assault was a fourth degree felony which had a maximum sentence of not less than 1 year and not more than 3 years in prison.

Doughty denied a request from Public Defender Robert McDowell that Holley be returned to St. Luke Institute in Maryland to complete a pedophilia treatment program he had begun in December. Holley was arrested at the Suitland, Md., facility one day after his indictment by the grand jury.

Doughty said the nature of the offenses and Holley's role as a trusted clergyman demanded retribution.

"These offenses are serious. These offenses are grievous. The position from which you committed these offenses shocks the conscience of this court, shocks the

conscience of these victims and shocks the conscience of this community," Doughty said before passing sentence.

"I'm sure that the sentence I'm about to announce is the right sentence of you for the crimes that you have committed," he said.

Doughty then sentenced Holley to the maximum on each count, and ordered the sentences to be served consecutively. That netted Holley a term of not less than 55 years and not more than 275 years in prison.

Holley showed no emotion, as Doughty handed down the stiff terms.