

Big Picture  Local Focus  
**Daily Herald**  
SUBURBAN CHICAGO'S INFORMATION SOURCE

Petition urges Geneva church to stop 'cover-up'

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It has been two years since the Catholic Church's widespread shuffling of priests accused of sexual abuse came to light.

A year and a half ago, Catholic bishops signed the first sweeping reforms into place, pledging an end to secrecy and a commitment to healing.

But a victim's advocacy group passed out several hundred fliers to parishioners at St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva Sunday because it believes that those promises have not translated into actions.

Specifically, the Chicago-based Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests takes issue with the Rockford Diocese's continued refusal to hand over internal documents to Kane County authorities related to former priest Mark **Campobello**, who faces numerous charges of criminal sexual abuse.

The group asked parishioners to contact Rockford Bishop Thomas Doran and ask him to "support law enforcement and to stop the cover-up."

The diocese argues that turning over the documents would violate the Constitutional guarantee to the separation of church and state. It has been held in contempt of court since May 2003 for refusing to turn over the documents.

"Hundreds, if not thousands, of us wouldn't have been molested if church leaders had turned over information to law enforcement," said the protesting group's president Barbara Blaine.

The charges against **Campobello** stem from allegations of misconduct that took place with two girls in 1999 and 2000 while he was living at St. Peter and working as assistant principal at Aurora Central Catholic High School.

The flier asked parishioners to contact authorities if they have any information about sexual abuse at St. Peter or other parishes.

It also urged parishioners to pass the information along to others so they can "begin to heal."

"When abuse victims stay quiet, molesters go undetected and the vulnerable are at risk," the flier said.

Blaine said about half of the parishioners at the early Sunday services did not seem to react to them, while the remainder were split between being supportive and angry.

Blaine said the church did not respond except to ask them to leave. They previously sent a letter to Doran two weeks ago because of concerns over how a parishioner that criticized the church's handling of the **Campobello** matter was treated.

"It's very infrequent that a bishop refuses to cooperate with civil authorities when there is a current investigation," Blaine said.

The diocese could not be reached for comment Sunday, and Msgr. Joseph Jarmoluk of St. Peter did not return a call seeking comment.

The diocese had not responded to the group's earlier letter as of early last week, Blaine said. St. Peter officials did not return Daily Herald calls asking for a response to that letter either.

The church did issue a statement on May 16, 2003, in support of its refusal to turn over the documents.

"Some may conclude that we are hiding things. But we are not," Msgr. Eric Barr wrote. "We are protecting the right of the church to have independence from the state."

Jarmoluk announced in January that he would be on a three-month sabbatical starting Feb. 1, but last week said he would not be leaving.

The announcement came after he received a subpoena to testify at Campobello's trial, which starts in May.

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