

Big Picture  Local Focus
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Diocese should help church, parishioners

With regard to former priest Mark **Campobello** pleading guilty to sexually abusing two teenage girls in the Diocese of Rockford, the healing of the victims, their families and St. Peter's church family, I am glad some closure and truth has been brought to this tragedy.

I hope Bishop Thomas Doran, on behalf of all of us in the Rockford Diocese, would personally visit each of the victims and their families and offer our apologies for what has happened to them. Representing all of us in the diocese, our bishop would extend our love, prayers and support for their journey of healing.

We would appreciate our bishop acting on our behalf to offer to have the Diocese of Rockford pay for any professional counseling or therapy for the victims and their families and any other assistance they might need to heal.

On behalf of all of us in the Rockford Diocese, I would like Bishop Doran, with an outside team of professional facilitators, to visit the people, clergy, school and church staff of St. Peter's parish to offer our sympathies, and facilitate and encourage an open, honest discussion surrounding the issues and any mistakes in handling these unfortunate events. This would include an opportunity for anyone to ask their questions.

Lastly, in closing this discussion, everyone would be informed of the protocol that will be in place if something of this nature happens again in the Rockford Diocese.

The process of healing is strategic. We need to admit our mistakes for our own peace and mental health so deep healing can occur for all involved. This process also helps us grow and learn how to do things differently and more appropriately.

I am glad the Illinois 2nd District Appellate Court ruled on how much access prosecutors should have to church records. This is a new frontier in the law.

A legal procedure needs to be put into place to protect the separation of church and state but at the same time does not allow the church to protect its priests and hierarchy in allegations of wrongdoing involving our children. This ruling also might help children in every diocese in the Catholic Church of America.

Lastly, I want to thank Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; and Illinois Appellate Justice Anne Burke, chairwoman of the National Review Board; and all the members of this board for their excellent work. This board of prominent lay Catholics has been charged with supervising the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy toward clergy sex abuse of children in all the Catholic dioceses in the United States. They have worked very hard the last two years to help all our children in the Catholic Church of America be safe and protected.

We all have learned a lot from this crisis within our church, and we have to continue to monitor and make sure the process is fine-tuned so no other child anywhere in our church is abused and scarred for life. I firmly believe every child has a special mission to accomplish in this life. I want our children to have a solid foundation in the teachings and doctrines of our Catholic faith so they can bring the Gospel values to their station in life.

I thank all those - the laity, priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, bishops and cardinals who get up every day working toward that goal around the United States.

Mary Lu Loarie O'Halloran

Geneva

World-minus-USA column was great

Kudos on Chuck Goudie's Memorial Day column! It was very good writing and a great idea. We, as well as the rest of the world, need to be reminded from time to time of the positive changes that have occurred in people's lives around the globe because the United States is here.

I have only one regret. I wish I had written it.

Don Lindman

Batavia

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