

## Parishoners' contributions pay legal fees

As parishoners of St. Peter's in Geneva, we have been educated through the church's weekly bulletin over the past couple of months as to the various expenses incurred by the parish from such things as heating expenses, mailing envelopes and even the expenses incurred for snow removal. In addition, the parish sent a letter to families sending their children to the parish school indicating that tuition may have to be raised next year because of the financial condition of the parish.

I'm waiting for St. Peter's to enlighten the parish faithful as to how much money the Rockford Diocese is paying its attorneys, who have apparently aligned themselves with the Rev. Mark Campobello's attorneys, in an attempt to block the release of the diocese's own investigative report on what really occurred with regards to the allegations of the Rev. Mark Campobello's sexual abuse of a minor in 1999.

Why are the diocese and Campobello attorneys working together to keep the Appellate Court from ruling on this? Isn't an expeditious court ruling something that the diocese has said it wanted all along? It now appears that Campobello's attorneys and the diocese's attorneys are "pooling their resources" in an attempt to keep the Appellate Court from issuing a ruling prior to Campobello's May trial date.

While I'm on the subject of the diocese lawyers, to truly understand the twisted logic that the diocese attorneys are desperately trying to advance, one only has to glance at a letter written on Dec. 1, 2003, by a lawyer from the diocese discussing the Campobello situation in regards to a subpoena to turn over documents. In the letter, the attorney argues that our state legal system does not necessarily apply to the church because our civil legal system is not a moral system.

The attorney goes on to argue that the church laws are the result of a true moral system and, therefore, the church tries to follow the law of the land, but must adhere to the divine law of the church because the church is a moral system. She concludes by saying that the legal system (that one that applies to you and me) does not purport to be a moral system, therefore the subpoena request must be challenged because the divine church law contradicts our civil laws.



**Frank Bochte**  
of Geneva

I'm not making this up... this bizarre logic was actually laid out by a Rockford Diocese attorney on official diocese letterhead. This is the legal expertise that your weekly contributions are paying for!

Despite attempts by St. Peter's parish to say otherwise, a portion of the hard-earned money that parishioners contribute each week makes its way to the diocese to pay the high-powered, Chicago based law firm that is fighting to conceal the truth. While it's true that the weekly donations given at St. Peter's stay within the parish — what many parishioners do not realize is that all parishes are required to support the diocese in a form of an "income tax" that the diocese imposes. The amount that St. Peter's has to "kick back" to the diocese is determined by a fairly complex formula that takes into account the per capita income of the average Geneva resident, and that is factored into how much total money the parish has collected in the past year. The amount St. Peter's is required to give to the Rockford Diocese can be substantial.

One very important point must be made — I will never attack Mark Campobello's Constitutional right to be able to defend himself to the best of his lawyers' abilities. A defendant's right to a competent defense and a right to a trial, are the cornerstones of our criminal justice system. What is truly mind-boggling, however, is why our diocese has lined up on the side of an accused sexual predator and is fighting tooth and nail against the Kane County States Attorney's Office in an effort to keep pertinent facts concealed from public view.

Shouldn't our bishop and pastor be taking the high road and doing everything they can to work with the prosecutors to have the truth revealed? Nobody is trying to convict anyone without a trial. But why is our diocese trying to handicap the prosecutors by fighting to prevent all of the facts from being revealed so an informed and intelligent court decision about Campobello can be reached?

In any event, the lawyers of the diocese are very grateful to all parishioners who willingly contribute to the parish — because without you, they wouldn't get paid. Myself, as well as many other parishioners, have chosen to donate to worthy Catholic charities that do not tacitly support alleged sexual predators and who believe in the concepts of openness, truth and justice — not denial and concealment.

Some will argue that it is wrong to stop giving to the parish and that it serves no purpose. I, and others, contend that so long as a diocese and a parish act in a way that is so inconsistent with the principles of our Catholic faith, we cannot in good conscience support them financially. There are plenty of other worthy Catholic charities that are deserving of support.

A bishop who preaches one thing about sexual abuse and practices another does not merit the blind support of the Catholic faithful. And if the pastor of a parish marches right along side him, then he is also a part of the problem. If people want to continue paying the diocese attorneys through their weekly donations, that's certainly their choice. The parishioners should be made aware, however, of how their contributions are being used to pay the legal fees of the diocese attorneys so they can continue to manipulate the legal system to the benefit of an accused sexual predator. The fear of losing its financial base scares the Catholic Church like nothing else. Sadly, the Catholic Church is not a democracy and money is often the only way parishioners' voices are heard.

If programs and/or staff are cut at St. Peter's, place the blame where it belongs — right at the doorstep of Bishop Doran for his misguided efforts to hide and conceal the truth rather than dealing honestly and openly with it — and with our pastor for marching lock-step right along with him.

It's a shame that the parishioners of St. Peter's are being asked to reach deeper into their pockets to pay for Bishop Doran's folly.

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■ Do you have a Guest View? Mail to Guest View, Kane County Chronicle, 1000 Randall Road, Geneva, IL 60134, or e-mail to [editorial@kcchronicle.com](mailto:editorial@kcchronicle.com).