

Justice served in guilty plea

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Former priest Mark **Campobello** will spend the next several years where he belongs - in a prison cell.

He has pleaded guilty to aggravated criminal sexual abuse and has been sentenced to eight years in prison.

No good can come from this case.

But at least **Campobello** admits to having sexually abused two teenage girls in 1999 and 2000. He served at St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva.

Denial not only would have dragged this case on far longer than it has, it also would have deepened the girls' wounds. They are scarred for life as it is.

Continued denial would have been a greater offense against God, whom **Campobello** vowed to serve in a way few others are called.

The Catholic Church nationwide has been rocked with accusations of sexual abuse against children, mostly boys. Bishops have resigned, priests have been jailed, and millions of dollars have been paid in settlements to victims.

New rules have been put in place to treat charges of abuse as the serious criminal matters that they are. New rules are to prevent the church from ever dismissing such allegations or admitting them only secretly to move the accused to another parish.

Members of the Catholic Church, and all the religious community, cringe at the mention of the charges. They are a blight on the

reputation and integrity of the church.

The church can restore confidence only by aggressive prosecution of all charges. They need to be turned over to criminal and civil courts, as well as canonical. Victims need to have the courage to follow through.

Justice can be served, as it has been in the **Campobello** case. But the power of prayer to overcome this systemic tragedy cannot be discounted.