

September 17, 2012

Attorney General Peter Kilmartin  
Office of the Attorney General  
150 South Main Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Attorney General Kilmartin,

You are known as a fierce protector of children. We reach out to you today with hope.

We are leaders of two national organizations: BishopAccountability.org, a MA-based online archive pertaining to the sex abuse crisis in the Catholic Church; and the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), a Chicago-based survivors' self-help group.

We are writing today to urge you to investigate the Pascoag-based Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a secretive and little-known religious order that has employed an exceptionally high number of credibly accused child molesters.

Last week, a Massachusetts judge ruled that a child sex abuse lawsuit against the order can proceed. The ruling and amended complaint are attached. The claim was brought by a Pawtucket RI man who was molested as a child in the 1950s by a Brother Regis at one of the order's schools, Sacred Heart Academy in Sharon MA.

Incredibly, Brother Regis is the tenth Sacred Heart cleric to be publicly accused since 2002. Five other clerics reportedly have been identified in claims that are not yet public.

The publicly accused Brothers include Roger Argencourt, Guy Beaulieu, Peter Claver, Leon Cyr, Leo Labbe, L. Morel, Armand Thibault, Albert LaFlamme, Shawn McEnany and Brother Regis. All but the last three are known to have worked at schools in RI.

Fifteen accused child predators would be an alarming number for even a large institution. But in an institution this small – the order has only several dozen active members today and had less than 200 at its peak in the 1970s – such a large number of accused clerics points to deeply flawed management and calls for criminal investigation.

The order has a "lax and tolerant attitude" toward child molesters, according to more than a dozen victims who filed a class-action lawsuit against the order in NH in 2003. Abuse allegations have emerged at every one of the nine schools the Brothers have operated in RI, MA and NH.

Today, the order still operates two schools in New England: Mt. St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket RI, now a coed day school with more than 700 students in grades 7 through 12; and Bishop Guertin HS in Nashua, NH.

In Rhode Island, the group has escaped public scrutiny, although victims continue to come forward in NH and MA.

In 2011, a case against the Brothers alleging abuse in MA by Brother Peter Claver was settled. Claver worked at three RI schools: the now-closed Sacred Heart School in Central Falls, Mt. St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket, and the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Harrisville.

AG Kilmartin, we ask you to initiate an investigation into the Brothers. We also renew our plea in a letter we emailed you in April 2011 to similarly investigate clergy sex crimes and cover-ups in the Providence diocese. Providence church officials have admitted in court to receiving allegations against 125 of its priests, but only 32 of these names have been publicly disclosed.

In recent weeks, aggressive prosecutors in Philadelphia and Kansas City Missouri have won cases against high-ranking church officials.

The Catholic institutions in RI exhibit the same secrecy, unsafe management practices, and child molestation problems as those in Philadelphia and Kansas City. But no public prosecutor in RI has ever held the diocese accountable. It is past time to do so.

If even one child is protected from even one predator priest, your actions will be well worth it. And if even one wounded adult, still suffering from child sexual abuse, is comforted, your time will be well spent.

Given your position and visibility, and given the vulnerability of children, the shrewdness of predators, and the ongoing secretiveness of Catholic officials, we urge you to investigate immediately the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the Providence diocese.

Sincerely,

David Clohessy  
National Director, SNAP  
Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests  
7234 Arsenal Street  
St. Louis MO 63143  
314 566 9790 cell, 314 645 5915  
[snapclohessy@aol.com](mailto:snapclohessy@aol.com)

Anne Barrett Doyle, Co-Director  
BishopAccountability.org  
P. O. Box 541375  
Waltham MA 02454  
781-439-5208  
[barrett.doyle@comcast.net](mailto:barrett.doyle@comcast.net)