

Jane  
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I was sexually abused as a young teenager (under 18) attending a Catholic school in Saginaw.

I first met my abuser at an extremely vulnerable time in my life. I was a very needy, confused, angry and desperate teenager who was living in an alcoholic home with no one to turn to. When the stress of my home life became more than I could bear I turned to the one person I was taught I could always trust and who was next to God himself – my parish priest. I began receiving counseling from him and at first he was very helpful. However, once I completely trusted him and became totally emotionally dependent he betrayed that scared trust and began sexually abusing me - abuse which continued for a couple years and ended only after I moved away. I told no one of the abuse for over twenty years.

I can not fully express the far-reaching devastation this abuse inflicted and how it adversely affected every aspect of my life and every relationship I had or will have. Devastation that has taken me years of counseling to deal with and that has left scars which I know will never be completely healed.

Upon reporting to the diocese and Prosecutor the priest admitted his guilt. Despite the admission, the Prosecutor was unable to press charges due to the very short Statute of Limitations having expired. This response was dictated by the current defect in the law – a law that you have the chance to correct for future children.

The Church's response however, has been despicable. Throughout the past four years I have been trying to work with the diocese and two bishops in a private and professional way, not wishing to make a media circus out of it all. I have had to endure a very painful and insensitive process which has left me feeling abused all over again and one which has seen no justice served or any real protection for other children this priest comes in contact with.

After four years this is where I am left concerning the Church's response even though there has been an admission of guilt

- They have refused to pay my counseling costs directly or have their insurance company pay.
- The priest remains under the protection of the church and I have to assume they continue to support him financially yet refuse to support me in any meaningful way.
- There is no assurance that he will never work with children or teens again.
- His whereabouts is unknown leaving other potential victims vulnerable.
- He has never been identified on any database as a known sex offender.
- The only crumb of support I have received is a small payment to cover some of my out-of-pocket expenses that MY insurance company did not cover and that, was only for an arbitrarily set period of time and after much persistence on my part.
- I have received nothing to compensate me for the damage caused by the abuse. When I asked for compensation I was told by the Bishop " *This is not a case where the diocese knew of a*

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*priest having committed sexual abuse and then transferred the priest to another parish. "*

What they were really saying was - because you have no legal grounds to sue we are not going to give you a penny even though there is no question as to the guilt of this priest. What they were really saying was - we are not interested in trying to right this wrong or in helping you heal as long as you can't sue us.

Under the current law, there is no accountability for a church whose priest abused me and whose superiors failed to fairly address the consequences of that abuse. I have no legal grounds for seeking justice, protection for future victims or compensation for the damage done.

**I give permission for this testimony to be used for the Judiciary Committee Hearing on HB 5699, Your name**