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CARDINAL ROGER MAHONY AND THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

“Total Power is the world’s illusion,” is a line spoken in dialog from “The Power and the Prize,” a 1956 movie nominated for an Academy Award but true nonetheless because it so aptly describes the archetypal figure of Roger Cardinal Mahony, Archbishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, California.

The use and abuse of power has brought the Roman Catholic Church to its present condition and it is also what keeps it unable to rise above it.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has paid out billions of dollars not only in settlements made on the eve of going to trial in numerous sexual abuse cases but also in lawyers’ fees, lobbyists’ fees, PR campaigns, Catholic Conference media blitzes and God only knows what else to obfuscate, to harass and to intimidate known victims of sexual abuse and their families.

It also appears that many of those in church leadership positions like Cardinal Mahony still believe that they can exercise total power by the manipulation of the facts and the media.

How many bishops, for example, support the removal of all statutes of limitation regarding the sexual abuse of children and direct their state Catholic Conferences to do the same instead of falsely accusing legislators of being anti-Catholic as has been the case in Maryland, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, New York and Colorado.

While I cannot say where this latest federal investigation will lead, any efforts at all that will force the files, records, correspondence or the like, that have anything to do with the conspiracy to cover-up the activities of rogue, sexually abusive clerics or bishops who used children, young persons or vulnerable adults for purposes of sexual exploitation, should be welcomed by all who seek the truth.

To say, as a archdiocesan lawyer has said, that Mahony “has been at the forefront of dealing with” issues of clergy sexual abuse is an attempt to rewrite history and just more dis-information as records forced into the public venue by a brave Boston Catholic judge have already proven.

Although numerous records and files have been ordered released by the Los Angeles court in the last few years, I understand that they have yet to be made public because the Archdiocese of Los Angeles continues to fight it.

The revelations in the Archdiocese Boston forced the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to mandate that the bishops deal with the problem of sexually abusive clergy in 2002 instead of continuing their decades long pattern of covering them up. The bishops' actions were not altruistic; they were compelled to act by public opinion.

They were shamed into writing their guidelines.

Cardinal Roger Mahony, like every other bishop in the United States was forced to act in establishing safe “environments for children in the United States,” by the USCCB because their actions were exposed.

In other words, they were caught!

Yes, programs and procedures have been put into place and in five or ten years they can be evaluated, not before.

If Mahony's comments that he “publicly acknowledged making mistakes in handling certain clergy accused of child abuse,” can be directly connected to the sexual abuse of even one child, he should be charged with reckless endangerment for putting that child in harm's way and suffer the consequences.

But at this point in time it has become obvious that because of the conspiracy that he has been a part of, he is probably guilty of much more.

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