

NEW YORK CITY PRESS CONFERENCE ON CATHOLIC WHISTLEBLOWERS
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My name is Sister Maureen Paul Turlish. I am a Philadelphian by birth now stationed in New Castle, Delaware. I am a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, an international community of women, writing in my own name from the depths of conscience. As a Sister of Notre Dame I take to heart these words taken from our 2008 Chapter Calls:

"We are called to listen to the mourning of our fragmented world, of those impoverished by the growing divide between rich and poor and of the sexually exploited, trafficked, marginalized and abused...."

Since 2002 and the implosion in the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts I have become increasingly vocal as an advocate for minors and vulnerable adults, victims of sexual abuse in our religious denomination, the Catholic Church.

Church leadership speaks of all that has been done since 2002, notwithstanding the reality that in every jurisdiction where more stringent criminal and civil legislation regarding the sexual abuse of children has been proposed, it has been opposed by church leadership and state Catholic Conferences. Such is presently the case in NY, PA, NJ, and Wisconsin among others. This does not bode well for Truth & Justice.

Moreover, the promise of accountability for the crimes and sins of the present does not absolve one from accountability for the crimes and sins of the past.

There should be no accommodation in law that gives more protection to sexual predators and their enablers than is given to those victims of sexual abuse – children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Right now, inadequate and short criminal and civil statutes exist in too many jurisdictions across these United States and they deny victims the access to justice they have a right to access as citizens of these United States.

No religious denomination, synagogue, cult or sect can or should be allowed to police itself regarding the sexual abuse of vulnerable populations. That is society's responsibility. Statutes of limitation should be totally removed for the protection of all our children. Statutes of Limitation were removed in Delaware in 2007 while a two year civil window was opened in order that previously time barred cases of childhood sexual abuse - by anyone - could be brought forward. We did it in Delaware so there is no reason it can't be done in every state.

**Thank you,
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