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Opinion

End statute of limitations for abuse victims

<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/opinion/x491731033/Turlish-End-statute-of-limitations-for-abuse-victims#ixzz2dkYVpJi5>

As members of a community of believers, the people of God, we say we are concerned with the rights of the unborn. We say we are concerned with protecting the rights of immigrants, legal or illegal. We say we are concerned with the trafficking of human beings.

But while we may take the moral high ground on these issues, many of us ignore the victims of childhood sexual abuse who are right in front of us and instead talk about the abuse victims who must be in it for the money along with their greedy lawyers, make inflammatory statements about the anti-catholic attitudes of anyone who would suggest accountability and the bias of just about every newspaper in the country, calling down God's eternal wrath on them from time to time.

None of which does much to address the problem.

This is a continuing societal problem, a tragedy of unspeakable horrors which must be dealt with, but justice, like charity, has to begin at home.

We are all still waiting for that promised accountability and transparency even while then United States Conference of Catholic Bishops president Bishop Wilton Gregory was telling us that, "The terrible history recorded here today is history."

No, it is not behind us as Gregory would have wished because church records, forced into the public venue by courts across the country and around the world, have brought that reality home to us with a vengeance.

Jesus said, "the truth shall set you free," but when will the truth be known?

Pope John Paul II did not do what needed to be done and Pope Benedict has come and gone yet the tragedy continues and so does the heartache.

Real accountability requires that all arbitrary statutes of limitation, criminal and civil, on the sexual abuse of our children be removed and that a window of at least two years be provided to allow previously time barred cases to be brought forward in a court of law.

Justice and charity are what Jesus taught. He never said it was contingent on the price tag. The people of all states and religious persuasions deserve better and our churches should be leading the way, not building barriers that thwart access to justice.

And Paul R. Shanley?

He should be kept in jail.

Sister Maureen Paul Turlish is a educator and member of the Delaware nonpartisan coalition Child Victims Voice.