

Press Conference
May 7, 2018

On Bishop Malone's So-Called Transparency:

Six weeks ago, Bishop Malone released a list of 42 names of priest abusers. He and his priests have said that the release of those names came, not from the pressure of survivors or the media, but that it had been in the works for some time.

Last evening Bishop Malone released a statement which read: "Since the investigation was conducted at a time before I became bishop of Buffalo, I have decided to reopen the investigation."

Six years ago Bishop Malone was appointed bishop here. Has he not had ample time to delve into these matters?

On St. Patrick's day I suggested that Bishop Malone was teasing victims and the good people of this diocese by thinking out loud about releasing the names of abuser priests.

Then he released the 42 names. But Msgr. Cunningham, then the Vicar General and now Bishop of Syracuse, in 2002 as part of the self-reporting every diocese did at that time go on the record saying there were 53 abuser priests in the diocese. When you tally up the reporting that has been done on this issue it is actually 64; talking to victims who have yet to come forward, I would suggest it is many more.

53 in 2002

43 according to Bishop Malone

64 according to the reporting

Bishop Malone, you have been here six years. It is cold comfort for victims to hear you say you just don't know because it all happened before you got here. Aside from the re-victimization resulting from your words and from your approach to this issue, you strike victims and some of the faithful as dishonest. You can correct that by releasing your files, and the name of every priest abuser who has served in your diocese.

On Bishop Malone's Leadership:

Sits on the American bishops Committee for Evangelization and Catechesis. He is that committee's former chair.

I ask how his performance in these matters is bringing people to Christ? This is not how Christ evangelized.

I ask what his performance in these matters is teaching God's people?

On Bishop Malone's Care for Vulnerable Victims:

Many victims in Buffalo were abused by religious order priests serving in the diocese, notably in the schools. Schools owned by the diocese, audited by the diocese, in-serviced by the diocese, reporting to the Catholic Schools Office of the diocese.

In addition to shepherding each Catholic child in the diocese, it is Bishop Malone's duty under church law to exercise primary responsibility for the education of every child in the faith, and to protect them.

Religious order priests and brothers may be under the supervision of their order to a large degree, but they are assigned by the bishop. You would expect, then, that the Bishop of Buffalo would read their histories and personnel files.

Many victims of religious order priests and brothers have contacted Bishop Malone, the independent review board, and the compensation board only to be told, if they get a response at all—some haven't—that they must contact their priest-abuser's religious order for the redress of their suffering.

Often without questions about the time, frequency, and duration of their abuse.

Does Bishop Malone only care about the children in his diocesan- and parish-run schools? Are not the children who attend order-run schools also part of his flock? Does he not care about them and the suffering they have endured?

On the Extent of the Problem in Buffalo:

When you look at the self-reporting that every diocese in New York State undertook in 2002, Buffalo doesn't look much different from the rest.

Back in 2002, Buffalo's self-reporting suggested that 2.6% of Buffalo priests molested children. But that is only comparing the bad priests to the good priests. But those priests weren't ministering within the discreet group of their fellow priests, they were working with the Catholic population. They were working with children.

Today, because of investigation by the press, that number is closer to 4%; a number that reflects what is known, not the full extent of the tragedy.

Again, these abuser-priests worked with kids and capitalized on their vulnerabilities. And when you look at the relationship of these abusers to the Catholic population in the diocese, the Diocese of Buffalo has almost the worst record in the State of New York. When you compare the number of abusers per capita in the Diocese of Buffalo to the rest of the state, Buffalo is worse than every other diocese except for Albany. That conclusion is based on what has been reported and tallied. Buffalo has more clergy sex abusers than any other diocese on a per capita basis than every other diocese except Albany. More than Rochester, Syracuse, Ogdensburg, the Archdiocese of New York, Brooklyn, and Rockville Center.

Conclusions to Draw from This Data:

- 1.) The Diocese of Buffalo, and Bishop Malone in particular, need to get their house in order. If Bishop Malone can't do it he should resign and leave it to someone with the courage and heart of a shepherd.
- 2.) Every other diocese in the State of New York needs to be as diligent as the media in Buffalo, victim advocates, and legal community have been in persistently investigating this tragic phenomenon.
- 3.) The lawmakers in Albany who have consistently ignored the plight of our most vulnerable children, and who have failed to pass the Child Victims Act, need to recognize that this crisis is hitting most profoundly at their doorstep. Their legacy will be judged on the basis of achieving a much higher standard than they have.

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