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I am writing to you as a member of the Roman Catholic Church who was sexually exploited by my parish priest in 1967 - 68. I am seeking peace and justice.

I grew up in a suburban area along with my [redacted] sisters and [redacted] brothers and parents with deep religious roots. Because of my parents strong beliefs in the religious ethics and morals we all attended Catholic Parochial schools. My father provided for our family by working for [redacted] first in Bridgeport, and then was transferred, to New York City. He endured the commute rather than uprooting the family. My mother stayed at home to raise their children and maintain the household. She spent her days volunteering at St. Theresa School, driving the nuns to their desired destinations, directing St. Raymond Nonnatus Mother Circle, Confraternity of the Rosary, Legion of Mary, Girl Scouts, P.T.A. and a variety of other church related activities.

When I entered my teen years, I followed in my mothers footsteps by teaching Religious Education, participating in Social Action and joining our church's Youth Group which is when Fr. Gregory Smith was assigned to our parish. He worked himself comfortably into our church community and my family, where he was considered more family than guest. My mother was honored that he chose to be with our family.

For more than a year he moderated youth group trips and planned functions that required close interaction with myself as the elected officer. Using this pretense, he made excuses to take me from my house and when out in a group, he would always bring me home last. He would tell my parents that I was needed at the rectory to answer the phone when he needed to go to meetings - always manipulating a way to be alone with me. I often objected due to school work or lack of money but my mother urged me to go saying that I should be honored that God chose our family to aid Fr. Smith in his ministry. My parents would never have believed that he was abusing me. No one would have believed me.

Eventually, Fr. Smith became interested in my girlfriend and to my relief, turned his attention elsewhere. After a relationship with her, she reported the abuse to several representatives of the Diocese. It was then that he was transferred to a nearby parish in Danbury and has since been promoted to Monsignor.

Not a day of my life goes by that I don't remember what he did to me. I have spent my life avoiding Fr. Smith and any chance meeting. I have gone for counseling, confession and retreats that dealt with forgiveness in an attempt to deal with my situation. Msgr. Genuario, who was informed of the abuse in the late 60's, did nothing

more than have Fr. Smith transferred to another unsuspecting parish and exposing innocent people to his illicit advances. As an adult I once again contacted Msgr. Genuario and told him of my difficulty and asked for his help. His advice to me was to ask God to help me forgive Msgr. Smith, seek professional therapy and get on with my life.

I am now a 47 year old happily married mother of [redacted] sons ages [redacted] years of age. I live in a small suburban town that borders the town where I grew up. I have volunteered as a religious education instructor for several years and have served as a lector at the different parishes that I have been a congregant. My children have also served our parish community by teaching religious school and lectoring along with me. I have retained my close relationship with God and my religious practices and beliefs have never faltered. I do not believe that I was victimized by God but by a man who was ordained by the Catholic Church to minister to the it's members. I have been totally frustrated by an organization that claims to minister to it's flock and to protect the children of God as it has victimized me a second time by refusing to respond to my call for help.

In March of 1997 I contacted an Attorney and filed a lawsuit against Monsignor Gregory Smith. I had found someone who believed in me and was willing to help me. On the day that the suit was publicized, which was on the front page of our local newspaper, Monsignor Gregory Smith was relieved of his duties as Associate at Our Lady of Good Counsel and the Director of Religious Studies at Sacred Heart University. I finally felt that he would be punished for what he had done to me, my girlfriend and who knows how many other vulnerable people. My elation was short lived due to a legal technicality, the statute of limitations. Had I contacted an Attorney several years ago rather than going to the Diocese, justice may have been served. My case was dismissed in December of 1997 and in January of 1998 Monsignor Gregory Smith was returned to his duties. The Diocese assured the public, in a newspaper interview, that he would not be returned to his duties without a thorough investigation. How thorough could their investigation been if they have never contacted me?

Not only was justice denied but people are once again subject to be victimized by a man who has never been held accountable for his actions. This man has been and continues to be protected by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

I am hoping that you will feel a responsibility to me as a Child of God and to all your congregation by doing the right thing and conduct an appropriate investigation into the past and present behavior of Monsignor Smith. Please help me to be at peace by responding to my letter.

Sincerely,

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