

Redacted February 2014
TMJA
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000447

Fr John Regan

From: Fr John Regan [frjohnr@dioceseofjoliet.org]
Sent: Sunday, May 28, 2006 11:03 PM
To: 'tslowik@scn1.com'; 'bwimbiscus@scn1.com'; 'Reiher, Nick'; 'rchapman@scn1.com';
'mcappellini@scn1.com'; 'jhosey@scn1.com'; 'lranda@scn1.com'; 'swarren@scn1.com'
Subject: This week's stories

Dear Ted (and other staff at The Herald News):

Sorry for the delay in responding to your last story in The Herald News regarding the lawsuits against the diocese. I've had a busy week and many important things to do.

In your story you accurately point out the discrepancy with the dates and ages of those making the accusations. According to the stories of the accusations that they are making, they would have both been born in 1970. One claimed to be age 8 in 1978, the other age 10 in 1980. Yet today neither of them are 36, one being 34, the other 38. It's possible for someone to forget just how old one might have been when they were abused, although one would think something that traumatic would leave an indelible mark on one's memory. But how does one forget how old one is in any given year, especially when given time to prepare a law suit?

Also, I didn't catch where Father Virtue was in 1980. You didn't list St. Mary's in Mokena as one of the parishes he was assigned to. Was he ever actually assigned to St. Mary's then?

What's your take on the taped testimony on DVD? Would Jeffrey Anderson have approved of Bishop sending in testimony for his infamous deposition by DVD? Some people who know these brothers have come forward to say that they cannot be trusted. That could have been mentioned in your article. The fact that Father Burnett and Father Virtue have denied the accusations could also have been included in the article.

It's too bad the younger Shanahan wasn't able to go through with meeting the Diocesan Review Committee. Then you would have had a source to talk about the process from someone who actually did it, not merely someone who wants to talk from inexperience. It might be good to talk with a victim who has actually met with the review committee to see if it was as draconian as you first reported (a packed room full of priests, psychiatrists, and lawyers with no opportunity for a companion to join them). I actually spoke with someone on the committee, and he told me that victims have had someone attend with them for support. They do not allow victim's lawyers to be present, because it is not a legal proceeding. As one reader commented, [REDACTED] was able to do a public news conference about this. He certainly could have met with the review committee if he wanted to.

I guess we can all be baffled why the topic of Father Virtue's dissertation was worthy of note in your article but not the checkered past of the younger [REDACTED]. You certainly are selective of which details are the most important to bring to the table for any discussion of the matter. You obviously approach each story with your dog in the hunt.

Also, I noted another interesting parallel in the positioning of stories in the paper. This week the conviction of the prison worker as a sexual predator was given page 2 coverage. Maybe reporter Stewart Warren isn't pressing hard enough for his stories to get better billing. The filing of a civil lawsuit against two priests which had already been reported more than once through news conferences was given front page coverage again. You must know someone at The Herald News to get your old news in better positions than new news.

I took the liberty to prepare a front page press release, a la Joe Hosey, regarding your upcoming transfer. I think when you read it you may understand how embattled we priests feel when it comes to the truth at The Herald News:

SLOWIK OUT!

Talk around town is that Ted Slowik has been fired from The Herald News. Some are saying it was a forced resignation to help save face. Earlier this week it was announced that a new publisher, Larry Randa, is coming in at The Herald News.

5/30/2006

**MISC. RECORDS RECEIVED FROM THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET ON 7-25-12 NO. 421
MISC. RECORDS OF BISHOP IMESCH**

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He has said that he is going to demand accountability for errors in journalistic integrity and reporter's mistakes. Looking elsewhere, Slowik had to take a position at the Naperville Sun. Numerous e-mails to the reporter and editor have gone unanswered.

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Perhaps the truth would come out, but what difference should the truth make? We like the story as it is. We could put a correction ("Ted Slowik is becoming an editor at the Naperville Sun."), on page 3 if that would help, but no apology would be needed.

Of course I know that this is not accurate, and only wrote it for affect, not to actually hurt you. But I am sure that a cavalier approach to your reputation and career is not appreciated by you. Likewise, your constant and cavalier attacks on the reputations of brother priests who are innocent until proven guilty and our bishop are not appreciated either.

I know that there is severe trauma to victims that has been caused by the real sexual abuse by priests. We cannot belittle that, and their cries have a right to be heard. No one is denying that. We cannot have anything but sympathy for those who have been victimized by any abuser, especially those in authority such as priests. And we ought to be outraged by the abuse of all those who have taken advantage of children, including the priests who abused. So much has been done by the Church and the Bishop to address the real issues of child abuse today. All of that is overlooked by the press, because they want to keep the story on what happened 20 years ago.

There is the other side of the story. In case you don't know we have had at least four priests accused of misconduct who were later found either innocent or where the victims recanted their stories. You do the math in terms of the percentage of priests who have been found responsible of misconduct and those falsely accused. It's a pretty high percentage (20% or so are innocent). And that's of those where cases were actually filed. There may be many others where someone with an axe to grind simply called in a complaint that was later proven false. Anyway, three of these priests developed cancer within a year of the accusations. I believe the cancer was a result of the extreme stress of those situations. Two of them died early deaths in their 50s. After one of the victims recanted, the attorney who represented the victim never even had the courtesy to apologize to the priest for the pain he made him go through.

Unfortunately these stories will never get reported, and we're not asking for that. Most of us priests choose to live a relatively private, personal life. Our position in the community is often public, but we would rather minister the Gospel in anonymity. We don't need our stories out there for everyone to read. But people at the paper have to know this goes on so that when they make decisions about what to publish and how important to treat a story they can give balance and perspective.

By the way, what is with Joe Hosey and his persistent attack on Father Radek? Can't a person have an emotional breakdown without it being reported over and over again in the newspaper? Are people's stress, anxiety disorders and depression fodder for reporters today? The editors really need to talk with Joe about what's appropriate for a community newspaper, as we hear The Herald News referred to these days.

I have simply asked for a fair, balanced, and appropriate reporting of these cases; and we get none of these from you or anyone else at The Herald News.

Ted, good luck in your new position as City Editor at the Naperville Sun. I hope you won't have to report these kind of stories in your new position. I am moving on as well, to become a pastor in DuPage County – not the Naperville area, though.

And I hope whoever takes your job at The Herald News in reporting about the Church will have greater understanding of the complexities of these matters and a better sense of fairness to all. I sincerely hope it's not Joe Hosey, because I am sure the one taking my job won't be nearly as vigilant as I am when it comes to reviewing his stories.

Sincerely,
- Father John Regan
Joliet, IL

5/30/2006