

I would like to read a statement.

I am referring to Father Paul's email dated March 31, 2007, in which you state that The Archdiocese position is "when anyone has been injured or the bond of sacred trust has been violated by those in positions of responsibility, the Archdiocese of Seattle is committed to address these matters in a sensitive, open and straightforward manner. These important values will always guide our response as we address the tragedy of sexual abuse of minors or misconduct by clergy, employees or volunteers." I am trusting that these are not just words, but your commitment to me as I now officially come forth with my story.

I first became aware of Father Cody's history through the church bulletin this past spring. When a client and long time parish family friend came into my office and said to me: "Have you read this week's bulletin? It said there were allegations of child abuse against Father Coy in 1970 to 1972." I said "his name isn't Father Coy, its Father Cody" and then I had a severe panic attack. I had to excuse myself. I had to get myself together and try to do my job. For several days I was a mess. I had to finally face the fact that something did happen when I was in his care. So, all these years that I thought that something might have happened, it really did happen; that I was molested by a priest.

These are my memories from that period of 1970 to 1972, when I was age 9 and 10, respectively. I can remember at least six times that I spent the night at the parish houses, and there were likely other times that I'm not remembering yet. I remember one time my brother was with me and other times there were usually two other girls, both around my age. Although we slept in sleeping bags or beds, I have memories of having been in Father Cody's bed at his invitation. I remember that during these times when I was in Father Cody's bed, he touched me both from the waist up and the waist down, in a sexual manner. In addition, I remember being aware of another young girl's situation. I was present with Father Cody and she and her sister. Although I remember the room being dark, I heard one of the girls crying for awhile after Father Cody left the room. I did not actually see Father Cody fondle either of the other girls; however, it is clear to me now and was likely clear to me then that both girls were experiencing the same situation as I was. Every time that I spent the night, something was going on, either with me and Father Cody or with the other girls and Father Cody. I don't know exactly why I didn't tell anybody at the time. Looking back at this now, I can see that I thought it was my fault, and I felt shame.

I remember that Father Cody gained trust in the families with children. He would vacation with our family, go on horseback rides over weekends with 4-H groups where he would surround himself with children; mostly girls.

As a result of what happened to me with Father Cody, I have had years of depression, anxiety and sexual problems that I could not connect to. My anxiety is strongly connected to my molestation by Father Cody and my memories of inappropriate sexual behavior by this man. I have experienced disconnection, dissociation when things get tough, self-destructive, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem, distrust of everyone and fear

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of getting close to others. Father Cody took the very essence of my being. The innocence of my childhood he stole from me.

I not only blame Father Cody for the loss of my innocence, I blame the Church, the Archdiocese for putting him in a situation; knowing that he molested children on and before 1962 and in 1967 putting him in treatment; and then 1970 assigning him to the Burlington church with no effective monitoring system. A priest is a Man of God who should be respected and looked up to. When I look into the eyes of a child, I wonder how anyone could misuse this trust. I wish you could feel the impact of your decision. I want you to look into a child's eyes and feel her heart and see her beauty and cry for her. I want you to want to protect her, comfort her, and never allow anything in your power to hurt her on any level. God would not wish this harm onto anyone. We are God's children. What a misuse of power. The Church had a responsibility to help shape and mold the lives of children; to teach love, cherish life, respect others, and above all teach forgiveness. As a child, I looked up to the Church. I remember wanting to be a nun, to serve my church, to make a difference. Now, as I am older, all I can see are the mistakes that the Church has made throughout many years. How many lies must be told? Are there different rules that the Church lives by? What is a child's life worth? Can we just throw away a child's self-worth? My thoughts go to, God what were they thinking? The decisions that were made on moving these priest around, what did this accomplish?

As far as I'm concerned, Father Cody and the Church murdered my soul; my spirit. I now need to repair the damage he did; remove the shame, guilt, despair and frustration, and build my self-esteem and self-respect.

At this time, I would like to refocus here on the solution instead of the problem. If I keep my focus on the situation that makes me feel desperate, overwhelmed and hopeless. I can't focus on the healing. We can all feel empowered here by focusing on that solution. This is a challenge for me to find the truth to let it go and focus on the solution. So, what is the solution?? What is the process? What happens next?? What proof do you need? What evidence do I need to support my claim?
I don't want this to go on for months and years. Dragging this through the court system is long and pain staking abuse in its own. Handling this and all cases with respect and responsibility is the only thing that's acceptable here. What help can you offer??

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