State law, prevailing opinion, exacerbated liability

By Ed Langlois
Of the Oregonian

Lawyers defending the Archdiocese of Portland against allegations of child sexual abuse had to get through a thicket created by Oregon law and culture.

Few if any other states have such a combination of statutes and anti-establishment opinion making it so hard for employers with a worker accused of sexual misconduct.

Here are some of the factors:

• Employers can be held liable for acts of abuse by their employees more easily in Oregon than in any other state. A 1999 case in the Oregon Supreme Court, Fearing v. Buhner, established automatic vicarious liability for Oregon employers. In most states, supervisors are liable only if they received prior notice that the worker had misbehaved in the past. It was no coincidence that sex abuse suits against the archdiocese began coming in shortly after that ruling. Between 2000 and 2004, the archdiocese settled 138 claims.

• Oregon courts can award punitive damages even if the defendant was merely reckless, not intentional, in wrongdoing. That is not the case in Washington state, for example. Before the bankruptcy, two accusers sought a combined $55 million from the archdiocese, mostly in punitive damages, forcing the bankruptcy filing.

• Oregon has a liberal statute of limitations when it comes to taking legal action for sex abuse. It allows accusers to file claims when they become aware of the damage the abuse may have caused.

The state lawmaker who originally pushed through the extended statute in 1999, Kevin Mannis, says employers were not the target of the law. But state courts have interpreted the law to include supervisors. That is why, for example, most of the cases against the archdiocese concern events that happened 30, 40 or even 50 years ago.

“When you are facing a case where the only person who is available to testify is the plaintiff and the person who is accused is dead, there is a real goal to do better — a concentration on ‘how do we keep people safe?’”

In 2001, the Oregon legislature passed a “safe harbor” law that provided immunity to any employee who reports an accusation. The law went into effect last year.

“Now our legal team is saying yes, we can file an action against a supervisor,” said Dr. Leila Keltner, who heads the archdiocese’s Office of Child Protection/Victim Assistance.

As required by the U.S. Bishops’ “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” the archdiocese has a lay review board consisting of one clergy member, judges, attorneys, physicians, parishioners, social workers and psychologists.

“People in pews, church leaders, react to ruling

By Jon Reddy
Of the Sentinel

Much of the secular media coverage of the clergy sex abuse crisis has been on the Catholic church’s mishandling of the situation.

What often gets overlooked is the work being done, says officials at the Portland Archdiocesan Pastoral Center to make sure children are safe in parishes and schools.

Cathy Shannon heads the archdiocesan Office of Child Protection/Victim Assistance, a full-time position.

“Child abuse is a societal problem,” said Shannon. “There is an opportunity for the church to not only learn from its mistakes, but also to take a lead in making a difference in what continues to be a growing problem in this country.”

As medical director of CARES Northwest, one of the oldest and largest child abuse assessment centers in the nation, Dr. Keltner and her staff assess more than 1,400 children (primarily ages birth to 14) annually for concerns of abuse.

“[It’s] an eye-opening experience for me working with the archdiocese in terms of seeing how the church works and witnessing an organization that really wants to do better,” said Dr. Keltner, a member of St. Mary Cathedral Parish. “I’m not sure you hear that in the news media, but my impression is that there is a real goal to do better — a concentration on ‘how do we keep people safe?’”

Archdiocesan Ember Days set

By Ed Langlois
Of the Oregonian

Archbishop Vlazny has proclaimed June 13, the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua, as “an extraordinary Ember Day of prayer and penance for the healing of all victims and their reconciliation with the church.” A service of healing and reconciliation will be held at St. Mary Cathedral at 7:30 p.m.

In September of 2002 Archbishop Vlazny re-established the spiritual practice of Ember Days in the Archdiocese of Portland. Traditionally, an Ember Day is a day of prayer and fasting. It is a day on which the Church is to offer prayers for its needs and to give public thanks. Archbishop Vlazny re-established Ember Days in the Archdiocese of Portland to pray for the healing with those who have been abused and to pray for their reconciliation with the Church.

Ember Days for the Archdiocese of Portland were established for Fall, Advent and Lent.

To fast means to eat one full meal; the other two meals should be less than the normal amount unless they are already at a minimum for good health. Eating between meals is prohibited.

See other articles in this issue for more information on Ember Days.

Catholic Sentinel
Priests from archdiocese answer bankruptcy, sex abuse questions

Q. How does the Archdiocese respond to a report of child abuse?

Fr. Dennis O'Donnell: For anyone who wants to respond quickly to any allegation of child abuse by a priest, the archdiocese's first response must always be to ensure the safety and health of the child, by reporting to the proper civil authorities if this has not already been done. We want to encourage anyone who has knowledge or experience of child abuse to directly contact civil authorities.

Q. What is the response to being told to leave the parish?

Fr. O'Donnell: It is a response to the recommendations of church law and church authorities, and the concern for the safety of children in our parishes and schools.

Q. What is the Ministry Review Board?

Fr. O'Donnell: The Bishop's Charter of Norms and the Archdiocese form a review board to advise the bishop on various aspects of the protection of children and young people. The Board was formed shortly after the adoption of the Charter in 2002.

It consists of one priest and eight lay men and women not employed by the Archdiocese. I currently serve as the priest representative on the board, other members include a psychiatrist who specializes in child abuse, a child psychologist, a lawyer, a retired judge, a licensed social worker, an abuse survivor, a mother, and a grandmother.

Priests from archdiocese answer bankruptcy, sex abuse questions

Q. Is the Archdiocese willing to fund legal representation for priests who are accused of abuse?

Fr. O'Donnell: The Archdiocese is willing to fund legal representation for priests who are accused of abuse.

Q. What did the Archdiocese do to respond to the complaints?


Q. Is the Archdiocese still funding legal representation for priests who are accused of abuse?


Q. What is the impetus behind the Archdiocese's policies dealing with child sexual abuse?


Q. What is the purpose of the Preliminary Investigation?

Fr. Brennan: The purpose of the Preliminary Investigation is to see if the facts are true. The Preliminary Investigation is a review of the case to determine whether there is a case.

Q. What is the role of the Ministry Review Board after the Preliminary Investigation?

Fr. Brennan: The Ministry Review Board provides advice to the bishop about the case.

Q. Who is the bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland?


Q. What is the canonical process when a priest or deacon is accused of sexual abuse of a minor?


Q. What is the canonical process involved in the investigation of a priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse of a minor?


Q. What is the purpose of the Preliminary Investigation?


Q. Who is the bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland?


Q. What is the role of the Ministry Review Board after the Preliminary Investigation?


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Q. Who is the bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland?

Reactions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and construction and maintenance of churches is dependent on parishioners and school parents. “Apart from their generosity our mission to proclaim in the gospel, celebrate the sacraments, and to form minds and hearts in our schools would come to an abrupt end,” he explains.

Father Siriani thanks the archdiocesan staff who worked “tirelessly” to reach the settlement.

“Rarely do we acknowledge and properly thank the people who work on fifth and Burnsise,” says the priest. “In this mat-
ter and countless others, they make the archdiocesan work.”

He thanks Archbishop John Vlazny for “incredible leader-
ship” during the crisis.

“He never lost sight of the fact that he was the shepherd of a flock that included those who sought justice as well as those seeking to continue the mission of the church,” the priest says. “He was a bishop to us all. The mistakes made in our dealing with the sexual abuse of children in this Arch-
diocese were not made by him. The crimes committed did not occur on his watch. Regardless, he gave his all to bring healing to those injured, and a commitment to all that the protection of our children from sexual abuse would never again be compromised.”

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

All child sex abuse claims settled by the Archdiocese (before and during bankruptcy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of abuse alleged</th>
<th>Number of Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2007</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glenn and Sandra Walker, members of St. Anne Parish in Grants Pass, say completion of the bankruptcy prompts them to move on “in optimism” with renewed spirit toward Catholic goals and values.

“Through the offenses of a few, we’ve all experienced diffi-
cult times,” their members have hurt each one of us and cost us time, accomplishments, energy, and vast amounts of money,” the Walkers say. “However, the offenders operate few in light of the multitudes doing good works throughout the Church. We can continue to draw courage and inspiration from present and past accomplishments spirited by love and service.”

The Walkers credit Archbishop Vlazny with giving an example of love and compassion. Like him, they are praying and will work for healing of victims through counseling, rehabilitation and fellowship.

“Many mistakes made by church, society, and our courts, were a product of the limited information existing at the time,” the couple say. “With current knowledge, the Church has been working hard to correct and prevent a recrudescence of abuse.”

The courage of faithful priests and religious inspires the Walkers.

“They remain dedicated to their mission and they dem-
courage trust in God while bringing love, hope, and joy into the various situations of life during these stressful times,” the couple explain.

Frank Bocci, a member of St. Mary Parish in Eugene and a retired federal judge, was concerned about how parishes might get involved. The work of mediators impresses him and he calls the settlement “balanced and fair.”

“I know the archdiocese intended that the involved plain-
tiffs be justly compensated and also that church and school properties of various parishes be protected as well,” Bocci says. “It’s clear to me that Chief Bankruptcy Judge Perris’ and District Court Judge Jones sought to have the matter determined in accordance with the law and with fairness to the parties on both sides, as well. There were four very well respected judges on this sad part of our history who did a great service in bringing this matter to an end.”

The bankruptcy has been on the minds of contemplative Catholics.

Since 2001, the Carmelite Nuns of Eugene followed direction from Archbishop Vlazny and reserved specific days for fasting and prayer, in the name of the abused.

“For several years, we have been following the events con-
cerning the sex abuse cases and proceedings,” says Mother Elizabeth St. Onge, the order’s prioress. “Through this time we have been offering our prayers and sacrifices for truth, justice and healing for all the people involved: the victims, abusers, court officials and especially the archbishop, clergy and staff who have carried such a heavy burden.”

Prayer and meditation are the norm for the Carmelite women. But focusing the spiritual efforts, explains Mother Elizabeth, has been growing.

“By the grace of God we hope to continue this contempla-
tive presence as a source of encouragement for everyone in the years to come,” she says.

“I think parishioners are pleased that the bankruptcy has come to a conclusion and as we go forward and documents are released explaining some of the practices that took place, the healing will give everybody a better op-
portunity to start the healing process,” says John Rickman, a retired banker and member of St. Pius X Parish. He sees the new chairman of the Committee of Pa-
rishioners, which was formed to protect interests of parishes in the bankruptcy.

“We all know the whole process came about because some wrong decisions were made and some very bad things happened to some very young people,” Rickman says. “The whole idea is to begin the heal-
ing process not only for survivors but for parishioners and the church as well,” he said.
Parishes, schools to be reorganized into separate legal entities

In recent articles in the secular press dealing with our Chapter 11 process, there has been a good deal written about “separate incorporations” of our parishes. That is misleading. Actually what we have proposed in the court-approved Plan of Reorganization is the following: that within one year we will “restructure under civil law the Archdiocese, the Parishes, and the Schools.”

One or more charitable trusts, endowments, non-profit religious corporations, or other charitable entities that are, under Oregon law, legally separate and distinct from the Archdiocese of Portland.

As a Catholic archdiocese, we are bound first by Church law (canon law). That canon law dictates worldwide how the Church, how archdioceses and dioceses, and how parishes are organized. As Catholics we are bound to follow that Church law. What we will be attempting to do over the next year is provide a way of structuring ourselves civilly that will better reflect the dictates of canon law, which sees every parish as a “separate juridical person.” Our task will be to accomplish that restructuring in such a way that we are true to Church law and at the same time separate and protect as far as possible the assets of parishes, schools, and other entities under civil law.

So what will that be like? The short answer is that we don’t know yet – there are various legal models for restructuring, but we’re working on it. The Archdiocese is currently structured as a “corporation sole,” where the Archbishop is the civil corporation. That is a civil structure that was common for Catholic dioceses when the Archdiocese of Portland incorporated back in the latter half of the 1800s. For the most part, it worked well for us for over a century. The Archbishop was always bound under Church law to recognize theeparishes and schools and other entities within the archdiocese. He couldn’t and didn’t just seize parish property or assets.

However, these last six years have shown the vulnerability of those assets, and so a new civil restructuring is called for. The Archbishop will be appointing people from among certain groups he needs to consult to advise him in this process. Changes are that after the restructuring most of us won’t notice the difference. The day-to-day financial operations and governance of our parishes will be very similar to what they are at present. Remember, we do still have to follow canon law. But there will obviously be some changes, and those are what we will be working on during the next year.

— Fr. Dennis O’Donovan

State Law

who worked with lawyers at the Miller Nash law firm to get insurers to come up with more than $160 million to pay claims. It took multiple lawsuits, hours of negotiations and $4 million in legal fees. In the end, 10 insurance companies agreed to buy back their policies, giving money in return for not having to cover the archdiocese any longer.

“The insurance settlement was the financial base on which we were able to exit bankruptcy,” Furness says. “You can’t settle claims without money.”

An order, which blocked parties in the bankruptcy from commenting publicly on the deliberations, made some reporters and insiders wonder if it helped stall the resolution because the focus was on the task, not public cat-and-mouse games.

Tom Stilley, a bankruptcy attorney for the archdiocese, told Judge Elizabeth Perris that the order was “the best thing that ever happened to this case.”

A release of archdiocesan personnel documents set for May has been delayed by some claimants’ lawyers and by parties as an act finally getting to the truth. Dulitch notes that many of those documents are already in the public domain. Furness warns that “releasing documents concerning priests and others long dead and events far in the past may show transparency” but will not get at the truth of what happened to, 40 or 50 years ago. Documents alone, out of context and without explanation by those who created them or what actually happened at the time, give only a partial picture — surely not the full truth — of what occurred.

She and Dulitch caution against judging church leaders of the past who lacked the knowledge and standards of today.

Archbishop Vlazny, who was not around Oregon when the cases of abuse happened, has maintained an open door policy with claimants, meeting with many.

But a fair number of lawyers have beenعزلت and Vita between their clients and the archbishop until settlement numbers were in. That’s because once an accuser meets with a credible archbishop, the zeal for recompense tends to fade.

“If they meet him they will have a much harder time wanting to be angry at anonymous bishops because here’s a real Halo, who’s a wonderful person,” says Furness.

“It’s easy to demonize an amorphous defendant.”

U.S. District Court Judge Michael Hogan helped mediate clergy abuse settlements.

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

Child sex abuse claim settlements (during bankruptcy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Amount</th>
<th>Number of Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $25,000</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001 - $50,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 - $250,000</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,001 - $500,000</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,001 - $750,000</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$750,001 - $1,000,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000,001 - $1,250,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,250,001 - $1,500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500,001 - $2,000,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,000,001 - $2,500,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Approximately 40 additional persons filed claims that were dismissed by the court with no payments made.

Ember Days

is not permitted; however, liquids including coffee, milk and fruit juices are allowed.

Observance of an Ember Day is encouraged but not obligatory.

Answers to frequently asked questions about Portland bankruptcy

1. What is the total cost of paying tort claims? Currently, $51,060,455 is the total amount to be paid on settled tort claims (including child sex abuse and other tort claims) including interest to the effective date.

2. Are any tort claims unresolved? Several tort claims that have been dismissed are on appeal. Funds have been set aside to pay these claims if the dismissals are reversed and the Archdiocese needs to pay at a later date.

3. How much has been set aside for child sex abuse claims that may be brought in the future (“Future Claims”)? $30 million will be financed to fund a Future Claims Trust. The trust will be operative until 2032. The Future Claims Representative will be Trustee of the Future Claims Trust.

4. How much money did the Archdiocese recover from the insurance companies? The Archdiocese recovered a total of $32 million dollars from nine insurance companies.

5. How much money will be borrowed or otherwise financed? The Archdiocese has negotiated financing totaling $40 million: a $35 million Line of Credit and a $15 million Letter of Credit with Allied Irish Banks. Actual borrowing on the line of credit and letter of credit will depend on cash flow requirements in the future.

6. What serves as collateral for the $40 million? Securities in the Perpetual Endowment Fund have been pledged as collateral along with four real properties owned by the Archdiocese (the Pastoral Center and three properties near the Cathedral).

7. What is the total amount spent on attorney fees? The total amount for attorney fees billed through March 2007 is $16.4 million. This number may seem high, but about $4 million was spent to recover the $32 million from insurers. Another $8 million was needed to litigate more than 200 claims filed. These costs would likely have been incurred regardless of the bankruptcy, as might other attorney fees necessitated to defend parish properties.

8. How much was spent on other bankruptcy costs? Total fees and expenses for other bankruptcy costs total approximately $1.5 million (expert and financial consultant fees, property appraisals, etc) through March 2007.

9. How will loans be repaid? In current and anticipated cash flows, it is projected that all debt will be repaid from budgeted debt service dollars with the General Operating Fund. The availability of these dollars is a result of substantial staffing cuts at the Pastoral Center over a four-year period.

10. How much have the parishes paid in attorney fees and costs during the bankruptcy? Participating parishes have paid approximately $750,000 to the PerkinsCole law firm, attorneys for the Parishes and Parishioners Committee.

11. Will parishes need to pay toward settlement of claims? No. Parishes are not paying toward settlement of claims. Insurance monies received and debt financing will fund the current plan of reorganization.

12. Will parish assessments be increased to finance the bankruptcy plan of reorganization? No. Under the current feasibility cash flow plan and other anticipated cash flow analysis, parish assessments are not being increased.

13. Will any parish property be sold to finance the bankruptcy plan of reorganization? No.

14. What, if any, Archdiocesan property will be sold to repay the debt? No Archdiocesan property is being sold to repay debt. However, as indicated above, the Pastoral Center and three other Archdiocesan properties will serve as partial collateral for the $40 million credit facility.

15. Will money from the Archdiocese’s Annual Catholic Appeal be used to repay the debt? No. Funds contributed to the Archdiocese’s Annual Catholic Appeal are restricted funds and will be used only for the stated purposes for which these funds are raised.

— Leonard Vuylsteeke

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
Accused against whom highest number of claims were filed (before and during bankruptcy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accused</th>
<th>Number of Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Grammond</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Laughlin</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Sprauer*</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Goodrich</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McLeod</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocco Perone, CSP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldo Orso-Manzonetta</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remy Rudin, OSF</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Baccellier</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Durand*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Harris</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Raleigh</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Boyle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Living priest who denies the allegations against him

Settlements made on claims against Maurice Grammond ($33,400,000) and Thomas Laughlin ($20,700,000) totaled $54,100,000 and accounted for more than half the total settlements made with child sex abuse claimants before and after bankruptcy.

The combined total of payments made on claims filed against the eleven other accused named above is $34,275,000.
Rebuilding the trust

The faithful throughout Western Oregon breathed a collective sigh of relief when the news of the sexual abuse scandal that had come to an end. Numerous questions about the handling of the crisis and the financial implications for the Archdiocese were also answered. Profound thanks are due to those who have worked so hard to resolve this issue.

The Archdiocese has announced that sexual abuse survivors will be compensated through a victim assistance program. This is a positive step towards healing and reconciliation.

We must also commend the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to support those affected by this tragedy. Their dedication and compassion are truly inspiring.

While we celebrate these achievements, we cannot lose sight of the ongoing work that needs to be done. It is essential that we continue to address the root causes of sexual abuse and work towards creating a safer environment for all.

The Archdiocese has taken important steps towards accountability and transparency. They have also established a hotline for survivors to report any allegations of abuse.

We applaud the Archdiocese for their efforts and urge them to remain committed to the needs of those who have been harmed. Let us work together to ensure that the lessons learned from this tragedy are not forgotten.

To all survivors: know that you are not alone. You are valued, loved, and worthy of dignity. Your stories are important, and your voices must be heard.

To all who have been affected by this tragedy: know that we are here for you. Let us come together to support one another and begin the journey towards healing.

We must never forget the pain and suffering that has been inflicted. Let us use this moment as an opportunity to create a different future, where all individuals are respected and protected.

In conclusion, we commend the Archdiocese for their efforts and encourage them to continue working towards a brighter future. Let us all strive to create a world where every person feels safe and valued.

The Archdiocese has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all individuals, especially children. It is up to us, as a community, to hold them accountable and demand change.

Let us all work together towards a better future, where every person is respected and valued.

(End of editorial)

Sideline view: Clergy, parishioners sold out on despite anger, disbelief

Why should a non-Catholic with no dear stake in the matter be concerned about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church? After all, shouldn’t they be shouting, “Scandal!”

We shouldn’t, our intestines shout. “It’s as foolish as a carpet sweeper mopping up the sky.”

The request, though, comes from Mary Jones, who has been a faithful member of the Portland Archdiocese’s chancellor.

We have collaborated before. Her efforts to build civil rights activist relations between religious groups in Oregon require more than a cordial, no-way.

So reluctantly, here are several observations from the sidelines.

Who then, will be the clergy who will express their repentance for the sexual abuse scandal? They certainly will not be the abusers, who now hide behind a cloak of righteousness.

Who, then, will be the church leaders who will be on the front lines to serve as a witness to the world of what is truly important in the Church? They will likely be those who have been quietly working behind the scenes, with no recognition, to bring about the much-needed change.

Who, then, will be the parishioners who will stand up and speak out against this abuse? They will be those who have the courage to say “enough is enough”, regardless of the consequences.

Who, then, will be the people of goodwill who will support the survivors and work to create a safer environment for all? They will be those who truly believe in the power of love and justice.

In conclusion, let us all work together towards a future where every person feels safe and valued. Let us hold the church accountable and demand change. Let us start by listening to the survivors.

(End of article)

Safety

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We applaud the Archdiocese for their efforts and urge them to remain committed to the needs of those who have been harmed. Let us work together to ensure that the lessons learned from this tragedy are not forgotten.

To all survivors: know that you are not alone. You are valued, loved, and worthy of dignity. Your stories are important, and your voices must be heard.

To all who have been affected by this tragedy: know that we are here for you. Let us come together to support one another and begin the journey towards healing.

We must never forget the pain and suffering that has been inflicted. Let us use this moment as an opportunity to create a different future, where all individuals are respected and protected.

In conclusion, we commend the Archdiocese for their efforts and encourage them to continue working towards a brighter future. Let us all strive to create a world where every person feels safe and valued.

The Archdiocese has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all individuals, especially children. It is up to us, as a community, to hold them accountable and demand change.

Let us all work together towards a better future, where every person is respected and valued.

(End of editorial)

Sideline view: Clergy, parishioners sold out on despite anger, disbelief

Why should a non-Catholic with no dear stake in the matter be concerned about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church? After all, shouldn’t they be shouting, “Scandal!”

We shouldn’t, our intestines shout. “It’s as foolish as a carpet sweeper mopping up the sky.”

The request, though, comes from Mary Jones, who has been a faithful member of the Portland Archdiocese’s chancellor.

We have collaborated before. Her efforts to build civil rights activist relations between religious groups in Oregon require more than a cordial, no-way.

So reluctantly, here are several observations from the sidelines.

Who then, will be the clergy who will express their repentance for the sexual abuse scandal? They certainly will not be the abusers, who now hide behind a cloak of righteousness.

Who, then, will be the church leaders who will be on the front lines to serve as a witness to the world of what is truly important in the Church? They will likely be those who have been quietly working behind the scenes, with no recognition, to bring about the much-needed change.

Who, then, will be the parishioners who will stand up and speak out against this abuse? They will be those who have the courage to say “enough is enough”, regardless of the consequences.

Who, then, will be the people of goodwill who will support the survivors and work to create a safer environment for all? They will be those who truly believe in the power of love and justice.

In conclusion, let us all work together towards a future where every person feels safe and valued. Let us hold the church accountable and demand change. Let us start by listening to the survivors.

(End of article)