
The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests

For immediate release: Wednesday, October 20, 2010

Statement regarding Fr. McCandless

My name is Judy Miller and I am the Delaware leader for SNAP, SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, is the world's oldest and largest support group for clergy abuse victims. We've been around for 22 years and have more than 9,000 members. Despite the word "priest" in our title, we have members who were molested by religious figures of all denominations, including nuns, rabbis, bishops, and Protestant ministers. Our website is SNAPnetwork.org)

We're here today because SNAP has uncovered information in sworn testimony in a deposition dated July 16, 2010 in which an alleged clergy sex abuse victim identified as John GR Doe divulged that Fr. William McCandless admitted to him that he had abused a 14 year old French boy attending a church camp. Fr. McCandless, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, was the principal of Salesianum until June of this year. Two of McCandless's predecessors have been accused of molesting children. We are not aware of any legal action against Fr. McCandless or that he has been publically accused before. However we are urging anyone who may have seen, suspected or suffered misdeeds or crimes by the priest to come forward, call police, protect children, get help and start healing

SNAP believes that since this disclosure was made during a sworn deposition, the Oblates should take it seriously, publicly announce the allegation and suspend McCandless while conducting a thorough investigation.

There are two ways accused predator priests are usually suspended. The first is after legal action – either criminal or civil. The second is after a victim reports directly to church officials.

As best we can tell, neither of these has happened with Fr. McCandless. Still, there are good reasons to take this disclosure seriously.

First, it was made under oath.

Second, it was made in a deposition with a church defense lawyer who was asking tough questions.

Third, it was made by an accuser whose identity is known to church officials and who has filed a lawsuit.

Fourth, this accuser has been deemed credible by experienced attorneys who have interviewed and represented dozens or hundreds of victims.

Fifth, I know this individual personally and find him very credible.

And finally, we should take this disclosure seriously because that's how we protect children – by taking reports and disclosures and allegations of child sex crimes seriously and acting on them prudently.

It's been several months now and there's been no denial from McCandless's supervisors. So we're asking Catholic officials to do now what we believe should have been done months ago – suspend Fr. McCandless and beg anyone with information that might prove or disprove this disclosure to come forward.

Judy Miller, Delaware SNAP leader

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Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests
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