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# The Pilot

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## A Very Painful Issue

In the months since the revelation that former priest, James Porter, was involved some 25 years ago in the serial sexual abuse of young girls and boys, The Pilot has reported and editorialized on the painful issue of clergy pedophilia. It is small, if any, consolation that the media reports that this destructive behavior goes on in other segments of society, because at the heart of it all are our children. They have been manipulated and used; their world of trust has been violated.

Once again, The Pilot finds it necessary to address this issue in response to a front page story appearing in The Boston Globe on March 31. Mr. David Coleman maintains that in 1985 he met with Rev. John McCormack of the Archdiocese of Boston and reported that he had been sexually abused, beginning in 1958, by a Father Richard Coughlin. Father Coughlin was then an associate pastor in an Archdiocesan suburban parish in 1965, while Cardinal Cushing was the Archbishop; Coughlin went

to California and has since worked in different capacities in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the Diocese of Orange. In January, 1993, Father Coughlin was suspended from priestly duties by the Bishop of Orange because of similar allegations of sexual abuse. The Diocese of Orange maintains that Mr. Coleman contacted them, but the Archdiocese of Boston did not.

As we go to press the story is one-day-old. It is simply too soon to speculate on the whole matter with any finality. And, because Mr. Coleman's and Father McCormack's memories of what took place at that private meeting back in 1985 vary, we have a serious public relations problem on our hands. It must not grow and wound the Church's credibility in this Archdiocese.

Looking for scapegoats is too easy. We must look at a very painful issue, examine our consciences, and remind ourselves that we who love the Church must always protect the innocent — especially the children.