



Voice of the Faithful of Long Island



**“The Consequence is clear: we cannot communicate with the Lord
if we do not communicate with each other.”**

--Pope Benedict XVI

LI Voice of the Faithful calls on ALL bishops to open their hearts, their ears and their doors, and to welcome ALL of the People of God to meaningful dialogue and communication.

From an article titled Church Critic Told to Keep his Distance (Press-Herald, Portland, ME, 12/30/08, Bill Nemitz, author):

By his own admission, he's long been a thorn in the side of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland. But in all the years he's spent lambasting the church hierarchy on behalf of those sexually abused by its priests, Paul Kendrick never thought it would come to this. "Over the past years, it has become apparent that you are unwilling to cease from publicly slandering and defaming (Bishop Richard Malone's) character," stated a recent letter to Kendrick from the Rev. Andrew Dubois, the diocese's vicar general. "This is a cause of great scandal, which may impede (Malone's) effective ministry."

It was not an idle observation. Attached to Dubois' letter was a "canonical precept," or order, from Malone mandating that Kendrick "abstain from all verbal and written communication and physical contact with me." Malone's precept also prohibits Kendrick from being "present in the same building with me (or) within 500 feet of me in public places." Finally, it instructs Kendrick to follow "the prescripts of civil law" – most notably criminal-trespass and cease-harassment notices issued on Dec. 18 against Kendrick at the bishop's behest by the Portland Police Department. Failure to follow Malone's decree, Kendrick was warned, could result in a canon-law "interdict" against him. Like the more serious sanction of outright excommunication, an interdict would bar Kendrick from attending church services or receiving the sacraments.

Sue Bernard, spokeswoman for the diocese, says Kendrick has more than earned the rebuke with his frequent public statements chastising Malone and the near-constant correspondence he sends to the diocese's chancery office. "It's been obvious for years that the bishop has been taking this – turning the other cheek, turning the other cheek and not doing anything," said Bernard. "This has gone so far beyond victim advocacy. This is about harassment." But Kendrick, who has retained two lawyers – one secular, the other canonical – for whatever lies ahead, has a markedly different interpretation of Malone's motives.

"It's to send a message of, 'Don't challenge us. Don't ask us questions. Don't speak out,'" Kendrick said. "Would I change the things I've done if these are the criteria for (an interdict)? No."

Kendrick, a lifelong Roman Catholic who was educated by Jesuits through high school and college, has railed against the church's handling of the so-called "priest scandals" almost since they first surfaced here in Maine and beyond eight years ago. He's spoken with numerous people who have said they are victims and their families, some of whom have revealed their stories of abuse to him for the first time. He's picketed the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, along with other churches around Maine, to call attention to alleged abusers still among the ranks of Maine's Roman Catholic priests. And long after the church-abuse stories faded from the front pages, Kendrick continues to deluge Malone and his staff with letters and e-mails exhorting them to be more welcoming of the church's victims and less protective of the priests who abused them. One such e-mail, written on Dec. 16, prompted Malone to retaliate.

After telling Malone that he hoped to attend midnight Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Christmas, Kendrick wrote that he would be sitting in the front row to hear the bishop's traditional Christmas homily. "I will come in peace," Kendrick wrote. "But if you happen to look my way from time to time, you may see me shaking my head ever so slightly in disbelief, or my head may be in my hands as I pray for tolerance to remain seated in spite of your hypocrisy."

Bernard said the diocese took that as a threat to disrupt the service, prompting Malone to obtain the police notices and issue the official church warning for Kendrick to stay away. "At the very least, it's distracting," Bernard said of the behavior Kendrick promised in his e-mail. "And if the person saying or leading the Mass is distracted, that's disruptive to everybody."

Kendrick, who ultimately did not attend the Mass, said the bishop is overreacting. "I would never disrupt a Mass or worship service. I've never done that," he said. "And I would never threaten to do that." Rather, he said, he simply wants Malone to sit down and talk with a woman from Boothbay Harbor named Marie Tupper. (Three years ago, Tupper settled a lawsuit against the diocese. In it, she claimed that when her son was a young child, back in the early 1980s, he was molested by the Rev. Thomas Lee at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Boothbay Harbor. Lee resigned his priesthood in 2004 after Bishop Joseph Gerry, Malone's predecessor, announced that complaints of sexual abuse by the priest had been deemed sufficiently credible to forward the case to the Vatican in Rome. The diocese has never said how many complaints it had against Lee. Tupper said this week that she's spoken with nine other victims in Boothbay Harbor, where Lee served as pastor from 1971-85, and three at St. Philip Parish in Lyman, which he led from 1985-2004.)

Mark Randall, a Portland lawyer who is representing Kendrick on the police notices, said he has no immediate plans to contest the orders. Still, Randall said, "I don't believe the conduct they're complaining of meets the definition of harassment." In a letter last week to Gerald Petrucelli, the diocese's attorney, Kendrick decried Malone's actions as a "scare tactic" designed to "intimidate and silence those who advocate for justice for victims."

"I urge you to advise the Bishop of Portland to cease his campaign of defamation against Paul Kendrick," Randall wrote. He later added, "The time for direct one-on-one communication (between Malone and Kendrick) is long overdue." As for Malone's precept and potential interdict against Kendrick, the Rev. Thomas Doyle, a canonical lawyer from Washington, D.C., and longtime friend to Kendrick, said Monday that he will represent Kendrick before the Roman Catholic Church. That will include appealing the precept issued by Malone, Doyle said, as well as fighting an interdict should the bishop impose one.

"Paul is not a 'Sunday Catholic,'" Doyle said. "He's a man who lives his Christianity on a day-to-day basis." As for Kendrick, he said he will continue advocating publicly for victims regardless of what Malone does to silence him.

"I would receive the Eucharist no matter what he did," Kendrick said. "He does not stand between me and God."

In Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter for the Jubilee Year 2000, where he spoke of the "spirituality of communion," he also said the following:

"Communion must be cultivated and extended day by day and at every level in the structures of each church's life. There, relations between bishops, priests and deacons, between pastors and the entire People of God, between clergy and religious, between associations and ecclesial movements must all be clearly characterized by communion...The theology and spirituality of communion encourage a fruitful dialogue between pastors and faithful: on the one hand uniting them a priori in all that is essential, and on the other leading them to pondered agreement in matters open to discussion.

We need to make our own the ancient pastoral wisdom which, without prejudice to their authority, encouraged pastors to listen more widely to the entire People of God...St. Paulinus of Nola urges: 'Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes.'

While the wisdom of the law, by providing precise rules for participation, attests to the hierarchical structure of the Church and averts any temptation to arbitrariness or unjustified claims, the spirituality of communion, by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of God, supplies institutional reality with a soul."

LI VOTF would like to express to the Church's hierarchy our hope for meaningful dialogue with, and a loving and pastoral outreach to, those abused by clergy and those who advocate for them. The time for accountability, openness, peace and healing is NOW.

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