

PRESS RELEASE
November 4, 2010

Survivors Voice Inc, Response to Vatican Spokesperson Fr. Lombardi's Statement

Clergy Abuse Survivors Respond to Vatican's Fr. Lombardi's Public Statement

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Boston Massachusetts: We at Survivors Voice (www.survivorsvoice.org) appreciated the invitation and opportunity extended by Vatican spokesperson Fr. Lombardi, to meet and speak during the Reformation Day gathering in Rome on October 31.

We applaud and agree with his public statement that "The scourge of sexual abuse especially against minors, but also in a general way, is one of the great scourges of today's world." We also applaud and agree that "This fight must be fought by us together, uniting our forces against the spread of this scourge.."

We do not agree with your statement that "*The major part of the crimes belongs to times bygone*". These crimes continue in every country of the world and the damage inflicted continues.

In Fr. Lombardi's own words issued in his statement "*Yesterday morning, 100,000 young people were present in these places for a great celebration ...*"

What we do not applaud and find discouraging is the fact that unless society changes the status quo surrounding the way we address the sexual abuse of children, of those **100,000** young people that Fr. Lombardi spoke of at the celebration in Rome, statistics show that **30,000** will be sexually abused before the age of 18.

What is more discouraging is that Fr. Lombardi's public statement began by informing us that the statement he issued was his alone and in no way represented the official stance of the Holy See.

In 2003, while in Rome, we extended an invitation to Vatican officials to engage in an open, direct and honest dialogue about childhood sexual abuse affecting children from around the globe. They declined our invitation. Several days ago, while again in Rome, we extended that same invitation. That invitation remains open, and survivors around the world remain determined to change the status quo of society's view of this issue.

Fr. Lombardi, if you cannot speak in an official capacity on this issue, please forward this invitation along to someone who can. Vatican officials detained us and photo-copied our passports. I'm sure they know how to reach us.

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