

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests

Thursday, January 24

Dear Friends,

This is an article from the Chicago Sun Times describing how those involved in the Father Daniel McCormack case, a priest convicted of child sexual abuse and currently serving time in prison, have been promoted rather than disciplined for the part they played in both allowing McCormack to continue to function as a priest even after they had knowledge of his abusive behavior and in the resulting cover-up.

Please add a comment on the blog and/or write a letter to the editor. The archdiocese's behavior in this case is particularly egregious and the archdiocese needs to be held accountable.

This is a good chance to express your feelings on this reckless behavior and educate people that this is not an isolated incident.

http://blogs.suntimes.com/religion/2008/01/the_cardinal_his_men_and_the_m.html#more

Thanks for the help.

Barbara Dorris

The cardinal, his men and the McCormack legacy

Cardinal George, Bishop Rassas, Chancellor Lago, Vicar General Canary, Bishop Kicanas

Two years ago this month, the Rev. Daniel McCormack was arrested for molesting boys. He's in prison now. And the top leaders in the Archdiocese of Chicago who might have stopped him have risen in their church positions.

Keep reading.

Cardinal Francis George

At the height of the sexual abuse scandals in 2002, U.S. Catholic bishops adopted a policy calling for the removal of any priest credibly accused of child molestation. Beforehand, George had argued repeatedly on national television that the "zero tolerance" policy was too stringent. McCormack was first picked up by police in August 2005, but not charged. The cardinal's review board recommended that the priest be removed from ministry, the archdiocese said. But the cardinal refused. McCormack went on to abuse other children. He pleaded guilty last July and was sent to prison. Four months later, the cardinal was elected president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop George Rassas

When McCormack was first arrested in 2005, Rassas was the archdiocese's vicar general. Despite the arrest, he allowed McCormack to receive a priestly promotion. The priest was kept in the West Side parish he served and went on to abuse more children. McCormack was arrested again in 2006. A few weeks later, Rassas was made an auxiliary bishop.

Chancellor Jimmy Lago

As the archdiocese's chancellor, Lago oversees the offices that handle sexual abuse. After McCormack's 2006 arrest, Lago told another media outlet that he regretted "that he was on vacation" when the priest was first arrested in 2005. And "not in the loop when a school principal came forward in 1999 with the first allegation against the priest." Not aware of McCormack? Really? Lago called for a so-called "independent" investigation into how McCormack slipped through the archdiocese's system. In releasing the report, the tough talking chancellor was hailed as a hero with unquestioning acceptance by the [Chicago Tribune](#). The cardinal bestowed Lago with even greater responsibility in handling abuse. The question not raised: Should Lago have been fired?

Vicar General Canary

The Rev. John Canary was vice rector of Mundelein Seminary when McCormack was studying for the priesthood. Mundelein officials learned in 1992 about sexual accusations against McCormack involving two adult males and a minor. The incidents began in 1988 when McCormack was at a seminary school known as Niles College, where Canary previously worked, according to archdiocesan reports. Canary said the allegations were noted in seminary records, which then "disappeared." Canary later became seminary rector. In 2006, he was appointed vicar general, a position that became open when Rassas was elevated to auxiliary bishop.

Bishop Gerald Kicanas

While rector of Mundelein Seminary in the 1990s, Tucson Bishop Gerald Kicanas says he knew about three reports of "sexual improprieties" against then-seminarian Daniel McCormack. Still, Kicanas supported McCormack's ordination, he recently told the Sun-Times. "It would have been grossly unfair not to have ordained him," Kicanas said. "There was a sense that his activity was part of the developmental process and that he had learned from the experience. I was more concerned about his drinking. We sent him to counseling for that." McCormack was ordained in 1994. The following year, Kicanas became a Chicago auxiliary bishop and in 2001, a bishop of Tucson. Two months ago, he was elected vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.