

(Your Address) _____

(Date) _____

(Name/Title of Recipient) _____

(Address) _____

Dear (Name of Recipient) _____:

As the sex abuse scandal continues to roil the Catholic Church, several recent initiatives are deserving of praise: credibly accused priests are being identified and laicized, new programs screen and monitor anyone with access to children, and some dioceses have established compensation programs for victims unable to seek redress because of statutes of limitations.

One significant problem, though, remains undiscussed and unresolved: clergy removed for sexual misconduct but never charged with a crime. Absent a conviction, these disgraced and dangerous individuals do not have to register as sex offenders and, therefore, face no limitations on their access to children including employment and living arrangements. Many of these individuals reoffend, making it imperative that the Catholic Church establish systems to, first, monitor those clergy removed after credible claims of misconduct and, second, report their whereabouts to local authorities.

You and your fellow Church leaders can make our communities and schools safer in three ways:

1. Create a national data base naming all clergy removed following credible allegations of child sexual abuse. This information should appear, publicly, in two places: on the website of any Diocese where the disgraced cleric served, and on a master list maintained by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops.

2. Determine the current address of each of these former clergy.

3. Mandate that every diocese provide appropriate law enforcement and school officials with the name, current address and offense for each former clergy listed in the two aforementioned data bases.

While laudable efforts are being undertaken to identify and remove predator clergy, it is unconscionable that after laicization, these shameful individuals can settle in unsuspecting neighborhoods with no restrictions. Without question, you and your colleagues have a moral obligation to warn communities of the potential dangers posed by the presence of these miscreants.

Sincerely,

(Your Name) _____