



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sunday,  
August 6**

**Cardinal Levada, the new Vatican Cardinal-Prefect visits Southern California parish, former home of convicted sexual perpetrator priest. A Coalition for Truth seeks answers and assistance from His Eminence.**

**WHO:**

**William J. Levada, Cardinal-Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (responsible for Doctrine and Discipline within the Church). Chosen by Pope Benedict XVI to fill the vacancy created by Benedict's selection to the papacy. Archbishop of San Francisco from 1995-2005 Former teacher at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo and part time supply priest at St. Jude's**

**WHAT:**

**A Coalition for Truth (ACT) ~Members of Voice of the Faithful, Survivors of Silence and Stones of Silence and SNAP~ seeks to question the new Vatican Cardinal-Prefect during his visit to St. Jude's Catholic Church, the Westlake parish where Fr. Michael Wempe admittedly abused local children. Wempe was recently beaten by his prison cellmate.**

**WHERE:**

**St. Jude Catholic Church  
32032 W. Lindero Canyon Rd.  
Westlake Village, CA 91361---**

**WHEN:**

**11:30 am Sunday, August 6, 2006**

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August 5, 2006

William J. Levada,  
Cardinal-Prefect,  
Congregation of the Doctrine for the Faith

Dear Cardinal Levada,

Congratulations on your selection as the new Cardinal-Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine for the Faith.

As Catholics from your home state we thought it would be appropriate to bring a few of our pressing concerns to your attention.

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are about the horrific sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and the subsequent cover up by the hierarchy? We ask you to work with Pope Benedict XVI to develop processes to hold Bishops of the Church worldwide accountable when they protect perpetrator priests.

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are by its original response that this is simply an American problem fueled by the US media?

In fact, the media has been invaluable in alerting us to what is actually happening in our neighborhoods. Because of the cover up by church officials, many credibly accused priest perpetrators live and work in complete anonymity. Recently one credibly accused, inactive priest was found to be living in a condominium complex full of unsuspecting families, across the street from a middle school bus stop, less than one mile from this church.

[http://www.theacorn.com/news/2005/1103/Front\\_Page/004.html](http://www.theacorn.com/news/2005/1103/Front_Page/004.html)

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are that priest perpetrators have been able to escape justice because of slow reporting by church officials of suspected sex abuse crimes?

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0802priest0802.html>

<http://www1.pressdemocrat.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060729/NEWS/607290303/1033/NEWS01&template=printart>

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are about the treatment of church employees who have the courage to do what is right and report abuse? All “whistle blowers,” with the courage to come forward like Reverend John Conley must be protected. <http://www.bishop-accountability.org/ca-sf/2004-01-14-Russell-SettlingThingsQuietly.htm>

We call on you to implement regulations in dioceses world wide that not only protect those who report crimes against children and vulnerable adults, but require that all church employees and volunteers report suspected sex abuse crimes to their superiors and to law enforcement within 36 hours.

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are by the favorable treatment of Fr. Marcial Maciel during the papacy of John Paul II? We are concerned about the lack of transparency of this case. We ask that you reconsider your original decision and officially defrock Maciel. We ask for a full public investigation of the Legionaries of Christ. We are most concerned about the required vow of silence demanded from the priests concerning Fr. Maciel. We ask that the Vatican and the Legionaries make a public apology to Fr. Maciel's victims.

[http://www.catholic.org/printer\\_friendly.php?id=20036&section=Cathcom](http://www.catholic.org/printer_friendly.php?id=20036&section=Cathcom)

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are that divorced and remarried Catholics are deemed unworthy to receive the sacraments, but convicted perpetrator priests (child rapists) are most often neither defrocked nor excommunicated? Will Fr. Michael Wempe be excommunicated?

Does the Vatican understand that good Catholics are scandalized by both the legal tactics used by Church attorneys and the money the dioceses have spent on attorneys to obstruct justice for the victims? Are the criminal and civil trials of priests who have allegedly abused minors about protecting the clergy and the institution of the church or about restoring the victims?

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20060731-9999-1m31delay.html>

We ask you to instruct all dioceses world wide to work for truth and justice for all involved in clergy sexual abuse cases, not self-protection.

Does the Vatican understand how scandalized good Catholics are about the treatment of survivors and the callousness with which their deep spiritual and psychological damage is dismissed? With whom does the Catholic Church identify: the priest, the Levite or the Good Samaritan? Will we as a Church accept the obligation to restore the survivors to health? Where is the compassionate care for **OUR** sisters and brothers, **OUR** children?

We ask that an international fund be established for rescue and recovery for all victims of clergy sexual abuse. We ask that each diocese and each parish be expected to contribute to the needs of the victims. We ask that you direct each and every diocese world wide to actively seek out the victims of clergy of sexual abuse and offer them assistance. This is not charity. **This is our obligation.**

Does the Vatican realize that time is of the essence in assisting victims and their families? For this reason, we respectfully seek a response from you and/or an opportunity to dialog no later than September 1, 2006.

Your sisters and brothers,

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