



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Group Says Pope's Apology Not Enough

Call To Action, the U.S.-based Catholic justice organization, voiced its concern Friday after Pope Benedict XVI during celebrations commemorating the Year of the Priest said that the church must "insistently beg forgiveness" for the sexual abuse crimes. He failed to state any clear change in policies or practice that would prevent further abuse or bring justice to the thousands of sexual abuse survivors who have come forward.

Jim FitzGerald, Call To Action's Executive Director, said, "The Pope's statement reveals either a woeful ignorance or unabashed denial of the worldwide nature of the abuse problem in the Catholic Church. An apology will not erase the crimes committed nor prevent future ones. Our church—and particularly our children—deserve more than mere apology; we deserve immediate action."

"An apology is nothing without correction of the wrong that preceded it. The Vatican must take responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of anti-abuse standards for reporting, prevention and accountability in dioceses worldwide," said FitzGerald.

"Additionally, the wounding of survivors and the betrayal felt by Catholics across the globe warrants nothing less than independent investigations into the crisis and a truth and reconciliation commission in which the names of all credibly accused priests would be released and survivors, many of whom have not seen justice due to civil statutes of limitations, would be able to share their stories."

"Only when there is truth-telling and accountability will the roots of this problem finally be addressed; roots that are grounded in a trail of cover-up that rises to the highest levels of power in the Roman Catholic Church. As far back as 1962, the Vatican had urged secrecy in dealing with sexual abuse crimes and that has lasted to this day in the majority of dioceses throughout the world," said FitzGerald.

Recent polling shows that the Pope and U.S. Bishops have lost credibility in the eyes of U.S. Catholics to deal with the sexual abuse crisis. 72% of Catholics believe that the U.S. Bishops have made a poor effort at addressing the sexual abuse situation in the church. 56% of Catholics believe the Pope has done a poor job.

Call To Action urges the Vatican to move from apology to action in order to transform the church from one of harm to one of healing.

For more information see:

Pope addresses priest abuse scandal

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/06/11/vatican.pope.abuse/?hpt=T2>

Vatican told bishops to cover up sex abuse (The Guardian, August 17, 2003)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/aug/17/religion.childprotection>

Zogby Poll (National Catholic Reporter, May 5, 2010)

<http://ncronline.org/news/zogby-poll-us-catholics-say-pope-should-not-resign>

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Call To Action (CTA) is a Catholic movement working for equality and justice in the Church and society. An independent national organization of over 25,000 people and 53 local chapters, CTA believes that the Spirit of God is at work in the whole church, not just its appointed leaders. Visit our website at www.cta-usa.org.