

# The Healing Voices Magazine

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual

### Child Abuse Prevention Special Edition

#### Welcome

Michael D. Hoffman

On behalf of the Founders of *The Healing Voices Magazine*, I offer a hearty welcome to child-protection professionals, survivor ministers and all concerned with healing wounds caused by abuse of children in our church and society. All of you, including those who met in Camden for the 2019 Child & Youth Protection Catholic Leadership Conference, remain in my thoughts and prayers.

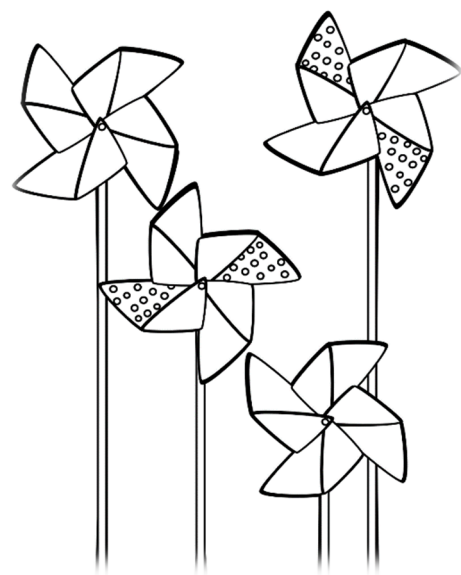
As a clergy sexual abuse survivor, I am certain—and I trust you will agree—that no other child should suffer the abuse that I and others have endured when we were young. Together, we can, as abuse survivors working with Church personnel, work to protect the dignity of all of God's children.

This is the fourth special edition that *The Healing Voices Magazine* has released for Child Abuse Prevention Month. In the four years we have been publishing, many forums have discussed abuse in the Church, and many revelations have continued to rock our Church. Each incident can dishearten fellow Catholics and also re-wound our more tender fellow survivors.

Yet, without denying any of the wrongs and failures, or the need for continued reform, I find myself wanting to share the success stories about public outreach events to raise awareness of child-safeguarding efforts taking place in Catholic schools and parishes each day. More schools and parishes are beginning to join with

the national efforts to raise awareness of child protection by holding Pinwheels for Prevention plantings. More of our neighbors in child-protection agencies are becoming aware of the advances and best practices that have been operationalized in United States dioceses thanks to the support of Church leadership and the tireless efforts of the USCCB Secretariat for the Protection of Children and Young People.

It is to these success stories I would like to turn the attention of this Special Edition, with contributions reflections on progress to date, lessons learned, successes—and happy moments as we join together, as one Church, to protect all children within the Church and throughout society.



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### The Four Pillars of Child Sexual Abuse Awareness

Msgr Stephen J. Rossetti, PhD, DMin

#### *A New Phenomenon?*

It seems to many that the issue of child sexual abuse is a new one. Decades ago it was rarely in the public eye. There were no mandatory reporting laws and little public awareness of this terrible tragedy. Those who were abused felt alone and did not dare to speak up. Perpetrators were very, very rarely punished.

With the current public spotlight on the tragedy of abuse, some may think that it is a new phenomenon. They wonder what is wrong with our current world to foster such widespread abuse. Research has surfaced astounding statistics suggesting that one out of every three or four women in the United States are sexually abused by the age of 18 and about half as many men. This is a veritable epidemic. Why now?

If one looks closely, there are signs that this is *not* a new phenomenon, nor is it confined to the United States. Around 306 AD in Elvira, Spain the Catholic bishops of that area met and passed a number of church laws or canons. Canon 71 states: "Those who sexually abuse boys may not receive communion even

when death approaches."<sup>1</sup> This tells us that there was enough sexual abuse of boys over 1,700 years ago in Spain that the council fathers felt compelled to write a law against it.

The sexual abuse of minors is by no means a new topic. So, if it is not new, then what did the Church and society do to protect children from sexual abuse for the next 1,650 years? If they knew about it, what did they do to protect children? The answer: essentially nothing. It was only beginning in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century did society and the Church start publicly acknowledging the reality of child sexual abuse and began implementing steps to prevent it. For example, it was only between 1963 and 1967 that mandatory child abuse reporting laws were passed in all 50 of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Century of the Child*

So, if child sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon, why are we only beginning to address it now? What happened in recent decades that allowed the reality of the hidden tragedy of child sexual abuse to become public? After more than 1,600 years, why now?

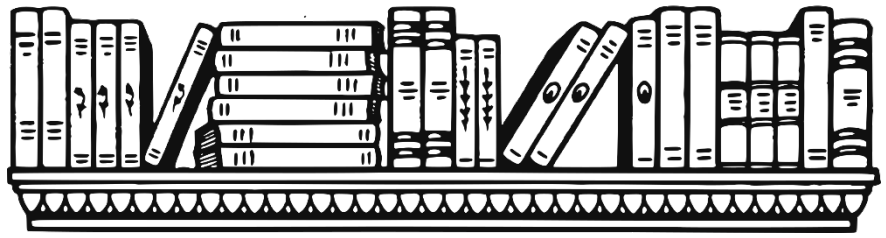
Some have dubbed the 20th Century as the "Century of the Child." Before this century, children were routinely exploited on many different levels and few noticed. For example, very young children were sometimes subject to dangerous and cruel child labor practices. Children worked long hours in mines, factories, and even in prostitution. For example, "Chinese slave girl prostitutes [were] bought and sold in San Francisco in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century".<sup>2</sup> People began to realize that normal child development can easily be derailed through the brutal physical exploitation of child labor, not to mention being exploited in prostitution.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oalfson, Erna, Corwin, David L. and Summit, Roland C. "Modern History of Child Sexual Abuse Awareness: Cycles of Discovery and Suppression," *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 17(1993), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child\\_labour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour) (accessed 2/10/19).

At the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a movement to ban exploitive child labor began to gain widespread support in the United States, including from the White House. These first efforts of recognizing and protecting



the rights of child focused on the exploitation of children in labor. For example, on January 25, 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt hosted the first White House Conference on Children ... The conferences were held every decade through the 1970s.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1938, “President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act, which includes limits on many forms of child labor.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 which was subsequently affirmed by the United States in 1960. The rights of children were thus thrust onto the international stage.

This movement toward recognizing that children have God-given rights is fundamental in facing and addressing child sexual abuse. For example, the Vatican’s Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors is charged with addressing the issue of child abuse worldwide. Several of its members actively go around the world promoting the welfare of children and raising consciousness about the evil of the child sexual abuse.

However, in some countries, there is a lack of interest in the subject for many reasons. One important reason is that some cultures do not vigorously recognize and promote the rights of children. So, the work of the Commission in those areas is more basic--- to raise consciousness about the fundamental human rights of children, including the obligation of a society to protect children from exploitation and sexual abuse.

### *The Sexual Revolution*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American society did not speak about sexuality in general and certainly not sexual relationships with minors. Anything other than adult heterosexuality was not openly acknowledged.

For example, in the small town where I grew up in the 1950’s and 60’s, sexuality was rarely if ever publicly discussed. There was little public sexual education and no child sexual abuse education awareness training. The word homosexuality was never mentioned. No one ever heard of pedophilia or imagined such things. Sexuality in general remained a hush-hush topic.

That changed beginning with the 1960’s and the “sexual revolution” or “sexual liberation.”<sup>6</sup> Playboy magazine, whom some suggest had a role in fostering this movement, was founded in 1953.<sup>7</sup> Sex was no longer a taboo subject. Such movements which openly advocated and discussed sexuality now were placed before the eyes of the American people on their magazine stands and eventually on television screens. While one should rightly criticize many aspects of the “sexual revolution,” the movement did allow people to address human sexuality more openly.

With society recognizing the rights of children and also now willing to speak openly about sexuality, the reality of the sexual abuse of minors surfaced. When faced with the reality of abuse, many people’s first response was disbelief, surprise, and lack of understanding: “Why would an adult do such a thing?” Certainly such actions seemed disgusting to people and

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_young\\_people%27s\\_rights\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_young_people%27s_rights_in_the_United_States)

(accessed 2/9/19).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual\\_revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_revolution), (accessed 2/9/2019).

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playboy> (accessed 2/9/19).

perverted. But the first revelations were relegated in society's mind to "a few sick people" and thus such abusive acts must be isolated events. It did not become a critical public issue until two more developments occurred.

### *Widespread and Devastating*

First, modern psychological and sociological research began to document how traumatic such abuse can be. Many people were, and still are, genuinely surprised. They think, "The children will forget. They will get over it." In reality, many abused children carry the trauma and its scars throughout their lives. Increased rates of depression, alcohol and substance abuse, PTSD, anxiety, and suicidality are among the documented effects of child sexual abuse.

But the path to recognizing the reality of this trauma, even in professional psychological circles, was not a smooth one. Well known is Sigmund Freud's own shifting on this issue. Originally, Freud's 1896 seduction theory posited that the widespread neurosis of women, including hysteria and other pathological symptoms, was due to their sexual abuse as minors by men. He originally thought that sexual abuse by girls in their families was "more common than suspected." Later he recanted and ascribed many of these memories of abuse as childhood erotic fantasies and not real cases of abuse.<sup>8</sup>

The famous Kinsey studies in human sexuality in the early 1950s were likewise resistant to the reality and devastation of child sexual abuse. In 1953, Kinsey wrote, "It is difficult to understand why a child, except for its cultural conditioning, should be disturbed at having its genitalia touched, or disturbed at seeing the genitalia of other persons, or disturbed at even more specific sexual contacts."<sup>9</sup> Their 1953 study went on to suggest that the overreaction of parents and the police

to the news of their sexual abuse perhaps was the real cause of their traumatization.

In their detailed and important 1993 article, Erna Olafson et al. document the lengthy process of society coming to grips with the prevalence and damage of child sexual abuse. "Social workers and rape trauma specialists were foremost among pioneers of sexual abuse studies in the 1970s and early 1980s."<sup>10</sup> It is only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that psychological professionals as a group were firmly convinced of the real trauma of child sexual abuse.

An important moment in the raising of the consciousness of Catholic bishops in the United States to the sometimes life-long damage of child sexual abuse occurred in Dallas in 2002. As the Bishops met to discuss the extensive child protection proposals in the "Dallas Charter," the agenda included four survivors of abuse standing up and speaking directly to the over-300 bishops. They each spoke of the devastation and harm of their abuse in heart-rending detail. A few moments later, the Dallas Charter was resoundingly passed.

Similarly, before the episcopal conferences from around the world attended the February 2019 summit at the Vatican, the Pope asked each of them to listen personally to victims and to hear their stories. He wanted each of the bishops attending the conference to recognize the devastation of child sexual abuse and to hear it with their own ears. The Pope wanted their hearts to be touched and converted by victims' stories.



<sup>8</sup>Olafson, Erna, Corwin, David L. and Summit, Roland C. "Modern History of Child Sexual Abuse Awareness: Cycles of Discovery and Suppression," *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 17(1993), pp. 10-11..

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

He knew that without such awareness, the work of the 2019 Vatican summit would likely be ineffective.

Second, research study after study uncovered the reality that the rates of abuse of minors in the United States, for example, are incredibly high. As noted previously, 1 out of every 3-4 girls and half as many boys are abused by the age of 18. Child sexual abuse was a hidden crime that rarely surfaced. Perpetrators worked hard to keep their abusive behaviors hidden and victims were shamed and sometimes threatened into keeping silent. Now, research studies and the mandatory reporting civil laws made it very clear: a lot of our children are being abused. It is a widespread and devastating tragedy. The numbers justify calling it an epidemic.

Putting together each of these developments: (1) public recognition of the rights of children, (2) willingness to speak about sexuality, (3) recognition of the trauma of child sexual abuse, plus (4) its epidemic levels, the lid blew off and the issue of the sexual abuse of minors thrust itself into the American consciousness.

### *Toward the Future*

All these point the way for promoting the protection of children in general, and in preventing child sexual abuse in particular. Without these basic societal developments, the tragedy of the sexual abuse of minors would never have burst into public consciousness as it has. Sadly, there was enough child sexual abuse in Spain 1650 years ago to warrant a church law being written to condemn it. But it took another sixteen centuries before society would become aware of this formerly hidden international crisis.

As members of the Pontifical Commission and its consultants travel around the world promoting the protection of minors, they sometimes meet with varying degrees of resistance. Some people still say: "This is an American problem" or "This is a Western problem." Still others suggest that it is not something that should be discussed publicly, or even privately. In

many places of the world, it remains a taboo subject. Still others do not demonstrate a great concern about preventing the abuse of children or a recognition of the rights of children in general.

Four basic pillars must be in place before a society becomes ready and mobilized to protect its minors from sexual abuse:

1. Child have human rights which society needs to protect.
2. Society must be able to speak about and address issues of sexuality, especially harmful acts that must be rejected.
3. The often life-long devastation caused by child sexual abuse must be recognized.
4. Child sexual abuse is not an isolated problem or one that occurs everywhere else. It is here among us.

We, in the Church, have a special charge. We are charged to go forth and preach the Gospel. This Gospel necessarily includes protecting those who are voiceless and particularly vulnerable. It must include protecting the very ones whom Jesus said the Kingdom of God belongs. Now, we have become aware of the trauma caused by abuse and its global scale. Now, we have to spread this awareness to the "ends of the earth."

### **We Must Continue to Do More**

By Jennifer Samartano

*There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.*

Nelson Mandela May 8, 1995

Recently, I walked into an event that was addressing the issue of child sexual abuse. What I remember the most from that event was the look on the faces of those charged with keeping our children safe from this horrific crime. They had their usual expression of great concern and compassion but this time they had the overwhelming look of exhaustion. We shared a brief exchange of words and it was brief because they didn't

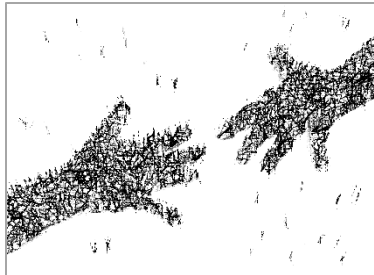
seem to have the exact words in that moment to articulately express why this keeps happening to our children. No matter how hard they worked in preventing abuse and supporting victims, the continuing outcries from new victims seemed overwhelming.

As of late, this experience has not been an isolated one for me personally. One can fill in the blanks as to whether this was an event at a church, school district or youth sports organization. There has been so much in the news about another outcry of child sexual abuse involving clergy, coaches, teachers or other school personnel. In many of these reports there have been hundreds of victims. This is and can be very overwhelming to hear, especially the enormity of it all. It can be extremely difficult for the community to hear as well as overwhelming to those who do this work each and every day. And it can be especially overwhelming for survivors.

I fear that there might be a fatigue of sorts not in the mission of preventing child sexual abuse and not by the professionals and individuals who fight for prevention every day, but a fear that the community may be getting a bit fatigued in hearing all of what seems to be the never-ending cases of child sexual abuse that always seem to be cycling in the news. But one of the reasons why we might be hearing so much is because of the prevention work that we are doing and the successful impact that we are all making in the community to bring this issue to the forefront. I strongly advocate that we all must be aware so that we all can do more to prevent this tragedy from happening. We simply must do more. We must do better for our children. Everyone has a role to play in protecting children and fostering resilience in our children and in our communities.

It seems that child sexual abuse is everywhere. Child sexual abuse is the most prevalent health problem children face today. Child sexual abuse can happen to any child, and it can happen anywhere. This is a crime

that knows no bounds. It is not a problem of just one socio-economic, culture, race, religion, or gender. It impacts every community and every person across the globe. No matter what statistic we use, whether it's one out of 10 children will be abused before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (one out of 7 girls and one out of 25 boys) or 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys, it is one child too many! Approximately 90% of those who are victims of child sexual abuse know their abuser. Abusers can be neighbors, friends, family members, teachers, coaches, clergy, anyone. It is also important to know that children can also be abused by an older, more powerful child. Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults, including sexual assaults of adults, occur to children aged 17 and under. Only about one-third of the children who are sexually abused ever tell anyone about their abuse.



Although prevalent, I strongly believe that child sexual abuse is one of the most preventable abuses against our children. We must educate adults, all adults in the community and we must also educate our children in an age-appropriate way in order to prevent child sexual abuse.

I am a Prevention Specialist for Prevent Child Abuse Illinois (PCA IL) and the Program Manager for our Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program. PCA IL is honored to have Mike Hoffman, one of the co-founders of this newsletter, serve as our current PCA IL Board President. PCA IL is actively involved in prevention education and public awareness, community outreach, public policy advocacy, and promotion of effective prevention programs.

Prevention education for all youth serving organizations and for all adults is key to ending child sexual abuse. At PCA IL we deliver child sexual abuse prevention education. I am a Certified Facilitator and Certified Instructor for the Darkness to Light 'Stewards of Children' training. 'Stewards of Children' is a

prevention training that teaches adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is designed for organizations that serve youth and for individuals concerned about the safety of children. It is the only nationally distributed, evidence-informed program proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes, and change child protective behaviors. (see <https://www.d2l.org/education/stewards-of-children/>)

It is extremely important that adults learn the warning signs so they can do something to help a child who may have been abused or who may be at risk of child sexual abuse. Each individual needs to be an active bystander. An active bystander is a person who witnesses a boundary violation or sees a situation where a child is vulnerable or sees other concerning behaviors that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, and actively intervenes to prevent child sexual abuse. Active bystanders are prepared to make spontaneous or planned interventions that reinforce safety boundaries and protects children. For more information about 'Bystanders Protecting Children from Boundary Violations & Sexual Abuse' training and other Darkness to Light's trainings, see D2L.org.

One of the best protections for our children is our relationship with them. We need to have on-going age-appropriate open and honest conversations with them about their bodies, healthy sexuality and boundaries. For many adults this can be very uncomfortable to do. But I will tell you, this is precisely what those who target and offend children are counting on. They are counting on our discomfort in discussing such things. However, the temporary discomfort that you may feel of these protective conversations is nothing compared to the overwhelming and devastating conversations that could occur should a child be abused. If these conversations start at a very early age it gets easier over time to continue these conversations with your child as they age. Besides, you want to be the trusted adult that your

children can always come to should they have any questions or concerns.

From the very beginning teaching children the proper names for body parts is so important. Teaching them that their private parts are private and reinforce that no one should ask to touch or look at their private parts. But also explain that there are times when certain adults do touch them to help keep them clean and healthy such as the doctor's office or bath. Overall, teach children about 'Safe and Unsafe' or 'Comfortable and Uncomfortable' touches. Use these conversations about touching as teachable moments. Also:

- Teach a child "No, Go & Tell."
- Teach them that they have the right to say "no" or "stop" when someone touches or asks to touch their body.
- Teach them to go and tell a trusted adult if someone has tried to touch their private parts or asked for them to touch theirs. Identify with your child who the trusted adults are that they can tell.
- Teach children, no secrets! Teach children how secrets can be a bad thing. Teach them not to keep secrets and explain to them that if someone asks them to keep a secret to come and tell you, no matter what. There is never a good reason to keep a secret from you or their caregiver.
- Teach children to listen to their gut or that "uh-oh" feeling. If someone makes them feel uncomfortable tell them they should move away from that person and find a trusted adult. Teach them that if anyone tries to break any of the safety rules that you have established with them to tell you or another trusted adult immediately.

These are just a few suggestions for younger children and there is so much more that you can do. There are also safety rules for



older children to reinforce their personal safety boundaries. Teaching children safety rules throughout their life is not only a critical part of keeping children better protected from child sexual abuse, it empowers them.

There are so many great resources for having these conversations with your children at any age. A full list of links may be found in the digital version of this article as published on *The Healing Voices Magazine*.

We must also demand that the organizations that serve our children implement effective prevention programs and child protection policies. For instance, school personnel identify 52% of all identified child abuse cases. Schools should be training all staff how to recognize and respond to child sexual abuse as well as how to prevent it, as well as educating their children in an age appropriate way about personal boundary safety and healthy sexuality. There should also be a parent/guardian prevention education component included as well. Ask your school what they are doing in terms of helping to keep children safe and strongly advocate for these programs and policies. For more information, <http://www.erinslaw.org/>

For more information regarding child protection policies and best practice, <https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Step-Up-and-Speak-Out-7.13.15.pdf>

The impact of child sexual abuse is devastating. And, whether or not you realize it, child sexual abuse affects all of us in some way. All children deserve to be safe and grow up to be happy and healthy. Ultimately, it is always the responsibility of adults to keep children safe. Therefore, we all must do more to protect children. We must create safe environments for all children. Each of us has a role to play in creating a safer and better world for our children.

*This is a call to action.  
What will be your response?*



## **The Global, Universal Argument for Safe Environment for Little Ones and the Vulnerable In Three Words**

### **SANCTITY OF LIFE**

Teresa Morris Kettelkamp

When I worked in Rome for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, the Commission received permission from the Holy Father to have Episcopal Conferences celebrate a National Day of Prayer for the victims/survivors of sexual abuse. Upon sharing this powerful healing opportunity, some responded saying the problem of sexual abuse did not exist in their country and having such a Day of Prayer would cause shame. Since sexual abuse exists everywhere, in every corner of the world, with the rich, the poor, the highly educated, the illiterate, the young and old alike, I personally felt a strong argument was needed to move those who believed that the sexual abuse of children from a 'did not exist' position, to a 'what can I do to protect the children and vulnerable' position.

I began to think about what could be the universal, global, air-tight argument that the Church can use to advocate everyone's responsibility to establish safe environments for children and the vulnerable: even in the face of non-believers who think children and the vulnerable are not at risk. I decided the argument to apply our belief as Catholics in the SANCTITY OF LIFE to this issue. If we call ourselves Catholic, then the SANCTITY OF LIFE is a sacred truth we hold as fact. A natural follow-through then would be to put policies and practices in place to uphold the SANCTITY OF LIFE for everyone. In doing that, there would be no room for any abuse of any type to anyone.

Activating the practice of the SANCTITY OF LIFE automatically protects the little ones and the vulnerable.

As Catholics we believe that everyone, every single one of the 7.7 billion people in the world (and growing by the



second) are sacred and made in the image and likeness of God. Look to your right, look to your left, look at the people on the news, look at the people at work, in the streets, at the grocery store, in villages, farms, cities, in the country, and even look in the mirror; there is nowhere you can look without seeing someone made in the image and likeness of God: God who is the Alpha and the Omega. Nothing is more precious and sacred than that. The SANCTITY OF LIFE applies to everyone you see.

The evil one will try to deceive us, but we know the truth: everyone is sacred and thus deserves respect and protection regardless of their situation. No one is exempt from this respect and protection. It is all of our responsibilities to uphold the sacredness and dignity of every person: not sit on the sidelines and close our eyes.

So, when anyone, from anywhere says that sexual abuse of children and minors does not exist in their world, tell them you wished they were right, but facts show differently. As Catholics and followers of Christ our job is to live and practice the SANCTITY OF LIFE: protecting all people, respecting all people because that is who we are, that is what we believe, and that is what we do.

### **Me Too**

Paul Ashton, PsyD, DMin

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.*

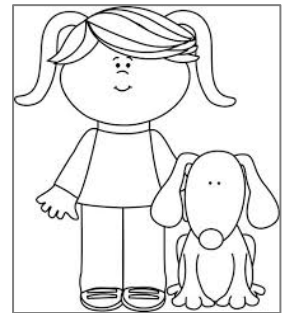
*1 John 4: 18*

"Me, too. Me, too." Those softly spoken words, almost whispered, came like a tsunami washing everything away, leaving silence and then, more tears, this time shared by the few of us in this small group.

It is devastating to be a victim of sexual abuse. It is isolating. It is scary. It is a fearful place to be. It is a place where anxiety dominates. It is lonely. It is dark. It feels dirty. It makes things feel dirty. It is like someone is always watching, knowing and seeing that something is wrong. It is tiring. It is a place where you run a lot, but cannot escape. It is hiding. It is shameful. It is anger making. It is non-trusting. It is giving up. It is finding excuses to avoid anxiety causing situations. It is

not trusting love. It is wondering all the time. It is not knowing when someone will find out or ask you. It is being worried that you are not handling it well or right. It is denying. It is disbelief. It is numbness.

Me, too. I am a victim. We are all victims in this small group coming together to offer support and to share and to show concern. The group is like a funny chorus line of people who have come together to stand together, but none of us fit together—except that we can say "Me, too." We are all shapes and sizes and ages, and come from all different walks of life and experiences. We have so little in common, but so much, all at the same time. When we lower our masks and tear down the walls, and avoid the smoke screens we create, we have so much to share, but mostly it is in the listening. When we listen and nod and say it is "OK" we know how important that "OK" is because we all need it



ourselves. We need to feel the opposite of all of the dark feelings described above. We need to feel connected and we need to feel like we belong. We are not entitled, but we are justly due the same place of security and freedom that everyone else has.

Sometime we see shadows at the door in the hallway leading to the room where we meet and share. Sometime we hear the muffled tears from those shadows. Sometimes the shadows come into the room and sit in the back outside of the circle. Sometime they run away and out of the room. We continue to sit and we wait. We listen. We share and we talk. We hope that these shadows will one day return and come out of the darkness and have their voice heard.

When we are not in this room we are teachers, psychologists, surgeons, stay at home mothers and fathers, phlebotomists, dentists, and professional dog walkers. We are like everyone else. Sort of.

When we gather to support each other, we always turn to prayer...for acceptance of our lives, for the grace to be able to make good decisions, for the ability to know what is important and what is not so important, and for the courage to deal with surviving and to be able to thrive. We pray that this will never happen to another child, and we pray that all perpetrators understand, and get even a small glimpse of what we feel so that they might stop hurting others.



Thank you to all of those who have been courageous enough to teach prevention of child sexual abuse. Thanks to all of those who have opened their doors and hearts to those of us who need support group meetings and places to be listened to and

heard. Thanks to all of you who stand with us in solidarity wanting to make this world a place of love, safety and security for all of God's children. May the "Me, too's" be fewer and fewer.

### **Children, Our Treasures**

Kathy O'Connell

I am a mother and now a grandmother. Children have been and always will be an important part of my life. They are treasures.

A mother lives very closely to the innocence of each child with his or her thoughts, words, and actions. In this role I treasure I am filled with wonder as each child encounters a world I've grown used to ... and reveals whole vistas every single day.

Children just amaze me, and I smile at all they have to offer. They warm my heart on a cold day just gathering for hot cocoa or a cuddle. When one of my grandchildren hugs me when I'm down my heart is uplifted and my whole viewpoint can change. Truly, children reflect the beauty of God in my day—in all our days. They are treasures from Him to us all.

For this reason, I am writing this article.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This cause is very important. It is critical for all of us. No child should ever be hurt, not physically, or mentally, or sexually, or emotionally. Children are miracles from God. To leave them unprotected, or worse to harm any one of them, is an affront to Him.

Children are born in innocence and through love. And they rely on us, as trusted adults, to lead them, guide them, scold them, help them—all in love, all in safety. We are there to remain beside them as they learn and grow each day. We are commissioned, really, to raise them physically, emotionally, and spiritually so they can be knowledgeable, compassionate and independent individuals ready to face the future before them.

Child abuse devastates children, and it also destroys our roles as protectors. It is our job as adults to make sure they are protected in every way we can. Abuse of any kind, from any adult, breaks a child's ability to trust not only the abuser but also anyone else who might offer care or protection. It leaves a child alone, isolated, to imagine he or she is the damaged one. Self-esteem, confidence, trust, hope... these are all stolen from child victims and make growing into confident and independent adults very hard. Sometimes, impossible. And, too often these stories end in broken lives or even suicide.

Our society today, especially our Catholic churches and schools, are prepared and educated on such abuse. Training and skills in the dioceses of the United States help everyone to be aware of signs of abuse and to know how to respond. Children today are safer and more able to rely on caring adults who have learned how to speak about abuse and empower children to seek help without becoming frightened. There is still much work to be done.

The progress means a lot to me, because I am a victim of child abuse by a parent and then by clergy. And, the aftereffects, as an adult, remain trying and troubling.

The road to healing is long and painful. With trusted individuals who share this journey with me, I am recovering by relying on their compassion and support. They help me know I am not all alone and that I can continue to make progress with their support. But this is not a fate I would want any child to face. This is not a challenge any adult should have to bear because of abuse when they were young.

My request of you, my reader, is this: If you know of a child being abused, be their angel and take all due steps to ensure they are removed from the danger, but don't stop there. They will have suffered a terrible loss of a trusted adult who betrayed their trust. They will be confused and maybe withdraw. Please, take time to find a way to support and guide them in the direction of finding the love and empathy they need to free their fearful heart of abuse and fill it with love and hope. Don't let them wait until they are older.

No child should have to suffer abuse of any kind. Let's all work together to live this out and continue finding ways to help our children. Children are God's miracles, and they are our treasures. We are all made in God's love and in God's image; let's treat children that way until they can take that into their hearts and grow in confidence, faith and love.

Sometimes it doesn't take a village. It takes a single, brave, and informed person to intervene on behalf of children who are essentially helpless until we help them. Our lives are meant to protect them, always. And to remind them that they are never alone.

### **This Dangerous World**

Teresa Pitt Green

Mike Hoffman has been a relentless advocate for child protection since the first day I met him some years ago and we founded this magazine with other Catholic survivors of clergy abuse.

Every survivor of abuse is a role model in his or her own right. Mike continues to give generously of his talent, time,

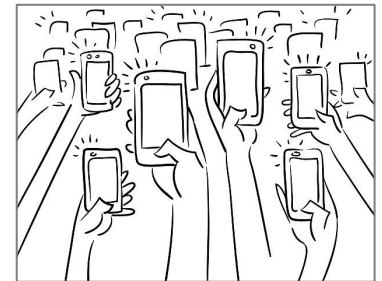
and treasure to promote child protection programs within the Church, to raise awareness outside the Church of the excellent programs available, and to advance child protection practices to keep every child safe in every corner of our world—including serving, now, as President of the Board of Child Abuse Prevention – Illinois.

People underestimate survivors. In my experience, they underestimate our resilience, and our faith, and our determination to help protect children and families from what we suffered. People also underestimate our spiritual capacity to push back against the darkness of abuse and the deeply running current of evil in the world. And, unfortunately, in this world, there is much need for the uncommon wisdom and resourcefulness we survivors have not chosen to gain but have not hesitated to share.

My work has led me to work, beyond the work of Healing Voices and Spirit Fire and other faith and healing programs, to volunteer in providing operational support for professionals dedicated to eradicating the scourge of human trafficking, which has become a disturbingly lucrative and global “market” phenomenon.

Here is what human-trafficking work has revealed to me.

The world in which I live now, as an adult recovering from child abuse, is far more, not less, dangerous for children than when I was a child, indeed even than when I was a target of



abuse. Now, unlike then, the internet delivers skilled traffickers into every household in every demographic in every single region of America. They are motivated groomers to begin, targeting children on social media at 12 or younger and cultivating these young people over time into compromised and compliant victims.

So, yes, I am an advocate for child protection programs in Catholic schools and other settings. They are more important than ever. Having tech-savvy programs to reach kids and parents is critical to shut down the free movement of traffickers online into the palm of a child's hand. (For some good at-home training, check out the free, online [KidsSmarts](#) programs by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.)

It's a surreal experience for me, as a survivor of clergy abuse, to participate in survivor ministry and anti-human trafficking work. It gives me a clear reason to be grateful the United States Church has a mandatory child protection program, with a commitment to training. Because the dangers of the world evolve, the program must evolve. Our program and training can and should also progress with our shared progress as individuals and as a Church.

My interest in supporting child protection programs in the Church is twofold. First, to keep Catholics, both adults and children, aware in age-appropriate ways that help protect against new generations of predators. Second, to ensure training and community vigilance reaches beyond parishes, indeed beyond the Church, so the positive impact of our living faith can reach beyond "our own backyard."

Local news continually covers increasing incidents, or increasing revelations, of abuse within other churches and schools, at daycare and at sports, in the entertainment industry and globally, and within the pitiful nightmare of foster care. With such bleak news, it is worth taking a moment to see the full context and now, more than ever, to understand that the Church is learning quite painfully and terribly slowly responding—and in the process wounding many victims—to a dark reality that is everywhere.

As ever, reflections such as these leave me with a cautious hope toward child protection policies in the United States Catholic Church and with a profound regard and gratitude for what victim assistance coordinators and survivor ministry professionals can potentially do for all survivors, for the Church and for the world.

## National Child Abuse Hotline

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**1-800-4-A-Child**

**1-800-422-4453**



### Pinwheels for Prevention

If you are interested in encouraging your parish to hold a Pinwheels for Prevention event, The Healing Voices Magazine has prepared a Do-It-Yourself Kit which is available for free here. Or, email us at (contact link).

We encourage parishes to work with their diocesan Office of Child Protection and offer a Mass or prayer service together. The Healing Voices Kit, above, has plenty of good information how to do so.

Events can offer presentations on the status of child protection programs in the United States Church, as well as activities for teens and kids; e.g., coloring pages.

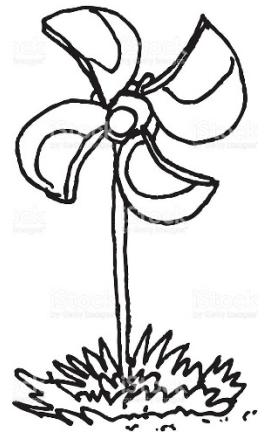
We remind planners to focus prayerful events on uplifting the dignity of children, to let children hear parishes come together to pray for their well-being. This creates a strong sense that adults exist to protect them from contemporary predatory threats without frightening children unduly.

These resources have been successfully used for public outreach expressing our core Catholic beliefs of the dignity of all Children of God.

### Meet the Contributors to this Special Issue

*(in order of publication)*

**Michael D. Hoffman**, co-founder of *The Healing Voices Magazine*, is a devoted husband and father to two teen-aged children. Mike is the President of the Board of Directors of Prevent Child Abuse – Illinois, and has published a book entitled, *Acts of Recovery – The Story of One Man's On-Going Healing from Sexual Abuse by a Priest*. Executive with the orthopedic company he founded, Mike volunteers at his local parish, St. Mary of the Woods on the Liturgy Committee and as lector and is the past President of the school's Athletic Board. Mike has served for eight years as Chair for the Hope and Healing Committee of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He speaks publicly and regularly publishes in *The Healing Voices Magazine* and with *Spirit Fire*, on



whose board he serves. Mike is a member of the Survivor Advisory Panel to the Pontifical Commission.

**Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti**, PhD, DMin, is a priest of the Diocese of Syracuse and a licensed psychologist. He holds a PhD in counseling psychology from Boston College and a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Catholic University of America. He is a research associate professor at CUA and has been a Visiting Professor at the Gregorian University in Rome. He is a former consultant to the USCCB Committee for the Protection of Child and Young People and assisted in developing the “Dallas Charter.” Currently he teaches at CUA, serves as a consultant for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, and is the author of many books and articles on wellness, formation, and child protection—in particular the bestselling *The Joy of the Priesthood*. He also serves on the Survivor Advisory Panel to the Pontifical Commission.

**Jennifer Samartano** is a Prevention Specialist for Prevent Child Abuse Illinois. Her duties include collaborating, advocating and promoting the prevention of child abuse in the Northern Region of Illinois. She is also the Program Manager for the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Initiative for PCA Illinois. She is a Certified Facilitator and Certified Instructor for the Darkness to Light’s, “Stewards of Children” child sexual abuse prevention program. She also serves on the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services Northern Region Child Death Review Team. Prior work experience includes being employed by the DuPage County State’s Attorney’s Office at the Child Advocacy Center. Working as a Child and Family Advocate, Jennifer worked with children traumatized by child sexual abuse. Jennifer currently holds a position on the Friend’s Board of the DuPage County Children’s Advocacy Center. Jennifer has a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Loyola University and also a Master’s degree in Nonprofit Management & Leadership from Walden University.

**Teresa M. Kettelkamp** retired with the rank of colonel after 29 years with Illinois State Police, and from her position at the head of the ISP’s Division of Forensic Services: crime labs and crime scene services, to work for the Gavin Group in conducting the first annual compliance audits of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. From 2005 to 2011, she served as Executive Director of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. From 2016 to 2017, Teresa moved to Rome to work for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors with a focus on developing universal guidelines for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, as well for pastoral care for survivors. In 2018 Pope Francis appointed her a full member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. She has worked with Spirit Fire to develop a virtual Survivor Advisory Panel currently being expanded to additional countries.

**Paul Ashton**, PsyD, DMin, serves as a Liaison for Victim Assistance and Director of Ministerial Conduct and Education for the *Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova* and as a consultant for the *Virtus™* programs.

**Kathy O’Connell** is a wife, mother, and grandmother who serves in her parish Ministry of Care. A Catholic survivor of clergy abuse, Kathy is also a co-founder of *The Healing Voices Magazine*, a regular contributor and our most reprinted author.

**Teresa Pitt Green** is co-founder and editor of *The Healing Voices Magazine*. The book she co-authored with Rev. Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, Provincial, entitled *Veronica’s Veil: Spiritual Companionship for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse – A Christ-centered Guide* is used by priests, survivors, and others as a guide for integrating faith with recovery from abuse or trauma. Teresa has co-founded Spirit Fire with Luis A. Torres, Jr., as a survivor-led Christian restorative justice program to collaborate with bishops advancing healing and reconciliation for survivors, families, priests and the



whole Church. With Luis, Teresa offered her survivor testimony at the USCCB General Assembly in Baltimore, November 2018. She now serves on the Survivor Advisory Panel for the Pontifical Commission and as lead for the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force. For over a decade, Teresa has offered workshops and events for priests, survivors, families and diocesan

groups seeking ways to promote healing in the lives of individuals, families and the Church. She is a prolific writer, speaker, as well as survivor advocate.

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<http://legalhistorysources.com/Canon%20Law/ElviraCanons.htm>, (accessed 2/9/19).

