



CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious
and
Civil Rights*

November 15, 2013

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Chief Tom Smith
St. Paul Police Department
367 Grove St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Police Chief Smith:

Two days ago, I sent you an email regarding any investigations that your department has launched involving the sexual abuse of minors, not including the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. I also asked if there had been any public pleas asking alleged victims of clergymen to come forward, other than the extraordinary plea recently made by Commander Mary Nash involving a Catholic priest. You did not respond to my inquiry, so I am taking this issue to the public.

It is hardly a secret that there are adversaries of the Catholic Church, including those seeking to undermine the good work of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Though I am not counting the St. Paul police among them, I was nonetheless outraged to learn that Commander Nash singled out the Archdiocese for public opprobrium; it smacked of "religious profiling." Today I am writing to you because of the news that the St. Paul Police Department has reopened a decade-old case involving a local priest who allegedly had child pornography on his computer. Your department previously conducted a seven-month investigation into this matter, and found nothing.

The decision to reopen this case may be entirely ethical, but there are two problems attendant to it. According to MPR News, your department is "putting out a general call to the public asking for any victims of clergy sexual abuse to contact investigators." This comes on the heels of the decision to reopen the case involving Father Jonathan Shelley and the Archdiocese. Reportedly, Commander Nash is the one casting the net wide, and, as usual, she refuses to explain her conduct.

Is this common practice? Does the St. Paul police issue public pleas asking alleged victims to come forward if the accused *is not a Catholic priest*? This is a serious matter, both legally and ethically.

The second issue is the selective interest your department shows in reopening "cold cases." The crimes listed below indicate that there are very serious cases that your department has not been able to solve; the list is not exhaustive.

- Jaques Dortch: shot and killed while sitting in a car in St. Paul on October 25, 2008
- Eric Woulard: murdered while picking up a friend in St. Paul on June 15, 2007
- Earl Lorenzo Farley: killed in a hit-and-run in St. Paul on October 7, 1999
- Susan Rheineck: found strangled in a St. Paul park on May 17, 1985
- Susan Petersen: found strangled in a St. Paul park on May 17, 1983

Two years ago, the St. Paul police announced that it had to shut down its "cold-case" unit because of inadequate funding. This may explain why St. Paul murder cases go unresolved. But it does not explain—indeed it raises serious questions about—the decision to reopen the case involving Father Shelley. I hasten to add that his alleged offense does not involve murder.

I would appreciate hearing from you about this issue. The public has a right to know, not just Catholics.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President