

The Holy Spirit Group

Summer 2002

Several times a week a new article would appear in the Courier-Journal identifying victims of sexual abuse by primarily Fr. Louis E. Miller while he was an associate pastor at The Church of the Holy Spirit near St. Matthews in the late 1950s.

The stories were detailed and repetitive and very sensational to us, seeing the names of classmates, friends and acquaintances. Many of the children's parents started Holy Spirit in 1937. The stories revealed what we knew and hid for approximately 45 years. Many of us knew what Fr. Miller did to us was wrong, we couldn't grasp how wrong it was ... he was a priest, need I say more.

Some of our wives regularly went out to dinner and one night the conversation was, What are the guys going to do? After being confronted by the question, John Eifler and I began to talk about IT and assembled a group of about 20 friends/classmates to kick around the unspeakable. First at John's home and later at my office. Soon the group grew to about 30 even after several dropped out not wanting to be exposed in public. We provided support, understanding and information of what happened to us. Lawsuits and criminal charges were filed with the primary goal of getting Fr. Miller out of the reach of children.

Meetings were later moved to Holy Spirit where even with a rude and unwelcoming acknowledgement by Pastor Thomas A. Smith we were only charged a fee 1 time to meet there after compiling with all their rules and regulations. Did I mention that our parents started Holy Spirit in 1937?

After 6 months of urging, the Archdiocese of Louisville, did provide a healing service at Holy Spirit in May of 2004.

Fr. Miller was later arrested, convicted and eventually died in prison.

Service seeks healing for abuse victims



Archbishop Thomas Kelly sprinkled holy water on worshippers and doorways at the service.



PHOTOS BY DAVID R. LUTMAN, SPECIAL TO THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Cindy Starr, left, consoled Charlie Kremer, a sexual-abuse victim, during yesterday's Service of Healing for Survivors of Abuse at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. More than 200 people, including at least 30 priests, attended.

Survivors, clergy, others affected by scandal gather

By **PETER SMITH**
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The Courier-Journal

Bernard Queenan stood holding an altar candle yesterday at the back of Holy Spirit Catholic Church — near the doorway where a priest had molested him more than 40 years ago — and marched solemnly to the front with two other victims of sexual abuse.

Following them was Archbishop Thomas Kelly, who then knelt silently for several moments in front of the altar. The gestures began a service for the

dozens of victims of sexual abuse at this parish and the many others affected by the scandal throughout the Archdiocese of Louisville.

The Service of Healing for Survivors of Abuse was organized jointly by the archdiocese and by a support group of those who were abused at Holy Spirit Church in the 1950s and 1960s by the Rev. Louis E. Miller, who is now in prison.

"This is what this service is about — healing young, good people, robbed of their faith by a man of the cloth, a prolific abuser, a man who was to be respect-

ed, loved and most of all a man of trust," said Jim Cecil, one of the victims, in a statement that drew applause.

Soon the gathering of more than 200 people, including at least 30 priests in clerical garb, sang a hymn written two years ago, at the start of the abuse crisis, that would have been unthinkable in the days when victimized children were taught to revere priests as next to God:

"When our leaders fail, when the dark prevails, be the path that will

Church of the Holy Spirit
3345 LEXINGTON ROAD
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40206
TELEPHONE 502-893-3982 FAX 502-893-8287

Frank Diebold
1724 Spring Drive
Louisville, KY 40205

13 March 2003

Dear Mr. Diebold,

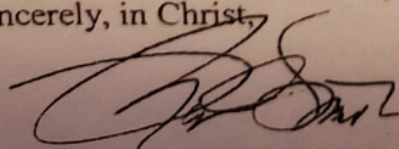
I have been given your correspondence of 12 March 2003, in which you identify yourself as a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a former associate pastor at Holy Spirit Church. In your letter you state that you are a member of an evolving support group for such victims, that your nascent group would like to meet on Holy Spirit Church property for your next meeting, 31 March at 7:00PM.

I am not opposed to the use of our facilities for such small gatherings, on a trial basis, as long as requests for facility usage comply with current parish policy. Since the group you speak of is not a parish sponsored organization, the current parish policy regarding facilities usage applies. That policy states, in the main, that use of our facilities is available to active parishioners of Holy Spirit Church (within prescribed limits) who complete the parish Facilities Rental Agreement. A copy of the current Guidelines and Agreement is enclosed. By this document, parishioners who have permission to use our facilities take responsibility for the actions and conduct of those present at the gathering. The parishioner signing the Agreement must be present for the entirety of the meeting and work in conjunction with the Parish Activities Coordinator, Mrs. Margie Guetig (#895-5623). As pastor, I will forgo the fees involved for facilities usage for this particular meeting. Future usage of our facilities will be considered on an individual request basis.

Please have your registered parishioner representative complete and sign the enclosed Agreement and bring it to the Parish Ministry Center to coordinate availability of meeting space and meeting time.

For further clarification, please contact me at the Ministry Center (#893-3982).

Sincerely, in Christ,



Rev. Thomas A. Smith
Pastor

Service seeks to promote healing for victims of clergy sexual abuse

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guide our way. When our anger burns may we strive to learn, to reveal the light of day. ...

"When the weakest ones have no place to run from the terror that haunts their days. Who will give them peace, make their nightmares cease? Who will drive their dark away?"

Kelly walked through the sanctuary and sprinkled holy water on the worshippers and on doorways to the sacristy and school where Miller accosted his young victims.

"THE SPRINKLING of water seems so ineffective," Kelly said. "I could have got down on my hands and knees and scrubbed and scrubbed, but the memory, the stain of what happened here, would never be washed away. It takes instead the power of Christ."

Dressed in a white robe and a purple bishop's cap, Kelly told the victims: "As bishop and a very imperfect man among you, I pray with you today, and I ask for your forgiveness."

He said they were "wronged first by the abuse itself, and then by a church that did not take responsibility for what had occurred."

"This was a failure in moral leadership, and I apologize and ask your forgiveness for the times that I or other church leaders added to your pain through our actions, or because of our disregard."

The Archdiocese of Louisville was one of the hardest-hit dioceses since the national scandal over childhood sexual abuse erupted two years ago.

More than 90 people alone reported having been abused by Miller, who last year began serving a 30-year prison sentence for abusing children at Holy Spirit, which is on Lexington Road, and elsewhere.

LAST YEAR, the archdiocese reached a \$25.7 million settlement with 243 victims of more than three dozen priests and others associated with the church over the past half-century. The archdiocese also cut one-fourth of its budget and one-fifth of its staff.

Cecil, in his remarks, talked about the impact of the crisis on the church. "We must support the many charities of the Catholic Church," he said. "These are good things." He also applauded the archdiocese's new "safe environment" program that trains its thousands of employees in preventing and detecting child abuse. And he also called for a greater role for lay people in the church, saying it is "essential to bring the word 'trust' back to this faith."

Kelly based his talk on the biblical story of Jesus raising a dead man, Lazarus, to life. He noted that the story describes many people, including Jesus himself, as moved to tears.

"Messages of pain and doubt are



BY DAVID R. LUTMAN, SPECIAL TO THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Jeff Koenig, left, and John Scott held signs outside the church accusing the archdiocese of not handling the sexual-abuse issue properly.

similar event for all of us who are gathered here. Many in this church have experienced the same sense of pain and loss as a consequence of childhood sexual abuse. Whether we are survivors, family members, friends or fellow parishioners, each of us has had to face harsh truths, particularly in the past two years."

Kelly's talk was interrupted by Gerald Ruhs, who brought a variety of accusations against Kelly and the archdiocese that were not related to sexual abuse. As he has done before, he accused the archdiocese of tax fraud for funding Catholic school education through tax-deductible donations rather than tuition. Kelly said the service was not the time to talk about it.

Also, two victims of sexual abuse stood outside the church, holding signs that said the archdiocese was still not handling the sexual-abuse issue openly. They said Kelly should, for example, support the release of a recent deposition he gave in a pending lawsuit.

"We're not going to go away," said one of the protesters, John Scott.

Kelly said afterward that it is the judge who is keeping the deposition sealed.

SEVERAL OTHER victims said they were glad they had attended the service.

Shannon Age, a victim of the late Rev. Kevin Cole, called the service a "starting point, something that needed to be done."

Queenan, who has long been an active member of Holy Spirit, said he participated with mixed feelings; carrying the candle reminded him of his days as an altar boy at the church, he said.

dal but is working toward reconciliation with his faith.

He said that his goal in joining the lawsuits against the church was not to hurt the archdiocese but "to force the whole thing open, to make people face up to it (the abuse crisis) and deal with it."

The Rev. Paul Scaglione, who helped organize the service, said that although Kelly has met privately with individual victims, it was important for him to preside publicly "in his role as leader of the church."

"IT IS THE beginning of a very long process of healing that's going to go beyond his time in office," said Scaglione, who serves on the archdiocese's board that reviews cases of sexual abuse.

Kelly added that the attendance of so many priests "made a great deal of difference."

Cal Pfeiffer, a victim of Miller and one of the service's organizers, said he appreciated Kelly's participation in the service but was disappointed the archbishop didn't speak more specifically about his and other church leaders' roles in the crisis. "I really didn't learn anything I never knew," Pfeiffer said.

Kelly did allude to a report published earlier this year by a national group of lay people who are monitoring the Catholic Church's response to the crisis. The report accused bishops of protecting abusers, treating victims with hostility, and failing to train and screen priests properly.

But Pfeiffer said he was looking for more of a public accounting of Kelly's specific role. Although most of the



Service of Healing for Survivors of Abuse: A Gathering for the Healing of the Body of Christ

Over the past several months, Archbishop Kelly and other representatives of the Archdiocese have been meeting with victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse. With the leadership of the survivors' group at Holy Spirit Parish, a prayer experience has been developed. Through this prayer service, we will call upon God to guide our efforts to heal and reconcile our Catholic community.

Survivors of abuse, family members, friends, and parishioners from throughout the Archdiocese are invited to attend this special event.

This service of healing will be held on:

Sunday, May 23, 2004

2:30 p.m.

**Holy Spirit Parish
3345 Lexington Road**

For more information, please call Father Paul Scaglione, Office of Pastoral Care or Ms. Judy Bullock, Office of Worship, 502/636-0296.