

Help Us Protect Children From Sexual Abuse. St. Therese was Home to Three Alleged Molesters. Two Children from this Parish were Allegedly Molested By Fr. William Kraft.

Who are we?

We are clergy sex abuse victims and supporters working to protect kids in the church.

Why are we here?

An alleged child molester, Msgr. William Kraft, lived and worked here at St. Therese. There are more than twelve lawsuits in the San Diego courts that claim that Fr. Kraft was a horrific child molester – two of those cases involve children right here at this parish.

We hope that if there are victims here suffering in shame and silence, they'll know that they are not alone and we can help them get help and healing.

What do we want?

We want to prevent abuse and help victims heal through informing parishioners of accused and admitted molesters to whom they may have been exposed.

We also want Bishop Robert Brom to release all files pertaining to alleged sexual abuse in the Diocese of San Diego, to cooperate with civil authorities, and to obey child protection laws. We want the church to be a safe place for all children.

What should you do?

If you or someone you know is a victim of clergy abuse, please know that you are not alone and that help is available.

San Diego Police Department (619) 531-2000

San Diego Sheriff's Department (858) 974-2222

SNAP www.snapnetwork.org or (626) 835-9066

We have a safe and confidential support group for men and women victimized by religious leaders

What can you do to protect kids?

- Urge your pastor to post these leaflets in your parish. Support all victims of sexual abuse.
- Call Bishop Robert Brom (858) 490-8200 and demand that he turn over ALL personnel files and sealed settlement records of alleged molesters to prosecutors and civil authorities, post the names of known and admitted molesters on the Diocese web site, and drop his objection to the child protection law that allows victims to seek justice in the court system.
- Talk with your children about "Safe Touch" TODAY!

- Report any known or suspected abuse to the police and law enforcement.

New lawsuits filed alleging sexual misconduct, abuse

By Greg Moran

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

June 8, 2003

The pace of legal action against the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego and current and former priests accused of molesting children years ago has picked up with a half-dozen more lawsuits filed in Superior Court.

On Tuesday, two more suits alleging abuse by deceased cleric Monsignor William Kraft were filed in San Diego County. One was by a woman who alleged that when she was a teenager and lying in Mercy Hospital, Kraft molested her while administering the sacrament of the last rites of the church.

The second was by a man who said Kraft abused him hundreds of times from 1970 to 1974 and gave him gifts – including cash and a motorcycle – to keep quiet.

The suits are in addition to at least 11 that have been filed over the past months in San Diego and San Bernardino County superior courts. Each alleges sexual misconduct and abuse by eight priests at parishes in San Diego County.

While the lawsuits were filed here, under a ruling made two weeks ago, they likely will have to be combined with suits from Los Angeles and Orange counties and handled by one judge in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Lawyers for other victims suing in Los Angeles and Orange counties criticized the timing of the suits, saying it broke an agreement among many attorneys representing plaintiffs in those areas to hold off filing suits while the parties tried to hammer out a settlement in mediation.

However, an attorney who filed the suits last week said mediation efforts can still move forward but the suits had to be filed to prod church officials who have not been divulging much information.

"We're just not getting any information from the church," said Orange County attorney Venus Soltan. "We can't sit on our hands and wait." Under a state law, victims have one year to file lawsuits, and that time is halfway expired.

"We have the perception the church wants to keep this all low-key and quiet," Soltan said.

Rodrigo Valdivia, chancellor for the Diocese of San Diego, said the church is not stalling and is willing to resolve claims before heading to court.

"We remain open to resolving these through mediation," he said. "And we still invite victims and their representatives to approach us to that end."

Kraft died in 1982. He was a priest at St. Therese in Del Cerro. The lawsuit from the woman, identified as Marilyn G. in court papers, said in 1961 she was hospitalized with rheumatic fever.

One night doctors told her parents she could die, so her parents asked Kraft to perform the sacrament of Extreme Unction – the last rites of the church.

The suit says he groped, rubbed and pinched her as she lay in her hospital bed. When she protested, he abruptly left, according to the suit.

In the second suit, a man identified as David B., who is now in his 40s, said he was a student and a parishioner at St. Therese. He alleged that Kraft molested him beginning in 1970 when he was 15 years old and continued until 1974, "with the total of individual instances of abuse exceeding 100."

Earlier this month a man filed a suit alleging he was molested by the Rev. Paul Gill in 1975 while Gill worked at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Lakeside. The man was 16 at the time. This is the second local lawsuit against Gill, who is now retired and living in Riverside County.

In the new lawsuit, the man said that one night when he was staying at the rectory, Gill, clad only in his underwear, had him give him

a back rub. He said he stopped when he became more uncomfortable with the contact, and that after that night he was shunned by Gill, who was a very popular priest at the parish.

"After that I was shut off," he said. "I'm hearing that I'm the bad kid of this parish. I didn't know what to do. I turned 17. I didn't have my church support anymore."