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'Clergy sex abuse not just an American problem'

by NCR Staff



Joelle Casteix, Southwest regional director of the U.S.-based Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, attaches pictures to a wall before of a news conference in Rome June 8. (CNS/Reuters)

About 300 survivors of sexual abuse and their supporters met this weekend in Chicago for a national conference sponsored by the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP). NCR contributor Heidi Schlumpf was at the conference and filed a series of stories to the NCR Today blog.

SNAP leaders said that the revelations this past year in Ireland, Germany and Belgium prove that the sex-abuse crisis is not merely "an American problem" caused by a few bad apples, the morally lax 1960s or anti-Catholicism in the media.

During an opening night talk SNAP founder Barbara Blaine noted that the SNAP office has received calls from victims in Brazil, South Africa, Australia and even Pakistan in the past weeks. "This is not a U.S. or a European crisis," said Blaine

"For 22 years we have focused on 4 percent of the world," said SNAP executive director David Clohessy, referring to U.S. population. "Now we're focusing on abuse and cover up worldwide."

Schlumpf will have a comprehensive account of the conference in the next print issue of *National Catholic Reporter*. Following are the reports she filed during the conference:

- A real-life Jack McCoy
- Penny for your thoughts
- Three myths about sex abuse
- "Truth itself was the victim"
- Sex abuse survivors meeting in Chicago

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