

Good guys wear black

Heidi Schlumpf | Aug. 12, 2011 NCR Today

This summer I've read articles about a [priest accused of secretly helping a convicted mob killer](#) [1], of embezzling money from their parishes and, of course, of abusing children or covering up abuse.

I was about to cancel my 'Catholic' Google Alert when I happily found this [article in the *New York Times*](#) [2] about the reform group Call to Action. Quoted right at the top is my former pastor, Father Bill Kenneally, boldly declaring that he was among 150 priests to sign a petition protesting the removal of Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois for his support of women's ordination.

According to the article:

Father Kenneally, the 75-year-old retired pastor of St. Gertrude's Church and volunteer at St. Barnabas Church, said he "and a majority of priests, truthfully" do not agree with the church's "vapid reasoning" for excluding women. Father Kenneally said he is unfazed by possible reprisals. "Since I'm retired," he said, "it's not like they can take a church away from me."

The truth is that Father Bill has always been fearlessly honest, including with the media—even before he was retired. While he respects the institution of the church and has given his life in service to it, he loves it enough to speak up when he thinks the church is falling short of its ideals.

He has personally inspired me so many times that I have written him thank you notes about it. But he is a humble guy, and shuns any recognition or praise. So I'll just say this here publicly—to Father Bill and all those other priests who have taken risks to follow their conscience:

I was never a Catholic who put all priests on a pedestal, but I do have a healthy bit of admiration for many of them. Your everyday work of preaching, celebrating the Eucharist and sharing your own spiritual journey regularly inspires me, but when I see you taking a public stand against injustice—especially in our own church—I am doubly awed. This shouldn't be a rare occurrence, but in today's church, it has become so. Still, your bravery calls me to follow the courage of my own convictions, and to do that in a way that is not caustic, but loving.

Thank you.

Source URL (retrieved on 02/05/2016 - 16:44): <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/good-guys-wear-black>

Links:

[1] <http://www.suntimes.com/news/crime/5873020-418/priest-charged-with-running-mob-killers-treasure-hunt-for-violin.html>

[2] <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/31/us/31cnccatholics.html?pagewanted=all>