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Conservative commentator: Bishops still don't understand sex abuse

Joshua J. McElwee | Feb. 8, 2013 NCR Today

"Ten years into the greatest crisis the Church has faced since the Reformation, most American bishops still haven?t begun to grasp the problem" of clergy sex abuse.

Not the words of a clergy sex abuse victim or advocate, but those of Phil Lawler, the editor and director of the not exactly progressive Catholic World News.

Writing in a column Wednesday about the Newark, N.J., archdiocese's decision to employ a priest who confessed to groping a teenage boy, Lawler states that if Newark Archbishop John Myers' phone isn't "ringing off the hook" with complaints from fellow bishops, the American episcopate must not understand the scope of the sex abuse crisis.

"There is no third option," Lawler writes [1]. "And as I look at those two possibilities, I shudder to think which is more likely. God help us."

Lawler refers to Myers' decision to appoint [2] Fr. Michael Fugee as the archdiocese's co-director of the Office of Continuing Education and Ongoing Formation of Priests.

Fugee is barred from unsupervised contact with children under an agreement with local prosecutors because of a 2001 confession that he intentionally groped a 14-year-old boy while wrestling with him.

Jim Goodness, archdiocesan spokesman, told Catholic News Service [3]Feb. 5 that in the position Fugee primarily seeks out and forwards information on seminars, courses and books that might help clergy in their ministerial work.

"It's important to note we're not looking at a high, prestigious position," Goodness told CNS.

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[1] http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/otn.cfm?id=961
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