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Keep Cardinal Mahony out of the conclave

Kristine Ward | Feb. 12, 2013 Examining the Crisis
Benedict Resigns

Pope Benedict made a sensible decision. It is evidence the papacy and the church can change.

Let's hope it is a signal of strength for the next pope to take the steps that the church needs.

The church is in bad shape and needs the tremendous power of the papacy to be used courageously and forcefully for good -- starting with the sexual abuse crisis, the largest crisis the church has faced in 500 years.

Pope Benedict, by being in the unique position of being alive and with his considerable political skills that were in evidence before and during the last conclave, will have influence over the coming conclave and, it can be reasonably expected, into the next papacy.

Pope Benedict should bar Cardinal Roger Mahony from entering the conclave. The Los Angeles documents are evidence enough that this high honor of voting for the next pope should be withdrawn from him. There should be an empty chair to mark Mahony's spot.

Pope Benedict took a few tiny window-dressing steps toward resolving the crisis. With the exception of action against the Legionaries of Christ founder, Pope Benedict's provided words only, and weak ones at that.

What's needed now is true righteousness and courage to match the nobility of action that the survivors have brought forth from lives crucified by rape and sodomy by priests and nuns.

The next pope should end corruption in the church starting with a papal balcony announcement of the removal of criminally convicted Bishop Robert Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo.

[Kristine Ward is chair of the National Survivor Advocates Coalition.]

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