NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Abuse survivors group responds to Vatican sex abuse commission

Dennis Coday | Dec. 5, 2013 NCR Today

The National Survivor Advocates Coalition, which advocates for victims of sexual abuse in the Catholic church, issued the following statement concerning today's announcement from the Vatican that Pope Francis will set up a special commission on the sexual abuse of children to advise him on ways to prevent abuse and provide pastoral care for victims and their families.

National Survivor Advocates Coalition Statement
on Vatican Commission Regarding Sexual Abuse

12/5/13

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Kristine Ward, Chair,
National Survivor Advocates Coalition

In today?s world, headlines can masquerade as substance.

Because of the general goodwill Pope Francis has created for the Vatican worldwide, NSAC raises an alarm bell today that the headlines about a sexual abuse commission not be welcomed without examination.

NSAC asks how independent will the Vatican?s commission on sexual abuse be?

If the proof?s in the pudding and the pudding is not made by a truly balanced commission designed to go where the truth is, find it, expose it and deal with it, the result will only be a soggy, tart, and unsatisfying whitewash. More?s the pity, the sin and the crime if that is the outcome.

A bedrock question here is: who will be on the commission, how balanced will the representation be, what?s the timetable, and what?s the endgame: report or action?

By balanced, NSAC means real representation from those who know this problem: the survivors themselves, critics of the why the crisis has been covered up and handled with public relations, the whistleblowers, professionals in law enforcement, psychology, sociology, mental health and finance ? for indeed the survivors regardless of how the Church has portrayed it have been on the short end of the financial stick given the depth and breath of this lifelong problem for survivors and their families.

Even then, the outcome can still be a whitewash if there is no dedicated attempt to deal with those

who covered up crimes, namely bishops, the Vatican, its staff and staffs in chanceries.

As a gesture of good faith, any day or the week, any season of the year, any year, Pope Francis can relieve convicted Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City ?St. Joseph, Missouri of his duties.

Why announce a commission without details, membership, timetable if getting out the news that yet another public relations attempt isn?t the crux of the activity?

Headline puffery or solid rock honest to God reform through responsibility? It?s up to the Vatican.

[NSAC is an all volunteer organization of in the pew Catholics and men and women of goodwill working to educate the public regarding sexual abuse, supporting survivors and advocating for changes in law and society to alleviate sexual abuse and its consequences.]

Source URL (retrieved on *08/27/2015 - 17:42*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/abuse-survivors-group-responds-vatican-sex-abuse-commission