



Survivors Network of those Abused By Priests  
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[www.snapnetwork.org](http://www.snapnetwork.org)

February 23, 2009

Jane Burke, SSND  
Executive Director  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
8808 Cameron Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4169

Dear Sister Burke,

In April, 2002, Pope John Paul II said "There is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young."

We again ask to speak at the 2009 LCWR Assembly being held this summer in New Orleans. As you know this is our sixth year requesting to speak to the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. It is our hope that by allowing us to present to the full LCWR Assembly, we will be able to reach out to survivors of sexual abuse by women religious, educate members of the LCWR about the affects of sexual abuse, and prevent any further abuse.

The LCWR states that "Working for a more just and peaceful world is an integral component of LCWR's vision and goals." We fail to see how the LCWR can ignore those who suffered indignantly at your members hands and not heed the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "It is your God given responsibility as pastors to bind up the wounds caused by every breach of trust, to foster healing, to promote reconciliation and to reach out with loving concern to those so seriously wronged."

The LCWR has taken a public stance on torture, the Iraq War, Nuclear Weapons, Iraqi Refugees, Iran, Immigration Policy Reform and even Wetlands and Hurricane Katrina. But the LCWR has not reached out to those who were sexually abused by women religious.

For the safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, we again call on the LCRW to become a leader in promoting healing for survivors and families devastated by sexual abuse perpetrated by women religious. We respectfully ask that you allow survivors time to speak at this year's LCWR Assembly. Open and honest dialogue will allow healing for victims, religious communities, and the entire Catholic Church.

*...it is important to establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure the principles of justice are fully respected and, above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes."*

*Pope Benedict XVI*

*October 28, 2006*

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Theisen  
Iowa SNAP Director  
123 Celeste Street  
Hudson, IA 50643