

August 11, 2007 - SNAP Calls for Diocese to Release Clergy Abuser Names
Savannah, GA, WTOC, Reported by: Liz Flynn,

A group representing people abused by priests is calling for the Catholic Diocese of Savannah to publicly release the names of abusive priests. This afternoon, SNAP, the Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests, took their message to the steps of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. They're starting a local self-help group for anyone molested by clergy members from any denomination.

Mark Wells spent the afternoon carrying a sign for his best friend. He said his friend was abused by Wayland Brown, a former Savannah priest. Brown was arrested in June 2002. He was serving time for abusing a 12 year old boy almost 30 years ago in Maryland. The victim said the abuse happened between 1973 and 1975 during a summer trip to Savannah.

"It ruined his life," said Wells, wiping away tears. "Now he's getting his life back. For someone to have that kind of power and authority over a child and to take advantage of a child that way is -- it's got to be stopped."

"Our goal is to help survivors, but also equally importantly, protect children," said Ann Brentwood, the southeast regional director for SNAP.

Brentwood said people need to know who the abusers are, where they are and what their status is.

"What happens is, because of the statute of limitations, they don't go on any registry," she said. "They're never prosecuted for the most part. Wayland Brown is an exception."

A spokeswoman for the Diocese of Savannah told WTOC they have complied with the openness and transparency provisions of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People that was adopted by the U.S. Bishops in Dallas, Texas in 2002. To learn more, go the www.diosav.org or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/>

For more information about SNAP, see www.snapnetwork.org.
