

April 19,2007 - Bishop Matano is asleep on the job  
Richmond, VT, Times Argus, Jim Cruise

Another year has passed and still the Diocese of Burlington has not achieved compliance with the U.S. Bishops' 2002 "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." After last year's failed audit, Bishop Matano suggested that the diocese would achieve compliance within a few short weeks.

How many lay people would still have their jobs if they promised a project would be finished within a few short weeks, but a year later they were still waving their arms and offering excuses?

This sexual abuse crisis in the church is not over. The vast majority of priests are obviously good men with no inclination toward the sexual abuse of children; however, common sense should tell us that the church has not found all of the molesters in the priesthood. It generally takes decades for survivors of sexual abuse to come to terms with what happened to them in childhood, and priests who have sexually abused children are not going to turn themselves in voluntarily just because a bishop asks them to.

Safe environment training is a simple step the church can take to help protect our children. One hundred-ninety-three other bishops were able to implement it, but not Bishop Matano. What will his excuses be next year?

Lost in this reporting is the pain caused to survivors of priest sexual abuse and their families by the continuing casual attitude of Bishop Matano and his employees toward the bishops' charter. After so many years, so much hurt, and so much bungling, the Diocese of Burlington still doesn't get it.

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