

5-6-08 - Victims Group Protests Lack of Notice About Priest  
By Michelle Boorstein, Washington Post, Arlington, VA

A small group of clergy sexual abuse survivors met outside the Catholic Diocese of Arlington yesterday to push church officials for more information about a Connecticut priest thought to be living in Northern Virginia.

Representatives of the regional offices of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) say they are upset that diocesan officials didn't tell the public when they learned in March that the Rev. Stephen Foley, 66, was living in Chantilly.

The Archdiocese of Hartford has made payments to 12 men who said they were victims of Foley's, including a single \$599,000 settlement in March. A former state police chaplain, Foley drove a Ford Crown Victoria -- a common police vehicle -- until last year, when the Hartford archbishop reportedly ordered him to sell it. Alleged victims said he used the car to lure children.

Foley was never criminally charged and has denied the accusations.

According to Arlington diocesan spokeswoman Joelle Santolla, officials told priests in Chantilly area parishes, police and the diocese's child safety office in March that Foley was thought to be living in the area. It was up to the priests to decide whether to share that information, she said.

But Becky Ianni, a Burke woman who was sexually abused by a priest as a child and is the leader of the Northern Virginia SNAP chapter, said parishioners should have been told. "This is the history of the church; they keep it among themselves," she said.

In a letter delivered to the Arlington diocese yesterday, SNAP said Bishop Paul S. Loverde "has a moral duty to warn unsuspecting families and neighbors,

Catholic and non-Catholic, about Foley's presence here."

Santolla said news reports led diocesan officials to think Foley had moved from Chantilly, but they weren't sure whether he was still in Virginia. The diocese asked Hartford for his current address but hadn't heard back, Santolla said.

However, Foley's attorney Walter Hampton, reached last night, said his longtime client is "likely" living in Northern Virginia and working outside of ministry.

"He was looking to live a low-key, under-the-radar life."