

# The Faithful of St. Brendan Parish

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Good Shepherd Sunday  
April 13, 2008

His Eminence Sean P. O'Malley, OFM Cap.  
Archbishop of Boston  
2121 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

Your Eminence,

May the joy of the Risen Lord be with you! Surrexit sicut dixit!

We, the faithful members and parents of St. Brendan Parish in Bellingham, after having met recently twice on this matter, wish to address our concerns to you, our shepherd, regarding the "safe environment" programs that the Archdiocese has imposed on other parishes and is attempting to impose on ours. We are convinced that these programs endanger the innocence of our children and are contrary to the Natural Law, the principle of subsidiarity, and the guidelines given by the Sacred Congregation on Education (*Educational Guidance in Human Love, 1983*) and the Pontifical Council on the Family (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 1996*). Specifically, these programs target children in the primary grades and seek to impart sexual information that we don't want them to have since it is damaging to them while they are in their "latency period."

God, in His divine wisdom, gave our children to us, so that we could be their loving parents and guide their formation as children of God; as such, we firmly believe that chancery officials should not arrogate this prerogative to themselves or to others. Our children are safe when we instruct them and when we put them under the guidance of priests who love the Faith and respect the God-given innocence of the little ones in the parish. They are not safe under the tutelage of godless programs, such as the "safe environment" programs emanating from the Office of Child Advocacy. We are thankful for Father Mullen and for his relentless guardianship of our spiritual well being. Please know that even had Father Mullen not been persistent in opposing these programs we, as parents, would have resisted TAT or any other TAT-like programs.

The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) criticized these programs in their report of 2006 entitled "To Prevent and to Protect" (TPP), quoting TTMOHS: "*At this stage of development, children are not fully capable of understanding the value of the affective dimension of sexuality. They cannot understand and control sexual imagery within the proper context of moral principles and cannot integrate premature sexual information with responsibility. Such information tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life.*" (#83) The CMA did not produce its report in a vacuum, but had conferred with various Congregations of the Holy See: "*In January 2006, officers of the Catholic Medical Association visited several Congregations in Rome. They learned that the Pontifical Council for the Family had received from the United States and elsewhere, petitions requesting the Council to speak on the issue of safe-child programs for the prevention of sexual abuse. The Congregations for Bishops, Clergy and the Doctrine of the Faith were also very much aware of the tension surrounding the mandated training of children in sexual abuse prevention. The Congregations and Councils all expressed support and appreciation when informed of the intention of the Catholic Medical Association to form a task force to study more thoroughly the issue.*" (TPP, p.4) The CMA concluded their study with

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this recommendation: *"We conclude, from study of the pertinent research, that child- and adolescent-empowerment prevention programs are not effective and are inconsistent with Church teaching and with the science of child development. These programs disrupt the most delicate and intimate elements of child and adolescent life and interfere with parental rights and responsibilities. Child empowerment programs are, therefore, in clear conflict with the Church's traditional support of the family and recognition of parents as the primary educators and protectors of their children. We therefore recommend that U.S. bishops rescind the safe-environment mandate as it applies to children and adolescents and discontinue all child-empowerment programs for preventing child sexual abuse."* (TPP, p.49)

Hence, your Eminence, we refuse the use of such programs which put the children of your flock in the Archdiocese of Boston at risk. We are also concerned that faithful priests like our pastor, Fr. Mullen, will be punished because they are faithful to the Church, respectful of parents' rights, and are zealous in preserving the innocence of our little ones. Fr. Mullen sent a letter to Bp. Lennon when he was Apostolic Administrator, which was copied to you when you became our ordinary, and he addressed several others to you over the last six years on the problems of archdiocesan "safe environment" programs and not one of them was answered or even acknowledged. Frankly, we are quite distressed that his concerns have gone unheeded. Your priests should be respected as pastors of souls, including the very young ones, and their advice should be sought on such weighty matters as the safety of our children. We remind you that the Archdiocese has a very poor record in this regard, which is why our patrimony has been sold off to pay for court settlements. The "safe environment programs" that are being imposed on the parishes further lessens our confidence that our children; body, soul, emotions, and intellect; are safe in the hands of the Archdiocese.

It saddens us that the Archdiocese would try, as they have, to force parish priests and DREs to conduct programs that they do not think are appropriate or moral. In this effort, rather than being the protector of conscience, the Archdiocese, in the matter of "safe environment" programs, accomplishes the opposite.

In summary, we respectfully request of you three things:

1. That Saint Brendan's be allowed to run the program "God Made me Holy", which handles the issue of children's sexual safety by teaching the parents, who in turn, and at their discretion, will teach their own children, or alternatively, permit the use of the program developed by The Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa, Bishop of Baker, which also complies with Vatican directives of addressing such issues through the parents instead of CCD teachers;
2. For a delegation from our parish, including Father David Mullen, to meet with you directly, and not with a representative, at a convenient time (evenings or weekends would be preferable) to resolve our concerns over TAT or similar programs. We may be contacted at (508) 966-0260;
3. Your consideration of the total elimination of TAT or similar programs throughout the archdiocese that violate parents' rights, the principle of subsidiarity, Natural Law, the learned and recent study by the US Catholic Medical Association, and clear Vatican directives.

We assure you of our continued prayers as you seek to fulfill the will of God in Boston.

Respectfully yours in Christ

cc: The Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese of Boston  
Deacon Anthony Rizzuto

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Signature page #1

Rose Marie Haley  
Cindy Haley Higgins  
Mary Ann Bloomer  
Wendy A. Kilty  
Madys M. Muffin  
Andrea L. VanBeek  
Carol P. Deeter  
Beth Anne Howard  
Patricia Whalen  
Postulant Amanda Schultz, F.S.M.  
Sr. Agnes Marie Bourgault, F.S.M.  
Postulant Rebecca Bilekian, F.S.M.  
Postulant Anne Nyaga, F.S.M.  
M. O. M.  
Palma Kaneda  
John Bloomer  
Mary Ann Bloomer  
Marylou Corvino  
Jodi Malachuk-Lonsey  
Jeanette M. Funk  
David R. Co  
A. M. S.

William Vitar, RN  
Ronald Loquen  
Carolyn Traxer  
David L. Vire  
Paula J. Richards  
Leontina Barreca  
Patrick Sullivan  
Carla Normandin  
Janet Normandin  
Eric  
William P. Bessomelle  
Kerry Sullivan  
Arthur J. Hauss  
Raymond Steward  
Brian M. Bell  
Rose Scott  
Laurie A. Tachia  
Jane M. Torchia  
Mary Ellen Ziebig  
Patrice Leavitt  
Robert Leavitt  
Anne Matthews

# The Faithful of St. Brendan Parish

Signature page #2

Clifford A. McLaughlin

John O'Rourke

Thomas N. Gentry

Michael K. Tubish  
Jacqueline Tubideau

Thomas Doyle

Shirley Gray

Phil Walsh

Joy N. Montecano

Regina M. Armstrong

Gerard J. Armstrong

Christine M. Girvan

M. A. Mc

K. C. Mc

Patricia D. Follett

John A. Collette

Stephanie Kales

Harold Lynde

Brendan O'Leary

Andrew O'Leary

Mark S. Trettel

Mary S. Kuzar

Benjamin Kuzar

Shirley Doyle

Teresa ~~Smith~~

David Trettel

~~Smith~~

Linda Ronder

Edna N. Sbordone

Kevin J. Sbordone

Judy G. Regan

Carla C. Cataldo

Beth L. Boronczyk

Anthony A. Boronczyk

John Gayer

Ann L. Fran

Julie D. Frank

Michael and Carolyn Smith

Byron A. Jr

# The Faithful of St. Brendan Parish

Signature page #3

Peter P. Rojewicz  
Barbara Rojewicz  
Margaret Vise  
Margaret Dettel  
Leticia Jurek  
James McNaught  
Dolores MacLaurie  
Judy Prout  
Peter Zyz  
Richard M. Opera Jr.  
Marie C. Opera  
Peter Szym  
James Szym  
Eric Szym  
Michael J. Keagney  
Cheryl Ann Duran  
Catherine Thomas-Lewis

David P. Wright  
Kimberly Wright  
James Anderberg  
John Ryan  
Ernest Adams  
Valerie Kost  
Catherine Hannon  
Paula Labella Belanger  
Leopold R. Belanger  
Kathleen Bouchard  
F. Maura Bener  
D. Nicholas Bener  
Dorothy S. Bee  
Matt McNeill  
Dr. Nicholas Bener  
Jan U. Barresi  
Mary Ann Barresi  
Kathleen B. O  
Mark Hennigan I  
Jaclyn Talbot

# The Faithful of St. Brendan Parish

Signature page #4

Mrs. Mary Linn Lisbon  
Maria Russell  
Cait Russell

Celia P. Shea

Karen Swain

Fred Swan

Maura McKel

Dee Dee Widet

Miss Ann Regan