

Vicar General Charles Lachowitzer,

For nearly 40 years I believed the sexual abuse I endured as a child by Thomas Adamson had no impact on my life. I believed that I was strong enough to bury it and live my life unaffected. I am only now just beginning to see some of the negative effects, such as my inability to trust and truly feel close to people. The abuse has caused strain and damage to my faith, my relationship with my wife, children, parents and siblings, along with the many other people that have entered my life. To this day I feel guilt and a great sense of sadness for every person that has been harmed in this manner, especially those harmed after my abuse, because of my lack of action and feeling of helplessness before this point.

It is painfully apparent that many people have been affected by sexual abuse through the Church either directly or indirectly. I believe that many of these people need help in some way to understand or deal with the trauma. I also believe many of them feel as I did that they are strong enough to handle it on their own, that asking for help would be showing weakness, or that it would be damaging to the Church or even sinful to speak poorly about a man of God. Many unjustly may feel overwhelmed with shame or guilt.

Over the past few years I have marked or written down every passage from the Bible that I have found that I believe warns against hypocrisy and arrogance in the church, also passages condemning harm to children or damage to another person's faith. My intent all along was to place those passages in this letter. After our meeting at Jeff Anderson's office this past Wednesday I have found what I hope to be a more appropriate verse. Matthew 17:20; "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move." There are countless numbers of people that have worked tirelessly for many years and deserve the credit for this outcome, but I feel because of your willingness to meet and work with Jeff Anderson, Mike Finnegan and their staff, the clergy abuse mountain has begun to move in this Archdiocese.

I knew one day there might be an apology to me from a member of clergy, but I believed this would be meaningless. You should know that the sincerity I felt on Wednesday afternoon from yourself, Charlie Rogers, and Tim O'Malley surprised me and gave me great hope for the future. Thank you.

You, your staff and Church have the power to let all survivors know that there is no shame in asking for help. Not only is it okay, but it is recommended and it can be done safely.

We all must do everything we can to protect children. My dream for the future is that child sexual abuse will one day be known only in our history books.

Sincerely,

Doe 1