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STATEMENT OF RITA MILLA

The Pope's resignation is something that has not been seen in centuries and now it is time for something else that would be unusual, a Pope who is a strong opponent of child sexual abusers. The church needs a Pope who will actually care more for his flock than the superficial image of the clergy. We now need a Pope with a sense of compassion and the morals and strength to use his power to protect the Church's children and vulnerable adults. We need a Pope with a heart that can be touched by the suffering of a child and who refuses to allow one more child to be victimized. We need one who is disgusted by the cover up perpetuated by bishops just as the rest of us are disgusted. We need a Pope who will not merely pray for the suffering, but will act to keep it from happening to another innocent soul. I have talked with victims worldwide and heard their pain and how they suffer in secrecy. The new Pope needs to remove the stigma of abuse from the victims and place it on the perpetrators. He needs to speak to the worldwide church and place the blame where it belongs, on the guilty.

As to Cardinal Mahony, he has once again shown his disdain for the victims of abuse by going to Rome to vote for the new Pope. Having such a man who has no regard for what is truly holy take part in this election inspires no confidence in me that any new change shall occur within the church. Cardinal Mahoney knew many of the faithful were opposed to him going and yet he has once again ignored what is right and has forged ahead to do what he wishes.

But since Cardinal Mahoney is in Rome and will be one of the first to speak with the new Pope, I ask that he advise the Pope of where he himself went wrong so that the Pope can formulate a plan to prevent more child victims of predator priests. I also ask that the Pope finally thank the survivors of abuse for having the courage to expose this poison that has infected the Church for so long.

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