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For Immediate Release

**NEW STUDY OF CHICAGO CLERGY
RAISES TROUBLING QUESTIONS ABOUT
ASSIGNMENT OF CREDIBLY ACCUSED PEDOPHILES**

Oct. 11, 2010 – Boston: Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Chicago who were credibly accused of sexual abuse served at nearly 60% of parishes in the city at some point in time, according to an in-depth statistical study of clerical assignments released today.

The Chicago-based affiliate of Voice of the Faithful, working with African American Advocates of Clergy Sexual Abuse, Bishop Accountability.org and the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), collaborated on the five-year study, which used the official church registry and website to track the parishes and institutions where 97 credibly accused priests were assigned to work and live over a total of 4,114 man-years of ministry, from 1917 through 2009.

Among the study's key findings:

- A total of 256 of the Chicago Archdiocese's roughly 400 parishes and institutions, or approximately 60%, had an accused pedophile priest working there or in residence at some point in time.
- The percentage of parishes and institutions ministered by credibly accused priests approached 25% in the mid-1990's. In 2009, one in five institutions in the archdiocese still had a credibly accused priest in residence.
- According to a comparison of priest assignments with ZIP codes, credibly accused priests were assigned exclusively to institutions in 135 out of the 263 ZIP codes in the Archdiocese of Chicago. No credibly accused priests were ever assigned to any of the remaining 128 ZIP codes.
- Of the 135 ZIP code areas where assignments were made, 13 ZIP codes received the most work assignments. Initial findings suggest that these areas tended to have higher concentrations of African-Americans and low median household income levels. Analysis of the demographics of the 135 assigned ZIP code areas is continuing.
- 64%, or 63 of the 97 credibly accused priests, lived at the same location at the same time as one or more other credibly accused priests.

“The Archdiocese of Chicago owes Catholics of Chicago some answers,” said VOTF vice president and Chicago native Janet Hauter in commenting on the release of the study. “This study raises deeply troubling questions about the way credibly accused priests were sent to parishes and

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residences. The concentration of assignments in certain areas, the clustering of multiple pedophiles in the same place, and the total absence of assignments to parishes or institutions in other areas, all suggest that assignments were not made strictly in response to changing pastoral needs. The question of what criteria were applied to the assignment of these priests remains to be answered. It is painfully clear that these assignments were not accidental.”

Hauter also noted that the study highlights the need for the Archdiocese of Chicago to actively reach out to potential victims of sexual abuse in those parishes where a disproportionately high number of credibly accused priests were assigned.

The study and statistical analysis was carried out by members of Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful and SNAP under the direction of VOTF member Bob Kopp, using official church directories listing priests and their assignments and residences, as well as the Archdiocese of Chicago website and U.S. Postal Service ZIP code information. The study also relied on the Bishop Accountability website (www.bishopaccountability.org), widely recognized as the authoritative source for information on credibly accused clergy, and on VOTF and SNAP volunteers, who donated hundreds of person-hours to data collection, as well as the assistance of a statistician for data analysis.

About Voice of the Faithful

Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) is a lay organization formed in 2002 in response to the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. The goals of the organization are to support survivors, support priests of integrity, and work towards structural change in the Church.

The organization began in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and has since expanded worldwide with more than 30,000 members and affiliates across the country and abroad. For more information about VOTF please visit www.votf.org or email votfpr@votf.org or call 781-559-3360.

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