

# **Bishop warns activist to stay clear or face arrest, sanctions**

PORTLAND, Maine – The bishop of Portland has warned an advocate for abuse victims to stay away from him and the cathedral or risk being arrested and losing the right to participate in the church's sacraments.

Bishop Richard J. Malone said in an article posted on the diocesan Web site that after years of harassment by Paul Kendrick, he felt it necessary to seek the assistance and protection of the Portland Police Department, and as bishop to caution Mr. Kendrick about possible ecclesial repercussions.

Bishop Malone's action came after Kendrick sent the bishop a letter saying he planned to attend Christmas Eve Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and would act in ways intended to remind him about a local case of sexual abuse by a priest.

Mr. Kendrick told reporters he was frustrated that Bishop Malone had not met with one particular victim's mother. Sue Bernard, spokeswoman for the diocese, told Catholic News Service Jan. 7 that the woman in question had years ago had a meeting with one of Bishop Malone's predecessors, Bishop Joseph J. Gerry, which Mr. Kendrick attended.

Ms. Bernard said that when the woman recently asked to meet with Bishop Malone about how the case was being handled he referred her to the vicar general and the head of the diocesan review board. Bernard said those men would have had more complete information about the case than Bishop Malone, who has been in the diocese since 2004.

For five years Mr. Kendrick has been a vocal critic of how the church has handled cases of sexual abuse by priests.

Bishop Malone's Dec. 30 article said that Mr. Kendrick "has been a vigorous critic of me and the church. He has picketed my residence, the chancery and the cathedral, and he has sent literally hundreds of e-mails to the chancery, many of which are

quite disturbing in both content and tone. For years, we have refrained from taking any action in response to Mr. Kendrick's activities. The situation changed over the past few weeks, however."

Bishop Malone went on to say that as he arrived for a Dec. 16 meeting with a young adult group Mr. Kendrick was waiting outside the meeting place with a video camera.

"A police escort was provided to me so that I could enter the building safely," the bishop wrote. "The following day I received a letter from Mr. Kendrick detailing his plans to distract and unnerve me and thus disrupt midnight Mass at the cathedral. Having endured protest vigils outside the cathedral, chancery and my residence, and having my family, friends, colleagues and myself subjected to literally hundreds of communications over the past five years, I decided that the line had been crossed beyond legitimate criticism of the church to what felt threatening to me personally and harmful to my ministry as your bishop."

Bishop Malone's article on the Web site acknowledged that "we have all been affected in one way or another by the knowledge that some priests were sexually abusive to those most vulnerable among us. ... I cannot undo the past, but I assure you that the Diocese of Portland has aggressively and appropriately responded to this crisis."