



FIRST NATIONS WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Public Statement

Kateri Marion

First Nations Women's Alliance (FNWA) stands with Kateri Marion in her efforts to hold perpetrators accountable and empower other victims and survivors of sexual abuse; in this case at the hand of a trusted clergy member.

Not every victim of clergy sexual abuse will be comfortable or safe coming forward publicly. Each survivor seeks healing in her/his own way. However, Kateri's incredibly brave public actions compel each of us to work for justice by encouraging ND legislators to loosen the statute of limitations on bringing criminal charges and civil suits against sex offenders, and maintaining pressure on the Fargo Diocese and other church bodies to release information on "credibly accused clergy" in order to encourage the victims to seek healing and to protect future potential victims.

Violating any person's physical body is a devastating crime. Exploiting someone's trust and violating someone's spirit by using one's power as a spiritual leader is reprehensible. Kateri's sexual abuse in the confessional was acknowledged by the Church, and the priest was removed. This is not enough, however.

There has also been a level of victim blaming in this case and victim blaming is never acceptable.

FNWA encourages everyone to find ways to support survivors and hold perpetrators accountable, whoever they may be. Resources are available.

Contact FNWA at 701-662-3380, and we will help connect you with local service providers or share action opportunities.

Help for victims and survivors is also available by calling toll free helplines: StrongHearts Native Helpline at 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483); or RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) at 1-800-656-4673.

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