



The Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts

serving the counties of berkshire, franklin, hampden and hampshire

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BISHOP BYRNE'S STATEMENT ON D.A. ANTHONY GULLUNI'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE MURDER OF DANNY CROTEAU

“Today’s news that Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gulluni was prepared to charge Richard Lavigne in the murder of Danny Croteau in 1972 brings sad closure to a tragic event which I know has hung over our faith community for decades. I was angered and sickened to hear Lavigne’s unapologetic admissions in the heinous murder of this innocent child.

It is incredibly disheartening to learn that a priest, a person ordained to care for God’s people, would have committed such an evil crime and then not taken responsibility for his actions. This is all totally contrary to the teachings that we as Catholics believe in and hold sacred.

It is also another reminder of our past failures as a Church and a diocese to protect children and young adults from such terrible predators in our midst. Although we have made great strides in improving our child protection efforts, that is little consolation to the victims of Richard Lavigne and the numerous other sexual predator clergy who preyed upon our youth.

I want to extend my personal and sincerest apology to the Croteau family and know that they will be in my prayers; especially Danny’s loving parents who sadly did not live to see this tragic matter resolved.

I wish to thank Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gulluni and his staff for their tireless pursuit of the truth in this horrific case.

I am also mindful that while today’s announcement resolves this case, there may still be many other victims of clergy sexual abuse who have not yet come forward. My message to them is that even if your abuser is deceased, you can still report the abuse you suffered to law enforcement and to the diocese. It is important that you be heard and that we acknowledge your suffering and trauma.

You can reach out to the diocese via our toll free abuse reporting phone line (800)842-9055 or via email at reportabuse@diospringfield.org.”