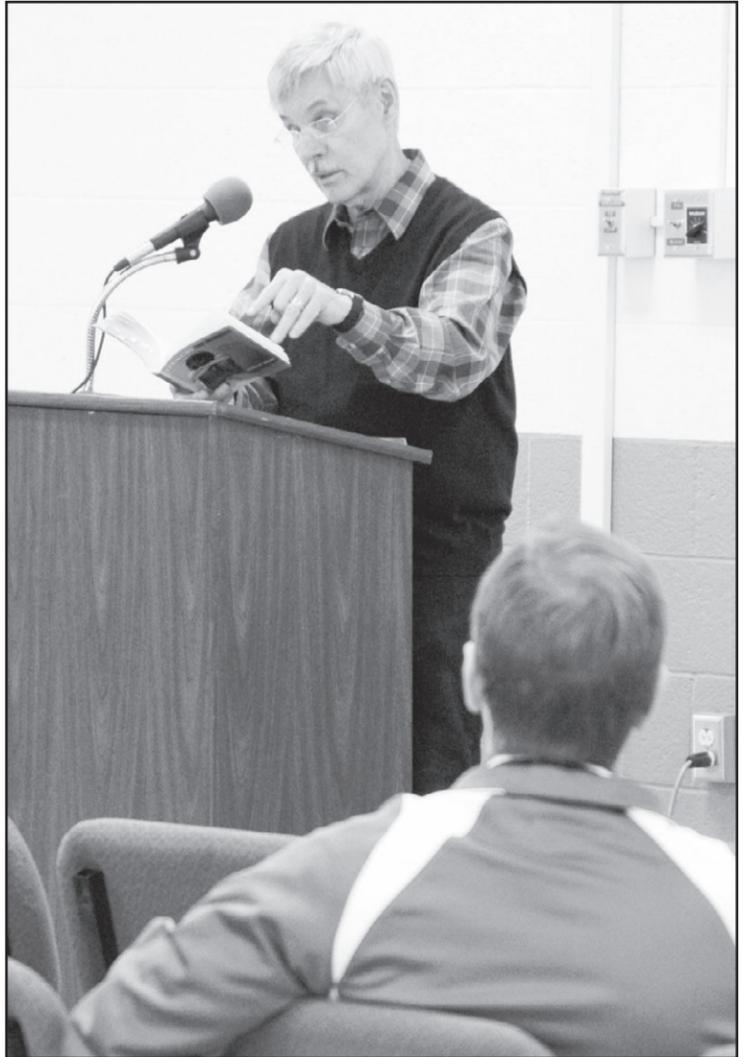


Krapf continues to 'shrink the monster' of abuse



The Message photos by Tim Lilley
 Bishop-Emeritus Gerald A. Gettelfinger, left, Norbert Krapf and Bishop Charles C. Thompson smile for a photo before Krapf's March 16 reading at the Catholic Center in Evansville.



Bishop Thompson, in the foreground, listens as Norbert Krapf reads from his latest book, "Shrinking the Monster: Healing the Wounds of Our Abuse."

BY TIM LILLEY
 The Message editor

Jasper native Norbert Krapf visited the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center for a March 16 presentation, which featured readings from his newest book, "Shrinking the Monster: Healing the Wounds of Our Abuse." Krapf suffered sexual abuse by a now-deceased priest of the Diocese of Evansville as a child.

He first notified the diocese of the acts in a letter to then-Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger in 2007. At the time, he had finished and was preparing to publish a book of poetry about his experiences entitled

"Catholic Boy Blues."

"I feel very lucky and blessed to have supporters like Bishop Gettelfinger, Bishop (Charles C. Thompson) and Archbishop-Cardinal (Joseph W.) Tobin," Krapf said during the presentation. Krapf lives in Indianapolis and met then-Archbishop Tobin as "Catholic Boy Blues" was being published. The archbishop attended the book-launch event for "Catholic Boy Blues" and facilitated delivery of a copy to the Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, who delivered it to the Vatican.

Krapf visited the Catholic Center in October 2014 for a presentation that featured

readings from "Catholic Boy Blues." That visit and its coverage were "firsts."

"The invitation I received from (then-Chancellor) Judy Neff to do a reading here was the first invitation I received from any Catholic organization to read from the book," Krapf said. "And the coverage provided by **The Message** was the first discussion of the book in any Catholic media.

"I believe that shows how progressive and forward-looking the Diocese of Evansville is."

In his 90-minute presentation on March 16, Krapf read several selections from "Shrinking the Monster," which deals with his ongoing journey of healing. He began with a segment from the preface:

"If you are a survivor of childhood abuse, I can say that I wrote this book more for you than for myself. . . . Maybe by the time you finish the last sentence in the last chapter, you will hear a voice that wants to speak to others about your own experience. If you hear such a voice, please listen

to what it wants to say and give it permission to speak."

Krapf said he chose this and other passages to read because he wanted to focus on healing. He began his day at the Catholic Center and finished it with a public reading in his hometown, at Vincennes University's Jasper Campus.

He also was clear that his newest book's title does not refer specifically to his abuser. "The Monster is the whole experience of abuse and what it does to us," he said. When he chose poetry as his vehicle to begin healing from the abuse he suffered years earlier, he said the poems that became "Catholic Boy Blues" "came like

a volcano I couldn't control. I learn so much about myself by what my poems announce and what they say to me. I don't want revenge; I want healing for myself and others."

He illustrated that point by reading the following, from Chapter 22 of "Shrinking the Monster," entitled "Interlude for Survivors:"

"If you have something in your past like what I am talking about in this book and dramatized in poems in four voices in my previous book, but feel insecure in dealing with it because you are not a poet or any other kind of writer, I want you to know that you do not have to be a published writer to help yourself heal. There are people who can help you . . ."

"Catholic Boy Blues," "Shrinking the Monster" and other books by Krapf are available on Amazon and from other online and storefront retailers.

THIS WEEK'S ANSWERS

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