

The Abuse Crisis in the Bay Area

Oakland Diocese History

- ▶ Many cases of abuse in the East Bay occurred before (and after) the Oakland Diocese was separated from the larger Archdiocese of San Francisco.
- ▶ Bishop John Cummins held the first apology service for survivors of clergy abuse in 2000.
- ▶ The diocese has followed the requirements established by the U.S. bishops in the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, through its safe environment program and other policies (see list of policies below).
- ▶ Settlements to victims in the diocese total over \$60 million, with over half that covered by insurance.
- ▶ As part of its response, the diocese has held many apology services, paid for counseling and treatment of victims, developed a "No More Secrets" public outreach campaign to help survivors, worked with groups of survivors, and dedicated a healing garden at the new cathedral.
- ▶ The diocese reports that it has found no credible cases of sexual abuse of minors since 2005.
- ▶ For more detail, see <http://bit.ly/2POppez>.

Current Oakland Diocese Policies

- ▶ Background checks and fingerprinting are performed on all church employees, as well as volunteers who come in contact with children.
- ▶ Employees and volunteers must follow an annual training session to prevent abuse.
- ▶ Those working with minors must follow a set of guidelines outlining rules for meeting with minors (such as only meeting in private under strict circumstances, with a door open or other visibility into the room).
- ▶ A Diocesan Review Board was formed in 1993 for acting on allegations of sexual misconduct. A

majority of the board must be lay people not employed by the diocese.

- ▶ The diocese asks that any report of abuse be made to local authorities (e.g. police), as well as the diocese's victims assistance coordinator.
- ▶ Also in accordance with the nationwide charter: a "zero tolerance" policy for abusers (who cannot be returned to active ministry with children present) and mandatory reporting to law enforcement.
- ▶ See <http://bit.ly/2xlZcgp> for full policy.

Recent Developments

- ▶ The **Diocese of San Jose** recently announced that it will release the names of priests credibly accused of abusing minors within the diocese and have an independent consulting firm investigate how the cases were handled. Bishop McGrath is also holding three listening sessions.
- ▶ The **Archdiocese of San Francisco** is actively discussing the possibility of a similar release and investigation.
- ▶ The **Diocese of Oakland** is reviewing files and discussing how they will approach the situation. Bishop Barber is calling for an independent outside audit to confirm that the diocese is following the 2002 charter.
- ▶ Some have called for **California Attorney General** Xavier Becerra to impanel a Grand Jury, as was done in Pennsylvania, to investigate abuses in the state. This would likely release details of many cases within the Bay Area that were not public.

What Happened in 2018?

United States Developments

- ▶ **Pennsylvania** • A grand jury issued a detailed report in August 2018 stating that over 300 priests sexually abused over 1,000 child victims in six of the eight Roman Catholic dioceses in the state of Pennsylvania. It also holds that "there were likely to be thousands of more" cases. Perpetrators were routinely moved to different parishes and remained in ministry. Bishops and other church leaders were found to have kept cases quiet to avoid publicity or financial liability. Very few cases were found to have occurred after 2002, suggesting that church reforms have drastically reduced incidences. However, the horrific nature of detailed cases, involvement of bishops, and lack of accountability has resulted in a loud outcry.
- ▶ **Cardinal McCarrick** • Allegations arose that a prominent cardinal, Theodore McCarrick had regularly sexually abused seminarians over the course of decades and at least one minor. Abuse was reported to others in the hierarchy and Pope Benedict XVI reportedly sanctioned him years after his customary retirement. However, McCarrick continued to stay in a very public role, including participation in Vatican events. He was formally removed from public ministry in June 2018 under Pope Francis. The case has led to provocative infighting within the hierarchy of the church. Former Vatican insider and Francis critic Archbishop Carlo Viganò claimed that Francis removed sanctions against McCarrick, and called out other implicated bishops. Factions continue to posture and fight over the allegations.
- ▶ **2019 Synod** • Pope Francis has called for a worldwide gathering of bishops at the Vatican in February 2019 to discuss "prevention of abuse of minors and vulnerable adults."

International Developments

- ▶ **Chile** • In a January visit, Pope Francis apologized for clergy abuse of minors in the country, but victims demanded that bishops who protected abusers be removed from power. Francis defended one of these bishops, saying he hadn't seen proof of wrongdoing and that the charges were "slander." Many criticized the pope for these remarks, including bishops such as Cardinal Sean O'Malley. Francis then ordered an investigation, which substantiated the claims and made him realize there was a widespread failure of the hierarchy to recognize and respond to the abuse. He then admitted he "made serious mistakes" in understanding the situation, said he was "part of the problem," begged forgiveness, committed to meeting with victims, and called all of the bishops of Chile to Rome, where they offered their resignations. Francis accepted five resignations so far and demanded that the others take specific actions to address the deeper issues that "made it possible for such attitudes and evils to occur."
- ▶ **Germany** • In September, media outlets leaked a report commissioned by the German Bishops Conference on abuse. It found that at least 3,677 people were abused between 1946 and 2014 in the country by at least 1,670 clergy. The report also found evidence of cover-ups, lack of accountability, and policies that reassigned accused priests to other positions. The report will be publicly presented in full later in the month, as originally planned.
- ▶ **Ireland** • Pope Francis' visit to the country brought to a fore the outrage and anger over abuse scandals in the country. The many cases ranged from widespread physical abuse of children in Catholic child care facilities, and sexual abuse of both children and adults. Pope Benedict XVI established an elite panel to investigate the cases in 2010.

What Has Pope Francis Said?

In the United States

- ▶ "Before God and his people I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse committed against you. And I humbly ask forgiveness. I beg your forgiveness, too, for the sins of omission on the part of church leaders who did not respond adequately to reports of abuse made by family members, as well as by abuse victims themselves. This led to even greater suffering on the part of those who were abused, and it endangered other minors who were at risk." (Homily at Mass with survivors, July 7, 2014)
- ▶ "This is a tragedy. We must not tolerate the abuse of minors. We must defend minors. And we must severely punish the abusers." (May 1, 2016)
- ▶ On Pennsylvania grand jury report: "With shame and repentance, we acknowledge as an ecclesial community that we were not where we should have been, that we did not act in a timely manner, realizing the magnitude and the gravity of the damage done to so many lives. **We showed no care for the little ones; we abandoned them...** I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and protection of the integrity of children and of vulnerable adults, as well as implementing zero tolerance and ways of making all those who perpetrate or cover up these crimes accountable.... **[E]very one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need.** This change calls for a personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does.... Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons, leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. **To say "no" to abuse is to say an emphatic "no" to all forms of clericalism.**" (*Letter to the People of God*, 8/20/18, <http://bit.ly/2xxTFmc>)

On Clericalism & Lay People

- ▶ "There is that spirit of clericalism in the Church, that we feel: clerics feel superior; clerics distance themselves from the people. Clerics always say: 'this should be done like this, like this, like this, and you – go away!' ...**the evil of clericalism is a really awful thing.**" (12/13/16)
- ▶ "A clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity... does not appear in the same way in all places. In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. In others, it is because in their particular Churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making." (*Evangelii Gaudium*)
- ▶ "[C]lericalism, which is not just clerics, is an attitude that affects all of us: clericalism is a perversion of the Church." (8/11/18)
- ▶ "[Clericalism], a failure to realize that the mission belongs to the entire Church, and not to the individual priest or bishop, limits the horizon, and even worse, stifles all the initiatives that the Spirit may be awakening in our midst. Let us be clear about this. **The laypersons are not our peons, or our employees. They don't have to parrot back whatever we say.** Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and the sacramentality of the Church belong to all the faithful people of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 9-14), not only to the few chosen and enlightened." (1/16/18)
- ▶ "If we hope for a new and living chapter of faith in this [Latin American] continent, **we will not get it without women.** Please, do not let them be reduced to servants of our ingrained clericalism. For they are on the front lines." (Columbia, 9/7/17)