

Scottish cardinal admits to sexual misconduct

by [Trevor Grundy](#) in the [April 3, 2013](#) issue

Days after pulling out of the conclave to elect the next pope and vowing to fight the charges against him, disgraced Scottish cardinal Keith O'Brien admitted on March 3 to inappropriate "sexual conduct."

O'Brien, who until his resignation was the highest-ranking Roman Catholic cleric in England and Scotland, had served as archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh for the last seven years and was made a cardinal in 2003.

After a week of turmoil among Scotland's 700,000 Catholics, the cardinal said in a statement released by the Scottish Catholic Media Office in Glasgow that "there have been times that my sexual conduct has fallen below the standards expected of me as a priest, archbishop and cardinal."

He asked for forgiveness for those he had "offended" and from the entire church. "I will now spend the rest of my life in retirement," O'Brien said. "I will play no further part in the public life of the Catholic Church in Scotland."

O'Brien resigned days earlier after explosive charges from unnamed accusers that he had made "inappropriate" sexual advances to four men, three of them priests and one now a former seminarian, starting in the 1980s.

Pope Benedict XVI accepted O'Brien's resignation—which was already on file and due to take effect within a matter of months—with unusual haste in one of his last official acts before resigning the papacy on February 28.

O'Brien said he would skip the conclave to elect a new pope in order to avoid becoming a distraction or media spectacle, leaving Catholics in the United Kingdom without a vote in the conclave.

Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow has taken over temporary leadership of O'Brien's former archdiocese, calling the revelations "painful and distressing."

—RNS