

More Irish bishops resign in wake of abuse report: "Significant reorganization" ahead

News in the [January 26, 2010](#) issue

Four Irish Catholic bishops have resigned within the first 30 days after a government-ordered investigation announced that over decades the Dublin archdiocese had shielded from the law more than 170 Catholic priests accused of sexual child abuse.

Two Dublin bishops—Eamonn Walsh and Ray Field—resigned on December 25 as they apologized to abuse victims during Christmas mass.

Two other bishops, Donal Murray of Limerick and Jim Moriarty of Kildare, quit earlier in December following the November 26 publication of the three-year investigation.

In announcing his resignation December 23, Moriarty apologized to “all the survivors and their families” and expressed hope his resignation “honors the truth that the survivors have so bravely uncovered and opens the way to a better future for all concerned. . . .”

Investigators traced a pattern of clerical physical and sexual abuse from 1975 to 2004 that had been covered up by the archdiocese of Dublin, at times with the collusion of the Irish police.

The report said the church had placed greater importance on protecting its reputation and maintaining secrecy than on children’s welfare or justice for victims. Starting in 1940, four successive archbishops of Dublin were aware of complaints, the report said, but church authorities failed to implement most of their rules for dealing with abuse.

Pope Benedict XVI expressed “outrage,” “shame,” and “profound regret” over the report’s revelations, which Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin said would lead to a “very significant reorganization of the church in Ireland.”