

Morrissey Steps Down Following Sex Allegations

The News-Times

By **ROBIN DEMERELL, BRIAN SAXTON, and SUSAN TUZ**

December 14, 2002 - The Rev. Robert P. Morrissey, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Ridgefield, has resigned following allegations that he and two other priests sexually abused a minor nearly 20 years ago.

In a statement released Friday, the Diocese of Bridgeport said it had received a letter from a man who claimed he was sexually abused by the priests from 1979 to 1983. During that period, he was between 15 and 19 years old.

The statement offered few details on the allegations, other than to say the accuser said he met with the priests separately and on different occasions.

The statement said Bishop William Lori has met with the accuser, interviewed the priests and brought the allegations before the diocese's Sexual Misconduct Review Board. Catholic officials also notified the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

"I am greatly saddened by this tragic situation," Lori said. "So many lives have been upset and disrupted by this news, including the victim, the priests and their respective parish communities."

Morrissey, who has been at St. Mary's since 1992, has presided over a period of explosive growth in the parish of 3,000 families. He led efforts to revive the parish's school, convert a barn on parish property into a counseling center and upgrade St. Mary's Cemetery. Plans to enlarge the church on Catoonah Street are on the drawing board.

On Friday, parishioners described Morrissey as a businesslike man with a good heart. One said he would have made a good corporate chief executive officer because he was ambitious, serious and good with a budget.

Carol Pisano, whose family have been members at St. Mary's for 16 years, said Morrissey has done a "tremendous job at the church. He took it when it was in shambles and rebuilt it."

She said if anyone "died or was in the hospital or needed help, he was always there for people to turn to. He was all over. This is very tragic and very sad and he'll be missed. It breaks my heart."

Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi, who was baptized at St. Mary's, said Morrissey spent a lot of time comforting Marconi's mother after her husband died in 1995. Marconi said this action may help the Archdiocese of Boston to experience the healing, reconciliation and unity which are so desperately needed," Law said in a statement

released by the Vatican. "To all those who have suffered from my shortcomings and mistakes, I both apologize and from them beg forgiveness."

Even among the princes of the church, Law is a major light. He is the nation's highest-ranking prelate, and has led the nation's fourth-largest archdiocese since 1984.

One of the pope's closest American advisers, the 71-year-old Law will remain a cardinal, which means he could take another church post and retains the right to vote in a papal election until he turns 80.

But his resignation does not free him from civil lawsuits pending in Boston, nor from a subpoena to testify next week before a grand jury.

The crisis in Boston was touched off in January when it became clear in court papers that Law had reassigned former priest John Geoghan despite numerous accusations of sex abuse. The scandal quickly spread to dioceses across the country, as more victims came forward and Catholics demanded greater accountability from their leaders.

At least 325 of America's 46,000 priests have been removed from duty or resigned this year because of molestation claims. U.S. bishops scrambled to come up with a policy against sex abuse, rules still being reviewed by the Vatican.

In recent weeks, thousands of pages of personnel files from the Boston archdiocese were released, offering disturbing details of misdeeds by priests. And the archdiocese - for the second time in several months - floated the idea of filing for bankruptcy protection in response to suits filed by more than 400 alleged victims.

After Law departed for Rome, 58 Boston-area priests openly rebelled, signing a letter asking him to step down.

"This is an extraordinary crisis we're going through, and it's not ending now," said the Rev. Robert Bullock, one of his critics. "We have a daunting task of rebuilding, and that's going to take a lot of wisdom and a lot of cooperation and effort by the church - not just from the leaders, but from church members."

The scandal prompted the formation of a laity group called Voice of the Faithful, which was started by a handful of Catholics in the basement of a Wellesley church and now claims 25,000 members across the country.

Jim Post, president of the group, said Law's resignation brought relief and hope, but also sorrow. He said he believes Law thought he was doing the right thing when he kept allegations against priests secret and tried to deal with offending priests within the church structure.

"The great sadness here was that everything he was doing was sowing the seeds for where we are today," Post said.

The pope was described by a Vatican official as "deeply saddened" by the whole affair.

Detroit Cardinal Adam Maida said Law "has taken a brave step to promote healing and bring serenity to the Boston archdiocese," while Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony said the resignation "gives us pause to reflect" on the "extraordinarily difficult and painful year 2002 has been for all the Catholic faithful across the nation."

Many victims had been strident in their criticism of Law and had called for his resignation months ago.

"As a Catholic, I have some sympathy for the devil. But he took an active role in covering up the victimization of quite possibly hundreds and hundreds of individuals. I will never forget those pains," said William Oberle, who says he was molested by a priest in 1969.

Others were more subdued.

"I really believe this is only a first step," said Mark Keane, 33, of Merrimack, N.H., who said he was molested by Geoghan at the age of 12. "There are a lot of other people who were involved, a lot of other bishops. I just hope that it's a new beginning for the archdiocese in Boston."

Law's temporary replacement, Lennon, offered prayers for the victims of sex abuse and pledged "to work toward healing as a church and furthering the mission of Jesus Christ within our community."

Church commentators immediately began speculating on which U.S. bishop would be picked to run the huge and devastated archdiocese now that Law is gone. Though Lennon is a possibility, the pope and his advisers might prefer someone from another diocese.

Among those mentioned as having management skills and a relatively good record on abuse: Archbishop Harry Flynn of St. Paul, Minn.; Archbishop Edwin O'Brien of the military archdiocese; Bishop Wilton Gregory of Belleville, Ill.; Bishop Sean O'Malley of Palm Beach, Fla.; Pittsburgh's Bishop Donald Wuerl; and a conservative favorite, Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput.

Former Teen Accuses 3 Clerics Scandal pushes resignations 3 area priests quit after new sex charges

Connecticut Post

By DANIEL TEPFER

December 14, 2002 - BRIDGEPORT - Three Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport priests resigned Friday after a man claimed they sexually abused him when he was a teenager 20 years ago.

The Rev. Robert Morrissey, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Ridgefield; the Rev. Albert McGoldrick, pastor of St. Paul's Church in Greenwich; and the Rev. Sherman Gray, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Church in Stamford, all resigned after being confronted with the allegations, said diocese spokesman Joseph McAleer.

"The resignations should not necessarily be viewed as an admission of guilt and the priests have not forfeited their rights to due process. But since they now have no parish assignment, their authorization to function as priests has been removed," he said. The diocese said they three resigned for the good of the church.

The three priests were accused of sexually assaulting a man, now 38, from 1979 to 1983, beginning when the man was 15. The name of the man, locations of the alleged assaults and circumstances were not released.

At the time of the alleged molestation, Gray and McGoldrick were assigned to parishes in Stamford and Morrissey was at a Greenwich parish.

Bridgeport lawyers Jason Tremont and Douglas Mahoney, who represent the victim, said the complainant met with Bishop William Lori on his own last week to inform him of the incidents.

"The victim has cooperated with the diocese investigation and will continue to do so, including providing witnesses and other documentation," Mahoney said.

Neither lawyer would discuss what witnesses and documentation their client might have, but Tremont said he found his client's allegations to be "very credible."

"I am greatly saddened by this tragic situation," Lori said Friday. "So many lives have been upset and disrupted by this news, including the victim, the priests and their respective parish communities. I regret that the diocese is facing such a sad situation during this holy season of Advent.

"But, like my brother bishops, I remain committed to following the [U.S. bishops' new national policy] faithfully and thoroughly so that no one who works for the Catholic Church will pose a threat of any kind to a child or young person," he added.

McAleer said Lori has met with the three priests. The allegations, he said, have been brought before the diocese's sexual misconduct review board and the diocese has notified the state Department of Children and Families.

As required by the new national policy approved by bishops on handling priest abuse cases, McAleer said the canonical process has been launched to determine whether the allegations are true.

"The diocese takes these allegations very seriously and is committed to following the procedures set forth in the Charter and Norms [as the abuse policy is known] to their conclusion," he said.

McAleer said these are the first accusations of sexual misconduct with a minor made against each of the three priests.

The priests will not face criminal prosecution on the allegations, if proven, because the statute of limitations has passed.

Morrissey, 57, a native of Whitestone, N.Y., was ordained as a priest in 1976.

In 1977, he was assigned to St. Lawrence Church in Shelton; served from 1978 to 1982 at St. Mary's Church in Greenwich; from 1983 to 1984 at St. Clement's Church in Stamford; from 1985 to 1986 at St. Joseph's Church in Danbury; and from 1988 to 1989, he was on duty outside the diocese. From 1990 to 1992, Morrissey returned to St. Joseph's Church, and was pastor of St. Mary's since 1992.

In the midst of growing publicity about diocesan priests accused of abusing children, parishioners at St. Mary's said Morrissey took the pulpit last year and announced there had never been an allegation of abuse against a priest at his parish.

"Father Morrissey is an absolutely wonderful priest and I hope everything comes out well for him," said Frank Foyt, a deacon at St. Mary's. "It's just an accusation."

Gray, 59, a native of Montague, Mass., was ordained a priest in 1970.

From 1971 to 1973, he was assigned to St. Mary's Church in Greenwich; from 1974 to 1975, he was at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome; from 1976 to 1981, at St. Maurice's Church in Stamford; in 1982 he was at the Theological College in Washington, D.C.; from 1983 to 1985, he was at Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Md.; and in 1986, he was at St. Bernard Church in Riverdale, Md. He has been pastor of Holy Name since 1987.

McGoldrick, 52, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., was ordained a priest in 1978.

From 1979 to 1980, he was assigned to St. Mary's Church, Stamford; from 1980 to 1984, he was an official with the diocesan tribunal; from 1985 to 1986, he was at Divine Word

College, Washington, D.C.; in 1987, he was at Our Lady of Peace Church in Stratford; in 1988, he was at Assumption Church in Westport; from 1989 to 1994, there is no listing for his service in the diocesan directory of clergy; in 1995, he was appointed a judge in the diocesan tribunal; in 1998, he was at Notre Dame Church of Easton; and in 1999, at St. James Church in Stratford. He has been pastor of St. Paul's since 1999.

McAleer said this weekend Lori will visit each parish where the three priests last served, In addition, at all Masses this weekend at every parish in the diocese, a representative of Catholic Charities will be present to speak about the counseling services available to parishioners and their families, he said.

Friday afternoon a letter was sent to parents of students in St. Mary Regional Elementary School in Ridgefield, informing them of the resignation of their pastor. McAleer said a Catholic Charities specialist will be at the school Monday morning to talk to faculty on how to answer questions from students.

Temporary replacements have been appointed at each of the parishes where the accused priests stepped down.

Daniel Tepfer, who covers state courts and law enforcement issues, can be reached at 330-6308.

30 File New Sex Assault Claims Bridgeport Diocese agrees to let magistrate mediate complaints

Connecticut Post

By DANIEL TEPFER

Friday, October 18, 2002 - BRIDGEPORT - More than 25 people have come forward in recent weeks claiming they were molested as children by 10 priests in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport.

Diocesan officials, who have interviewed many of the accusers, on Thursday agreed to allow U.S. Magistrate Judge William I. Garfinkel to act as a mediator in an attempt to resolve the complaints.

The mediation attempt comes on the heels of separate settlements recently reached between the diocese and three men who claim that priests molested them.

And on Thursday the local law firm of Tremont and Sheldon filed lawsuits in Superior Court on behalf of five men who claim in an action separate from the other 25-plus complaints to have been abused as children by priests.

The new complaints, along with past settlements, brings the total to more than 55 people who claim to have been molested by priests in the diocese since the 1960s.

Cindy Robinson, of Tremont and Sheldon, which represents all the new complainants, said Thursday that she has so far been impressed with the way Bishop William Lori is handling the latest cases.

In contrast to former Bridgeport Bishop Edward Egan, now cardinal of New York City who has been accused of orchestrating a cover-up of the abuse cases and moving offending priests from parish to parish Robinson said Lori has directed diocese officials to interview complainants and agreed to Garfinkel's mediation.

"We look forward to the opportunity to sit down with the diocese and, with the help of Magistrate Judge Garfinkel, attempt to resolve these cases that have devastated so many young people's lives," said Jason Tremont, a principal in the law firm.

"The Diocese of Bridgeport has been cooperating fully with the attorneys of Tremont and Sheldon," said Michael T. Dolan, general counsel for the diocese. "We have interviewed the plaintiffs and offered a sincere apology and counseling services. They have also been invited to meet personally with Bishop William Lori."

Garfinkel was instrumental in the \$15 million settlement the diocese paid last year to 24 people who claimed priests in the diocese abused them.

The two dozen people, many of them former altar boys and members of Catholic youth organizations, claimed they had been abused as children by priests in parishes in Bridgeport, Trumbull, Stratford and other areas of Fairfield County since the late 1970s.

The diocese agreed to the settlement after seven years of litigation.

Robinson said the diocese within the past three months agreed to settle claims by three men who said they were abused in the 1960s and early 1970s by Monsignor Charles W. Stubbs, Rev. Joseph P. Moore and Rev. Charles T. Carr in local parishes.

The diocese had previously suspended all three priests after complaints of abuse surfaced.

The settlements were funded through insurance reserves, diocesan spokesman Joseph McAleer said. Neither he nor Robinson would reveal details.

The 10 priests named by the 30-plus complainants include: Stubbs, Martin Federici, Alfred Bietighofer, Joseph Gorecki, Richard Grady, Joseph DeShan, William Donovan, Raymond Pcolka and two priests whose names the diocese would not disclose.

McAleer said one unnamed priest is a member of a religious order who has not been in active ministry since 1987, while the other is living in another diocese but is not functioning as a priest. He said the bishop of that diocese has been informed of the complaint against that priest.

Three have since died. Gorecki died in 1988 and Grady in 1993. Bietighofer hung himself earlier this year in his room at a Maryland psychiatric facility, where he was sent after he was accused of abusing five boys in Bridgeport in the 1970s.

Grady, whose name has not previously appeared in any abuse complaint, was previously pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Bridgeport and St. Leo Parish in Stamford.

The remaining priests, with the exception of DeShan, had been previously suspended as a result of abuse complaints.

DeShan in 1988 initiated a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl while assigned to St. Augustine's Cathedral. The girl became pregnant in 1989 and DeShan subsequently left the priesthood.

The woman lives with her daughter in Bridgeport while DeShan, who married another woman, is an elementary school teacher in Cinnaminson, N.J.

Robinson said the Bridgeport woman recently hired her firm to take legal action against the diocese.

Daniel Tepfer, who covers state courts and law enforcement issues, can be reached at 330-6308.

Bishop Lori Suspends Vicar of St. Andrews

Connecticut Post, April 30, 2002

By DANIEL TEPFER

BRIDGEPORT - Claiming they were abused as children by the Rev. Alfred J. Bietighofer, four men have waited more than 20 years for justice — when it came, it was, in the diocese's words, "swift and decisive".

Less than two hours after sitting down with two of the men — Victor Negrón and Mario Jaiman — and hearing their allegations, Bishop William Lori of Monday night suspended Bietighofer.

"It's vindication after all these years, it's incredible," Jaiman said. "Bishop Lori was on the money when he said he would take action."

"Our main goal was to make sure other kids don't have to go through what we went through," Negrón added. "Bishop Lori listened to us and he knew we weren't lying."

"We are pleased that the bishop took the time to listen and acted swiftly to relieve Bietighofer of his duties," said their lawyer, Jason Tremont. "This is the type of action we hoped for."

Diocese spokesman Joseph McAleer said after meeting with Negrón and Jaiman, Lori met with the 64-year-old Bietighofer to discuss the allegations.

McAleer said during the meeting, Bietighofer voluntarily withdrew from his current assignment as parochial vicar at St. Andrew's Parish on Anton Street and the bishop suspended him.

While he technically remains a priest, Bietighofer no longer has the authorization to do ministry.

"In the case of Father Bietighofer, the allegations from the two gentlemen were credible enough to warrant immediate action in line with our policy," said Lori. He said that he would bring the specific details of the case before the diocese's sexual misconduct review board.

"To facilitate reconciliation and healing, the diocese of Bridgeport stands ready to meet with anyone who believes he or she has been a victim of sexual abuse. We also pledge to respond swiftly, decisively and fairly to all allegations," Lori said.

Shortly after 5:30 p.m., Negrón, Jaiman, and their lawyer met with Lori at the Catholic Center on Jewett Avenue.

"It was very difficult for them to go in there, but they were very credible and Bishop Lori listened to what they had to say," Tremont said as he left the meeting.

In an interview last week with the Connecticut Post, the two 36-year-old men, along with Len Pirulli, 37, and Manuel Gonzalez, 35, related how they had been molested on numerous occasions by Bietighofer between 1976 and 1982 at Blessed Sacrament Church on Union Avenue in Bridgeport.

Negron and Jaiman, who were altar boys, said Bietighofer molested most of the 60 altar boys at the church under the guise of teaching them sex education.

The men said they struggled with guilt and embarrassment over what happened, finally finding the courage to come forward after reading about victims abused by other priests.

The four men said they were concerned that Bietighofer would molest other children unless they came forward and ensured he was removed from the priesthood.

Both the criminal and civil statute of limitations has passed in their cases.

Negron said he has been in touch with other men who were also molested by Bietighofer but have been too afraid to come forward.

"This is a victory for all of us," he added.

Bietighofer is the 13th priest in the diocese to be dismissed because of sexual abuse allegations.

Ordained in 1965, Bietighofer was assigned from 1966 to 1968 to St. George Parish in Bridgeport; from 1968 to 1974 at St. Anthony Parish, Bridgeport; from 1974 to 1975 at St. John Vianney Parish, in Chiclayo, Peru.

From 1975 to 1976, he was at St. Patrick Parish, Bridgeport; 1976 to 1982, at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Bridgeport; 1982 to 1984, at St. Joseph Medical Center, Stamford; 1984 to 1986, at St. Joseph Parish, Norwalk; 1986 to 1987, St. John Vianney Parish, Chiclayo, Peru; 1987 to 1988, Sacred Heart Parish, Stamford; 1988 to 1998, at St. Mary Parish, Norwalk; 1998 to 1999, St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Bridgeport; 1999 to 2001, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Weston; and 2001 to 2002 St. Andrew Parish, Bridgeport.

Egan Meets With Priests Privately

Hartford Courant, April 30, 2002

By JIM FITZGERALD

YONKERS, N.Y. -- In a meeting that resembled last week's summit between U.S. cardinals and the pope, New York Cardinal Edward Egan and hundreds of priests gathered Monday to discuss the sex abuse scandal engulfing the U.S. Roman Catholic church.

Meanwhile in Boston, Cardinal Bernard Law came under new criticism for a legal defense that suggests plaintiffs in a lawsuit against him were partly responsible for an allegedly abusive relationship between the Rev. Paul Shanley and a boy.

In New York, the Rev. Peter Gavigan from Our Lady of Victory said his "faith and trust" in Egan was renewed after Monday's private, four-hour meeting.

Egan opened the meeting with a 45-minute speech, after which the 500 priests broke into small groups. Egan met with the smaller groups and answered their concerns.

"It was both informational and relational ... the relationship between the priests and the cardinal as bishop was strengthened," Gavigan said. "We priests have been dealing with it, in a sense, on our own. It was necessary to see him face to face."

Egan had no comment as he arrived at St. Joseph's Seminary. On Sunday, he said priests accused of sexual violations would be suspended from clerical duties at least until the allegation was resolved. He also suggested those who suspect abuse should seek out the authorities.

In Boston, an attorney for Law responded to a lawsuit brought by Gregory Ford and his parents, claiming Law was negligent in overseeing Shanley, who allegedly began abusing Ford in 1983, when he was 6.

Shanley was described in archdiocese documents as a "very sick person" and known as a proponent of sex between men and boys even as church officials shuffled him from job to job.

In a six-page response to the lawsuit, an attorney for Law said, "The negligence of the plaintiffs contributed to cause the injury or damage." The response said any damages against Law "should be reduced in proportion to the said negligence of the plaintiffs."

The Fords' attorney, Roderick MacLeish, said there was "not a shred of evidence" to support the claim that Ford or his parents were responsible for Shanley's behavior.

Ford's father, Rodney Ford, called the response "a disgrace."

"They want to blame me and my wife for something that happened to my 6-year-old son," he said. "I'm ashamed to call myself a Catholic."

Suffolk University law Professor Rosanna Cavallaro called the legal language in the response "boilerplate" and said it would be unusual for an attorney not to raise every defense available.

The archdiocese did not return calls to comment Monday. Shanley, 71, whose last known address is in San Diego, has issued no public statements since the case began.

A Family Caught Between Faith and a Sister's Dark Secret

The New York Times, April 28, 2002

By MATTHEW PURDY

MONROE, Conn. - You have to wonder whether the Catholic Church deserves Peggy Fry.

Mrs. Fry, 51, was sexually abused as a teenager by a clergyman in the Bridgeport Diocese who last week publicly apologized. Her story is shocking in its familiarity: an affable priest insinuates himself into a devout family and preys on one of its children.

Less familiar is the story of a victimized family keeping faith with a church that inflicted pain, only partly eased by its new formula for addressing abuse — zero tolerance plus some tolerance equals muddle.

Mrs. Fry made her own adjustments. She never encouraged her three sons to be altar boys. She attends Mass, but no longer gives money. She briefly explored other denominations, and says with a hint of heresy: "There is one God, but I'm not sure there's only one church. That's a big statement. I'm a Roman Catholic."

She was raised in what one brother calls "the epitome of an Irish-Catholic family" in Trumbull. Their mother attended Mass daily and wove the church seamlessly into the lives of her five children. "We sat around the table after dinner every night and said the rosary, all seven of us," said Hugh Gallagher. "How do you rip that out?"

A young priest, Gregory M. Smith, pursued Mrs. Fry, then Peggy Gallagher, when she was 16, forcing her to have sex repeatedly for about a year, she said. When another girl complained, he was shuffled to another parish, Mrs. Fry contends.

Mrs. Fry never told her parents and told her siblings only in recent years. Now they are navigating between a church hierarchy she sees as corrupt, and a faith they love.

Last week, one of Mrs. Fry's sisters, Pam Arsenault, an education director at a nearby parish, asked their brother Ray to a Mass supporting so-called "good priests." But during a standing ovation for the priests, Ray remained seated. "It wasn't meant to be malicious," he said. "I think at that point the victims needed our attention."

Mrs. Arsenault insisted he stand. He refused and she worried they would start shouting in church. For Mrs. Arsenault, this is a painful period that she hopes will strengthen the church in the end. For Ray, "God is still God." But, he said: "The church was our connection to God. Now church is big business."

Mrs. Fry sought solace from the church. But when she revealed the abuse at confession years later, she said the priest came into her cubicle, saying, "Get out of here! You're making up lies. This is a house of God." She wrote to Edward M. Egan, then Bridgeport's bishop and now cardinal in New York, in the 1990's, and she said a monsignor responded, telling her, "I'm not saying it's not true, but God has given me the ability to forget what has been forgiven."

When Mrs. Fry's father died in 1995, her husband, Bill, told their priest about the abuse, asking that Father Smith be kept from the funeral. "He covered his ears," Mr. Fry recounted, and then the priest said, " `I don't want to know who it is because if I do, I'll have to do something about it.' "

Mrs. Fry sued in 1997 and church officials, finding the allegations credible, suspended the priest, by then Monsignor Smith. The suit was dismissed because the claims were too old. He was declared "fit to return to ministry" and resumed work at a Bridgeport parish and Sacred Heart University.

She wrote to the Vatican representative in Washington in 1998, saying, "Please help me be at peace by responding." No one did.

Last week, after pressure from the Frys and local media attention, Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport announced that Monsignor Smith was taking a leave. A spokesman said the monsignor, who did not return phone calls seeking comment, had acknowledged the contact with Mrs. Fry and the other woman. He left behind a letter saying, "I truly wish to apologize to those I harmed early in my ministry and I ask their forgiveness."

It is a lot to ask. The pain has reached a second generation. With the family joyously anticipating today's confirmation of a nephew of Mrs. Fry, her 23-year-old son called Thursday so angry that he questioned his own confirmation. "I think I convinced him that the confirmation was committing himself not to the organization of the church but to living as a Christian," she said.

"I 100 percent understood him," she said. "I lived with this all my life. He's looking for answers and I don't necessarily have the answers."

Cardinal Egan's Faint Apology

New York Post

By DOUGLAS MONTERO and MARSHA KRANES

New York's Catholic cardinal says he's sorry — sort of.

In a letter to be read in all New York Archdiocese churches this weekend, Edward Cardinal Egan makes a qualified apology for any mistakes he "may have made" dealing with sex-predator priests in New York and in old job as bishop of Bridgeport, Conn.

"Over the past 15 years, in both Bridgeport and New York, I consistently sought and acted upon the best independent advice available to me from medical experts and behavioral scientists," Egan says.

"It is clear that today we have a much better understanding of this problem.

"If in hindsight we also discover that mistakes may have been made as regards to prompt removal of priests and assistance to victims, I am deeply sorry."

The letter was reported yesterday by National Review Online writer Rod Dreher, a former Post columnist. Calls to the archdiocese for comment were not returned.

The letter came to light as Manhattan prosecutors studied a list of six predator priests submitted by the archdiocese earlier this month.

Sources familiar with the list said it may result in two or three cases recent enough and serious enough to warrant criminal charges, and that prosecutors are seeking more details from the archdiocese.

Egan's apology received a mixed reception from critics of his handling of priest sex-abuse charges in Bridgeport, where he served 12 years, and New York, where he's nearing his second anniversary as archbishop.

Cindy Robinson, a lawyer with Tremont & Sheldon — a firm that has represented dozens of sex-abuse victims in Bridgeport, welcomed the change in Egan's tone. She called his letter "positive" but misleading.

She noted that two earlier statements made by the cardinal on pedophile priests "were totally legalistic, without compassion and lacked an apology and accountability."

But she said she knows firsthand that Egan's claim that he "sought and acted upon the best independent advice available" from doctors is untruthful.

She recalled a meeting with Egan and the parents of one alleged victim and appalled she was when he summarily dismissed the sex-abuse charges without seeking any independent advice.

Another critic, Susan Langford, regional director of Survivors Network for Those Abused by Priests, complained that Egan makes it appear that his mistakes have not yet been proven.

"He's like a criminal at sentencing who invariably says 'I made a mistake and I'm sorry' — but the damage has already been done."

She asked, "Was the cardinal sorry before the coverup of the scandal hit the press, or is he just sorry that it's coming out?"

One longtime church observer called Egan's limited apology "grudging and legalistic."

"They had to drag this out of him," he said. "He must be terrified that the Bridgeport case documents will be unsealed and all hell will break loose in New York."

"He may find himself in the same position tomorrow that Cardinal Law is in today," he added, referring to Boston's Bernard Cardinal Law, who has been widely criticized for covering up sex-abuse cases and reassigning pedophile priests.

Egan Kept A Low Profile In Rome

Hartford Courant, April 26, 2002

By EDMUND H. MAHONY
Courant Staff Writer

As American cardinals returned from an uncomfortable discussion in Rome of clerical sexual abuse, one of the points observers agreed on Thursday was the near invisibility of Cardinal Edward Egan.

Egan casts a long shadow over American Catholicism as the leader of the populous archdiocese of New York. Before that, he was bishop of Bridgeport. But over two days of extraordinary discussion of the moral and legal crisis that is sapping the church's credibility, Egan locked himself away from public view in Vatican meeting rooms or at his hotel, the five-star Crowne Plaza Rome-Minerva.

Like fellow Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, Egan for weeks has suffered under a stream of criticism for policies that shuffled sexually abusive priests between assignments while shielding them from civil authorities. Both men, normally deferred to as towers of moral authority, spoke infrequently in Rome and said little when they did.

"Egan and Law were no-shows," said Richard Ryan, a former Catholic social worker and columnist for The American Catholic.

Egan, for nearly two decades spanning the 1970s, lived and studied in Rome as either a church law student, professor of canon law or Vatican judge. Acquaintances say he is conservative, not an outgoing man, and prone to answering questions with legalistic responses.

But a variety of observers believe Egan's reticence in Rome was defensive. He attended the pope's conclave, but was rarely present at public forums. Some observers suspect he was trying to spare fellow cardinals and Pope John Paul II the distraction the media could cause over the abuse charges that surfaced during and after his tenure as bishop in Bridgeport. Others believe he was simply trying to stop the erosion of his personal credibility.

"It was fairly evident to me that the reason he wasn't present was that it would have been a diversion," said Patrick Scully of the Catholic League. "The focus of the meeting was how to deal with the problem. If he is there, the focus may have been where they didn't want it. He would have been a distraction. He would have been a lightning rod. Everyone would have been asking about him."

David Clohessy, director of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, was less charitable.

"Egan and Law might as well have recused themselves," Clohessy said. "They should have said 'I am a major part of the problem and I have no credibility nor wisdom nor appropriate role in trying to solve it.' You could argue that the prudent and moral thing for them to have done would have been not to go to Rome. I cannot see how Egan has credibility any longer."

The events that prompted the pope to summon the American bishops to Rome began in January with news reports in Boston that Law had rotated an abusive priest among parishes in what many believe was an effort to conceal his behavior.

The ensuing scandal spread to New York within months, when The Courant reported that, while leading the diocese of Bridgeport in the 1990s, Egan allowed abusive priests to remain in the ministry and failed to report their behavior to the police.

Reports of similar behavior have since surfaced elsewhere in the country.

After meetings with the pope and other Vatican officials, the American cardinals Wednesday night issued a set of proposals intended to help remove priests who abuse minors. But the recommendations fell short of the zero tolerance policy some clerics had hoped for and are likely to be the subject of further discussion.

Egan, who, along with Law, has been under pressure to resign, skipped the Wednesday press conference at which the anti-abuse proposals were announced. On those occasions when reporters managed to catch him, his statements danced around the edges of the issues dominating the Vatican talks.

"What I think has been most important here is that the Holy See, the pope, and his top officials have had a chance to explain to us their reaction to all of this in great detail, and we've had a chance to explain our understanding to them," Egan told The New York Times.

When pressed about homosexuals in the priesthood, a topic several cardinals said they had hoped to discuss in Rome, Egan complained of being misquoted by an Italian newspaper. The paper said that Egan was concerned that homosexuals could become pedophiles if admitted to seminaries.

"I would just say this. The most important thing is to clean up the truth," Egan said. "And the truth is, I have never said anything."

Egan's statements in recent weeks have sounded painfully contrived, as if he were trying to express sympathy for the child victims of abusive priests while continuing to distance the church from legal responsibility.

After insisting for weeks that he properly handled abuse complaints against priests in the Bridgeport Diocese, Egan distributed a letter to New York City parishes last weekend in

which he wrote, "If in hindsight we also discover that mistakes may have been made [in regard to] prompt removal of priests and assistance to victims, I am deeply sorry."

The letters were read from New York pulpits Sunday. Egan visited a church in the Bronx that day, but had another priest read the letter. Egan's recent remarks are not markedly different from the responses he made to the hostile question from lawyers bringing abuse complaints against his diocese in the 1990s. Those answers reflect his background in canon law, which is drafted in part to protect the church.

In 1960, he was appointed assistant vice-rector of moral theology and canon law at the Pontifical North American College in Vatican City. Four years later, he earned a doctorate with honors in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

He returned briefly to Chicago - he was born in Oak Park in 1932 - and worked as secretary to Cardinal John Cody. He returned to Rome in 1971 and continued to be involved in teaching and interpreting church law. He was one of six canonists who worked closely with Pope John Paul II on the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1983.

Egan was consecrated a bishop in May 1985. He moved to New York, then Bridgeport. He became cardinal of New York after Cardinal John O'Connor's death in 2000.

Egan seems less comfortable under the media attention than the camera-friendly O'Connor.

"He speaks, I think, only when there is pressure," said Ryan, who writes for *The American Catholic*, published in Farmington. "I think he feels he is a politician. But he's kind of a sloppy politician."

Egan's political skills could soon be put to the test. Lawyers say the intense publicity given to clerical abuse has prompted numerous victims in the Bridgeport area to come forward with complaints. Legislation pending at the state Capitol would make it possible for victims of decades-old abuse to sue.

Newspapers Move to Unseal Documents on Abuse Lawsuits

The New York Times

By **DAVID M. HERSZENHORN**

WATERBURY, Conn., April 24 -- Lawyers for The New York Times and The Hartford Courant urged a judge today to officially unseal confidential court records related to more than two dozen lawsuits involving Connecticut priests who were accused of sexually abusing children.

Despite the court seal, The Courant has already obtained and published some of the documents, including transcripts of depositions by Cardinal Edward M. Egan, the archbishop of New York, that raised questions about his handling of abuse allegations when he was bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

As Pope John Paul II continued his meeting in Rome with American cardinals about sexual abuse by clergymen, and with Roman Catholic officials across the United States pledging more openness, the request by the two newspapers today met with staunch opposition.

Before Judge Robert F. McWeeny in State Superior Court, church lawyers argued to keep the records secret. They said several of the lawsuits, involving accusations by 26 people against five priests, were settled last year based on an agreement that the files would remain sealed.

The lead lawyer for the Bridgeport Diocese, James F. Stapleton, said Judge McWeeny had no authority to open files from closed cases that never reached trial. "This court has no jurisdiction under established Connecticut law to do any of the things The New York Times has asked it to do," he said.

But a lawyer for The Times, Jonathan M. Albano, urged the judge to lift the seal, saying that recent revelations about abuse by clergymen nationwide as well as public comments both by Cardinal Egan and Pope John Paul II had created a pressing public interest in the disclosure of the Bridgeport records.

"In March of 2001, the number of people who have come forward had not come forward," Mr. Albano said. "There hadn't been meetings in Rome." In December, Mr. Albano represented The Boston Globe in its successful effort to unseal court documents related to clergy sex abuse cases in Boston.

The Times filed an emergency motion to unseal the Connecticut documents on March 26, nine days after The Courant first published excerpts of the sealed documents. The Courant report suggested that Cardinal Egan had covered up abuse allegations and allowed abusive priests to continue working. In a letter to parishioners just before Easter, Cardinal Egan defended himself against The Courant's report, noting that all priests

accused of misconduct had psychiatric evaluations to determine if they were fit to return to work.

Joseph McAleer, a Bridgeport diocese spokesman, said the church was fighting the newspapers to avoid opening old wounds. "As we move forward to ensure the protection of children, our focus is reconciliation, healing and closure," he said in a statement. "We believe it serves no healing purpose to reopen painful circumstances that have already been very publicly discussed, and where reconciliation has been reached with victims."

In court, Mr. Stapleton, the lawyer for the diocese, said The Times did not have a legitimate public interest in seeking the documents. "I don't know what the emergency is except that they want to compete with The Hartford Courant, which has been writing a lot of stories," he said.

Ralph Elliot, a lawyer for The Courant, told Judge McWeeny that there was a compelling public interest in examining the behavior of the Catholic Church because it does not pay taxes. "It is a legitimate question of public policy whether the defendant is still entitled to the act of grace given by the Legislature in the form of tax exemption," he said.

Judge McWeeny said that he did have the authority to rule on the newspapers' request but would hear further arguments. He ordered both sides to file additional briefs by May 6 and response briefs by May 9.

Raymond B. Rubens, a lawyer for the Rev. Raymond S. Pcolka, one priest accused of abuse, called the efforts to unseal records "baloney."

Cindy L. Robinson, a lawyer who represented many abuse victims in Connecticut, said she was surprised by the church's decision to fight a pitched legal battle in Connecticut.

"There seems to be a need more than ever for openness," she said.

Text Of U.S. Cardinals' Statement At The End Of Two-day Meeting At The Vatican

Hartford Courant, April 24, 2002

The text of the statement released after the extraordinary two-day meeting held at the Vatican:

On April 23-24, 2002, an extraordinary meeting was held in the Vatican between the Cardinals of the United States and the leadership of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and the heads of several offices of the Holy See on the subject of the sexual abuse of minors.

The meeting was called with three goals in mind:

- on the part of the American bishops, to inform the Holy See about the difficulties which they have faced in recent months,
- on the part of the Roman Dicasteries, to hear directly from the American cardinals and the chief officials of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops a general evaluation of the situation,
- and together to develop ways to move forward in addressing these issues.

As is known, the holy father received the working group in his private library late in the morning of Tuesday, April 23, and gave a programmatic address. Today, at the end of the morning session, his holiness invited the American cardinals and bishops to lunch, to continue their discussion of some of the themes raised at the meeting.

The participants first of all wish to express their unanimous gratitude to the holy father for his clear indications of direction and commitment for the future. In communion with the pope they reaffirm certain basic principles:

- 1) The sexual abuse of minors is rightly considered a crime by society and is an appalling sin in the eyes of God, above all when it is perpetrated by priests and religious whose vocation is to help persons to lead holy lives before God and men.
- 2) There is a need to convey to the victims and their families a profound sense of solidarity and to provide appropriate assistance in recovering faith and receiving pastoral care.
- 3) Even if the cases of true pedophilia on the part of priests and religious are few, all the participants recognized the gravity of the problem. In the meeting, the quantitative terms of the problem were discussed, since the statistics are not very clear in this regard. Attention was drawn to the fact that almost all the cases involved adolescents and therefore were not cases of true pedophilia.

4) Together with the fact that a link between celibacy and pedophilia cannot be scientifically maintained, the meeting reaffirmed the value of priestly celibacy as a gift of God to the church.

5) Given the doctrinal issues underlying the deplorable behavior in question, certain lines of response have been proposed:

a) the pastors of the church need clearly to promote the correct moral teaching of the church and publicly to reprimand individuals who spread dissent and groups which advance ambiguous approaches to pastoral care;

b) a new and serious apostolic visitation of seminaries and other institutes of formation must be made without delay, with particular emphasis on the need for fidelity to the church's teaching, especially in the area of morality, and the need for a deeper study of the criteria of suitability of candidates to the priesthood.

c) it would be fitting for the Bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to ask the faithful to join them in observing a national day of prayer and penance, in reparation for the offenses perpetrated and in prayer to God for the conversion of sinners and the reconciliation of victims.

6) All the participants have seen this time as a call to a greater fidelity to the mystery of the church. Consequently they see the present time as a moment of grace. While recognizing that practical criteria of conduct are indispensable and urgently needed, we cannot underestimate, in the words of the holy father, "the power of Christian conversion, that radical decision to turn away from sin and back to God, which reaches the depths of a person's soul and can work extraordinary change." At the same time, as his holiness also stated, "People need to know that there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young. They must know that bishops and priests are totally committed to the fullness of Catholic truth on matters of sexual morality, a truth as essential to the renewal of the priesthood and the episcopate as it is to the renewal of marriage and family life."

Again in the holy father's words, neither should we forget the immense spiritual, human and social good that the vast majority of priests and religious in the United States have done and are still doing. The Catholic Church in your country has always promoted human and Christian values with great vigor and generosity, in a way that has helped to consolidate all that is noble in the American people. A great work of art may be blemished, but its beauty remains; and this is a truth which any intellectually honest critic will recognize. To the Catholic communities in the United States, to their pastors and members, to the men and women religious, to teachers in Catholic universities and schools, to American missionaries in all parts of the world, go the wholehearted thanks of the entire Catholic church and the personal thanks of the bishop of Rome."

For this reason, the cardinals and bishops present at the meeting today sent a message to all the priests of the United States, their co-workers in the pastoral ministry.

As part of the preparation for the June meeting of the American bishops, the United States participants in the Rome meeting presented to the prefects of the Roman congregations the following proposals:

- 1) We propose to send the respective congregations of the Holy See a set of national standards which the Holy See will properly review (recognition), in which essential elements for policies dealing with the sexual abuse of minors in dioceses and religious institutes in the United States are set forth.
- 2) We will propose that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops recommend a special process for the dismissal from the clerical state of a priest who has become notorious and is guilty of the serial, predatory, sexual abuse of minors.
- 3) While recognizing that the code of canon law already contains a judicial process for the dismissal of priests guilty of sexually abusing minors, we will also propose a special process for cases which are not notorious but where the diocesan bishop considers the priest a threat for the protection of children and young people, in order to avoid grave scandal in the future and to safeguard the common good of the church.
- 4) We will propose an apostolic visitation of seminaries and religious houses of formation, giving special attention to their admission requirements and the need for them to teach Catholic moral doctrine in its integrity.
- 5) We will propose that the bishops of the United States make every effort to implement the challenge of the holy father that the present crisis "must lead to a holier priesthood, a holier episcopate, and a holier church" by calling for deeper holiness in the church in the United States, including ourselves as bishops, the clergy, the religious and the faithful.
- 6) We propose that the bishops of the United States set aside a day for prayer and penance throughout the church in the United States, in order to implore reconciliation and the renewal of ecclesial life.

Text Of U.S. Cardinals' Letter To Priests

Hartford Courant, April 24, 2002

The text of the letter to priests released Wednesday by U.S. cardinals at the Vatican:

We, the cardinals of the United States and the presidency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, gathered with our brother cardinals of the Roman Curia around the successor of Peter, wish to speak a special word to you, our brother priests who give yourselves so generously from day to day in service of God's people.

At our meeting, you have been very much in our minds and hearts, for we know the heavy burden of sorrow and shame that you are bearing because some have betrayed the grace of ordination by abusing those entrusted to their care.

We regret that episcopal oversight has not been able to preserve the church from this scandal. The entire church, the bride of Christ, is afflicted by this wound - the victims and their families first of all, but also you who have dedicated your lives to "the priestly service of the Gospel of God" (Romans 15:16).

To all of you we express our deep gratitude for all that you do to build up the body of Christ in holiness and love. We pledge to support you in every possible way through these troubled times, and we ask that you stay close to us in the bond of the priesthood as we make every effort to bring the healing grace of Christ to the people whom we serve.

We are in complete harmony with the Holy Father when he said in his address yesterday: "Neither should we forget the immense spiritual, human and social good that the vast majority of priests and religious in the United States have done and are still doing.... To the Catholic communities in the United States, to their pastors and members, to the men and women religious, to teachers in Catholic universities and schools, to American missionaries in all parts of the world, go the wholehearted thanks of the entire Catholic Church and the personal thanks of the bishop of Rome."

As we look to the future, let us together beg the eternal high priest for the grace to live this time of trial with courage and confidence in the crucified lord. This echoes the summons of our ordination: "Imitate the mystery you celebrate; model your life on the mystery of the lord's cross" (rite of ordination); and it is a vital part of what we now offer the church as she passes through this time of painful purification. From the house of the successor of Peter, who has confirmed us in our faith, we wish in turn to confirm you in the humble and exalted service of the Catholic priesthood to which we have been called.

Peace be with you!

Birth Control Challenge To Church Admonitions On Sex

Hartford Courant, April 24, 2002

By RINKER BUCK
Courant Staff Writer

ROME -- Cinzia Mezzi, a 32-year-old housewife who lives in the Janiculum Hill neighborhood overlooking this city, spent Tuesday afternoon in the beautiful Villa Sciarra park doing something almost completely unheard of for Italian women these days.

Mezzi spent the afternoon in the park watching her two children play.

"Oh no, you noticed," Mezzi laughed, when asked about the size of her brood. "When the second baby came along all of my friends said 'Cinzia, Cinzia, Cinzia, what are you doing?' Nobody in Italy has more than one baby anymore. I'm considered a little crazy."

Over the past 25 years, Italian women - in a country where more than 90 percent of the people are at least nominally Catholic - have just said "no" to more babies, and most of them are either forgoing motherhood entirely or insisting that their family planning stop at just one child.

What demographers are now calling Italy's "bambino bust" is something of a marvel of the world. With a national birth rate of just 1.18 children per woman - compared to a birth rate of 2.06 children per woman in the U.S., or 1.75 in neighboring France - Italy is no longer producing enough children to sustain its population, and at the present rate will actually shrink by about a third over the next 50 years, from about 56 million people to about 40 million.

Italy's incredible, shrinking baby machine is considered remarkable, but not simply because the country has achieved the lowest birth rate in the world in the space of a single generation. Culturally, the shift toward one-child families is considered enormous. Italy, long celebrated in literature and film for the pageantry of its large families, is also the historic seat of the Roman Catholic Church, and the modern Italian penchant for small families has put its married couples on a collision course with the Vatican and its teachings about birth control.

Italy's bambino bust stands as a subtle but potent backdrop to the historic Vatican summit this week between American cardinals and the pope. While the issue raised at this week's meetings - the growing scandal of sexually abusive priests - is vastly different from the question of Italian family planning, ultimately both resound with a single theme: the continued credibility of the Roman Catholic Church.

In America, questions about the moral authority and legal culpability of the church and its priests have brought some pointed questions to the fore, not the least about issues concerning sexuality.

The Rev. Richard McBrien, a prominent theologian from Notre Dame University, raised the issue recently in comments about the sex abuse scandal. "One of the good things that will come out of this crisis is that the Catholic Church, at least at the official level, will no longer be able to speak out on sexuality. The church's concern with sexuality has been obsessive," he said.

In Europe, where over the past 25 years church attendance has plummeted and priestly vocations have fallen sharply, nominal Catholics have grown used to considering the church an afterthought, its vast bureaucracy and cathedrals more reliable as a source of tourist revenue than a source of moral guidance. Vatican officials have said that Pope John Paul II's concern about just that - a European-style skepticism about the church and its hierarchy being introduced into America by the sex-abuse scandal - was one reason for this week's conclave.

When asked about the Catholic Church and its teaching on birth control, Mezzi seemed almost joyfully defiant, an attitude typical in a country where opinion surveys show that more than 90 percent of women use birth control and that has one of the highest abortion rates in Europe.

"Oh, please, do not talk to me about the church and the pope," Mezzi said, throwing back her head to laugh. "Who is he to tell me what I can do with my body and how many babies I must have? The pope talks, talks, talks, but believe me, nobody in Italy listens."

Lorenzo Breveglieri, 31, an officer with the Italian Senate police, was kicking a soccer ball with his 6-year-old son on Tuesday afternoon, also in Villa Sciarra park. He and his wife "thanked the Lord," he said, when their son was born, but plan to have no more.

"Life in Italy is not what it is like on the TV shows I see from America," Breveglieri said. "The economy is very competitive, apartments are hugely expensive, and most couples both have to work to scrape by. Middle class is just survival here. I would love to have more babies, but we can't do that and make a down payment on an apartment. No one in Italy has a big family any more."

Sociologists and political scientists point to another important factor. A succession of unstable governments and traditional Italian reluctance toward funding a generous social welfare state have prevented Italy from making the long-term commitment to child care and other benefits for women that neighboring countries in Europe began establishing over 30 years ago.

"You have to understand what has happened in Europe during the postwar years," said Margaret B. Melady, a sociologist who has spent nine years in Italy and is now president of the American University in Rome. "In Europe, there's a real sense that government

programs have replaced the traditional role of the family, and in France, Germany and Scandinavia tax breaks for larger families, universal day care and free medical care have created a very protective structure supporting slightly larger families. These countries saw a baby bust coming years ago and planned for it. Italy never did this."

American-style values and the gradual impact of the women's liberation movement are also mentioned by many Italian women. Sylvia Mampieri, 27, works for a film production company in Rome and married last year after what she called a "long playing-around period" in her early 20s.

"I grew up watching Julia Roberts movies and said to myself, 'Oh, I want that life for a while,'" Mampieri said, while dining with friends at an outdoor cafe along the trendy Via Trastevere in Rome. "I just wanted to get out of university, find a job and have boyfriends for a while before I got married, a life very different from what my mother had. Birth control gave me that freedom, and I can see already that I will just continue its benefits in marriage."

Attitudes like that, of course, have long exasperated the conservative John Paul II. On several occasions, while reaffirming church doctrine on birth control, the pope has specifically mentioned changing sexual mores in Europe, and his annoyance with Italian women in particular has been one of his most public piques. During a Vatican speech in February, 2000, the pope caused a furor in Italy by saying "Italians: Make more babies."

"Oh, that man! Italian women will never forget that he said that, but he just made things worse for himself and his church," said Univella Giannotta, 36, who was interviewed at another Via Trastevere cafe. Giannotta is a medical librarian at a Rome hospital, has one child, and didn't marry until she was 30.

"The pope just doesn't understand our lives and the pressures on us," Giannotta said. "We Italians are very sensual, and we enjoy our outdoor culture and fun. No one can afford big apartments or large cars so we enjoy life at night in the cafes together, meeting our friends and family, or going to the cinema. It's a lot easier to have just one child because then one couple can care for two or three of them at night while the others go out. I laugh at the pope because what we have in Italy is just one big beautiful family sharing the children, but he doesn't understand that."

Lorenzo Breveglieri said that Italian men are also adjusting. He and many of his friends, he said, resent the traditional depiction of Italian men as chauvinistic lovers and husbands who insist on having more babies and don't share in child-rearing chores.

"My parents keep saying, 'Where are the babies, we need more babies,' but that's not important to me," Breveglieri said. "It's a lot more important to me that my wife just loves me a lot."

Priests As 'John Doe'

Hartford Courant, April 23, 2002

**By EDMUND H. MAHONY
Courant Staff Writer**

Four priests whose departures for sexual misconduct were announced Sunday by Bridgeport Bishop William E. Lori were allowed to actively serve for years despite complaints about them, raising more questions about the diocese's past practice of recording and investigating complaints.

The four were among seven "John Doe" priests referred to, but never publicly identified, during years of litigation against the diocese by victims of another half-dozen priests. The remaining three priests in the group of John Does were not suspended by Lori Sunday and remain active.

Collectively, the seven priests formed a group, which in the mid-1990s hired a lawyer to keep plaintiffs who had filed sex-abuse suits against the diocese from examining their personnel files. Lawyers for the seven priests and the diocese succeeded in keeping the files secret.

Questions about the conduct of the John Doe priests became known to senior diocesan officials during the course of the abuse suits. In fact, Bridgeport's then-Bishop Edward M. Egan, now archbishop and cardinal in New York, was asked about complaints against the seven during a deposition in September 1999. Egan's lawyer blocked him from answering the questions.

The lawsuits were settled last year when the Bridgeport diocese agreed to pay about \$12 million to 26 people who complained of abuse by priests during the 1970s and 1980s. Settlement of the suits effectively ended legal attempts to examine the church's personnel files on the seven John Doe priests, and with litigation no longer pending, demands for evidence of misconduct became moot.

The Courant learned the identities of the seven - who were never named as defendants in the abuse suits - after obtaining sealed legal papers, including Egan's depositions in the suits.

Lori resurrected questions about the seven on Sunday when, during a press conference, he announced the removal or resignation of several priests, in part to allay concerns of Fairfield County parishioners about sexual misconduct by clergy members.

Saying "the evil of sexual abuse of minors calls for a radically new approach," Lori announced the suspension of the Rev. Stanley N. Koziol of St. Mark Parish in Stratford, and the resignation of Monsignor Gregory M. Smith, director of the Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Studies at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

In addition, Lori revealed that two other priests who had disappeared without explanation from their parishes in 1997 had, in fact, been removed for sexual misconduct on Egan's orders. Those priests were the Rev. Joseph Moore and Monsignor Charles W. Stubbs.

Joseph McAleer, a spokesman for the Bridgeport diocese, said Monday he did not know why complaints, some of which appear to have been present in clergy personnel files for years, were not acted on prior to Lori's installation as bishop.

"I can't speak for the past," he said. "I can speak for you confidently for the present and on Bishop Lori. We never had a review board before."

Smith was accused of becoming sexually involved with two teenage girls in the late 1960s and early 1970s. One of the girls filed repeated complaints with church officials over a period of many years about Smith's conduct. In the late 1990s, the girl - by then a middle-aged wife and mother - sued Smith and the diocese, but a judge dismissed the suit, saying it had been filed too late.

Egan, then bishop of Bridgeport, briefly suspended Smith at about the time the suit was filed. But he later reinstated Smith after the priest completed a psychiatric evaluation.

Koziol, prior to his suspension Sunday, recently admitted having sexual relations with a minor in the early 1960s. A deposition obtained by The Courant shows that a senior diocesan official was aware of questions about Koziol's behavior for years.

In a deposition in 1996, former Bishop Walter Curtis was asked: "Isn't it a fact that Father Koziol was transferred from one of his parishes to another because of claims made in regard to sexual abuse of children?" Curtis' lawyer instructed him not to answer the question.

According to another deposition, the diocese knew of the abuse charges involving Moore at least by 1995 - two years before his quiet suspension by Egan.

A lawyer for sex abuse plaintiffs questioned Monsignor Andrew T. Cusack about the complaints against Moore in 1995. Cusack, at that time, said he did not recall a meeting with two parents who told him that Moore had abused their sons.

The allegations that led to Stubbs' removal that same year, and the date of their occurrence, could not be determined.

The nature of the complaints against the three other priests who intervened in the abuse suits - but who were not among those mentioned by Lori on Sunday - are less clear.

A variety of sources said they did not know the nature of the allegations that put two of the three still-active priests into the group of seven. In a deposition obtained by The Courant, the third is accused of removing the trousers of young boys and spanking them.

A lawyer familiar with the litigation against the diocese said that at least one additional complaint against that third, still active priest, surfaced during the lawsuits.

McAleer said that a review recently ordered by Lori as a means of dealing forcefully with misconduct allegations showed no information in the personnel files of the three still-active priests that would merit punishment.

"Bishop Lori initiated the file review not because he was expecting anything," McAleer said. "He wanted to make sure that if there were allegations from the past they were handled properly and thoroughly. In the course of file review, if any past allegations were discovered, they were revisited with the advice and wisdom of the new review board."

Others expressed a lesser degree of confidence in the diocesan review process.

Peggy Fry of Monroe, the woman who unsuccessfully sued Smith, said Monday she thought his resignation from the church was appropriate. But she criticized the church for years of inaction on allegations of sexual misconduct.

"Unfortunately, I think this is just the tip of the iceberg," she said of Lori's suspensions.

Bridgeport lawyer Cindy Robinson, who sued in behalf of Fry and other abuse victims, called Lori's actions long overdue.

"Those announcements should have been made years ago," Robinson said. "My feeling is that they are only now being made because of the public scrutiny. These aren't new allegations for them. In the case of Monsignor Smith, they have known for years and they recklessly have allowed him to continue on as a priest even after he admitted sexual abuse of minors."

Cardinals Walk Alone

Hartford Courant, April 23, 2002

By RINKER BUCK
Courant Staff Writer

ROME -- Even before today's remarkable papal conclave began, there were clear signs the fallout from a growing sex abuse scandal was not only aggravating rifts within the church's U.S. hierarchy, but also causing new problems in the historically uncomfortable relationship between the Vatican and its American prelates.

In the first sign that it was distancing itself from broad calls for reform of the church, the Vatican Monday abruptly changed plans and announced that news conferences and briefings during the talks would not take place within the Vatican walls.

Instead, the cardinals and their spokesmen will be meeting with reporters and addressing their remarks to television cameras from around the globe on the grounds of the Pontifical North American College, informally called "the American seminary," southeast of the Vatican grounds on the fabled Janiculum Hill.

Symbols are important at the Vatican, where the slightest change of address or wording of a statement can speak volumes, and the choice of the North American College was considered highly significant. The college is a prestigious academic way point for future U.S. priests and theologians, and numbers among its graduates many bishops and cardinals. Students can only be nominated for acceptance by their bishops. Archbishop Daniel A. Cronin of Hartford is the chairman of the college's board.

The North American College commands a sweeping vista of the Tiber River and greater Rome across the immense dome of St. Peter's Basilica, but reaching the campus requires a long climb up the twisting, narrow Via Del Gianicolo, a hike that few of the aging cardinals are expected to make. A Vatican official, who generally speaks to the press on the condition that he not be named, smiled gently and winked when asked about the sudden change of address.

"Officially, there is no reason that the cardinals attending the conference [will] speak to the press up there," the Vatican official said. "Unofficially, we are simply saying that this is their conference, an American meeting, and they may speak on their own grounds. The Holy See and its various offices are not necessarily endorsing any statements that come out of this meeting. The Vatican regards this as a closed meeting and will not be commenting, except at the end, as to its events."

In Vatican-speak, these are potent nuances. First, by clearly establishing an American locale for outside news of the meeting, the Vatican is erecting a kind of media cordon sanitaire around the event, indicating that it will not respond either quickly or avidly to

broad popular demands for change emanating from America since the church sex abuse scandal began in Boston in January.

Second, the pope and his Vatican handlers are already uncomfortable about remarks made by some of the more liberal American cardinals. Now the Vatican wants it known that talk of changing the mandatory celibacy rule for priests or reforming Rome's cumbersome procedures for removing errant clerics is premature and out of keeping with the present policies of Rome.

Adding to the church's problem is an element of disunity among the American cardinals. As the delegation left for Italy, there were reports that several would push for the resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston. Monday, however, there was vocal support for him, leaving the question of his future unclear.

In essence, the "snap conclave" of 2002 is already renewing a longstanding question that has bedeviled Rome's relationship with its American branch, tensions that date to the period just after the Revolutionary War, when the Vatican managed to abort an attempt by American prelates to declare ecclesiastical independence from Rome.

Vatican officials are particularly unsettled by remarks made by two outspoken American cardinals. They are Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., and Roger Mahony of Los Angeles. McCarrick's role is considered important during the meetings this week because he is regarded as particularly media savvy and his position as the head of the archdiocese in the U.S. capital lends him the seeming authority of speaking the national Catholic mind. Mahony is considered influential because he is the popular leader of a sprawling Southern California archdiocese - the largest in the United States - that contains a growing population of the American church's most loyal source of new members, Hispanic immigrants.

When the sex abuse scandal began earlier this year, McCarrick seemed well positioned to weather the storm. Since 1993, his Washington archdiocese has practiced a policy of reporting allegations of sexual abuse to civil authorities and quickly removing offending priests. McCarrick has indicated that he favors a comprehensive plan for removing abusive priests across all dioceses in the country and expressed a need for reforming the Vatican's procedures for removing offending clerics. Under present Vatican rules, bishops can only suspend a priest temporarily and then confidentially move his name through a long bureaucratic appeals process that can take years to resolve.

McCarrick's position places him at odds with the controversial cardinals Law and Edward Egan of New York, both of whom cited church policy on confidentiality and the need to follow official church procedures as reasons for their delays in removing repeat-offender priests.

In recent weeks, Mahony has gone even further. In remarks made to reporters and in a television press conference, Mahony has said that he will carry to Rome a proposal to study the ordination not only of married priests but also of women. Mahony has publicly

pointed out that Eastern Rite Catholics have long been served by married priests and argued that married and female priests are worth study.

At this, Mahony is only acknowledging that, even before the sex abuse scandal this year, Catholic sentiment was shifting on the mandatory celibacy rule, much as surveys show that American Catholic women routinely ignore the church's conservative teachings on birth control. As long ago as 1994, a Los Angeles Times poll showed that 59 percent of priests and 66 percent of nuns believed that priests should be allowed to marry. Gallup polls have regularly shown that over 60 percent of American Catholics believe that women should be ordained.

Such thinking, however, is still anathema to Rome and its present pope, whose deep roots in the conservative traditions of the Polish church have never been shaken by calls for change from across the Atlantic.

American Scandal As Seen From A Distance

Hartford Courant, April 22, 2002

By RINKER BUCK
Courant Staff Writer

ROME -- A long stroll into Vatican City Sunday along the banks of the Tiber River, where fishermen plied the waters for carp, and schoolboys kicked soccer balls in the broad piazzas, revealed a city almost blissfully unaware of the furor in American Catholicism and determined to enjoy the traditional rites of spring.

As U.S. cardinals began to gather here for an unprecedented "snap conclave" with Pope John Paul II this week, and the archbishops of Boston and New York once again addressed the American church's crisis, there were few overt signs of trouble here.

Rather, on a balmy April day, with low cumulus clouds scudding over the cathedral spires and the massive dome of Castel Sant Angelo, St. Peter's Square in the Vatican was a scene of jubilation. The pope, at 82 frail and visibly ailing, has recently been forced to skip his traditional noon Sunday public audience from the high library window of his residence. Most of the people in the large crowd milling in the immense square - Catholics from Sicily, France and Argentina, with a smattering of American and Japanese tourists - did not expect the pope to appear.

Then, just a few minutes before noon, the large shutters above the library window were thrown open, the giant video screen to the left of the square flickered on, and a curate could be seen pulling aside the curtains and adjusting papers on a small metal stand. Moments later, the familiar stooped figure of the pope appeared, in white robes and skull cap, and the crowd clapped with joy and exclaimed in many tongues, from Italian to American English.

"Bene! Bene! Il Papa! Il Papa!"

"C'est le Pape!"

"Honey, I think we're in luck. That's the pope right there on the video screen."

Foregoing his habit of earlier years of speaking to the Sunday crowd in several languages, the pope labored under obvious physical difficulty in Latin, slurring his syllables as his voice trailed off almost to a whisper at the end of long sentences. But the crowd below cheered and clapped with enthusiasm anyway, especially when the pope's prepared remarks mentioned tour groups that his speechwriter knew would be there. Flocks of pigeons rose to startled flight each time the crowd roared.

But there was no mention of the crisis in America, no declaration of support for the cardinals, no condemnation of the alleged abusers.

Afterward, as the crowd dispersed toward the pizza shops and gelati stands along the broad Via Della Conciliazione, a few tourists and pilgrims remained behind in the square, herding in toward St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museum.

Robert Rohm, a retired artist and sculptor from Charlestown, R.I., is visiting Rome for the week with his wife, and like many in the crowd was both moved and saddened by the pope's appearance.

"He seems very feeble, short of breath, doesn't he?" Rohm said. "But after that performance, I wouldn't underestimate the man."

As a New Englander, Rohm said, he's been following the "trials and tribulations" of Cardinal Law in Boston, events which formed a poignant backdrop to the trip to Rome that he and his wife had been planning for more than a year.

"The one thought I had while the pope was standing there and courageously getting through his words is that I wouldn't want to be an American cardinal right now," Rohm said. "It must be a little scary for these cardinals, like being called down to the principal's office when we were kids, because it's obvious that the pope hasn't called them here to give out awards. He's calling them here to deal with this problem - or else."

Like many, Rohm said that he was "scandalized" by the recent revelations about pedophilic priests, but thinks that sudden reforms like scuttling mandatory celibacy for Catholic clergy might be a mistake.

"I have long been attracted to Buddhism and they have a long celibate tradition among the monks in that religion," Rohm said. "There's something very attractive about a church holding fast to its traditions despite the pressures and hubbub of the modern world."

Many Italians expressed surprise at the arrival late this week of foreign journalists and TV satellite trucks, and news that the furor in the American church was considered serious enough to warrant a sudden meeting of the cardinals in Rome. The Italian and European press has largely ignored the American scandal, which has been pushed off the front pages by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the elections in France. Besides, they say, European countries have had their own church sex scandals in recent years, and these rarely resulted in widespread calls for radical church reform.

Brother Gregorio Lucatta lives in a small monastery outside Florence and belongs to a Catholic order devoted to education and maintaining church buildings and shrines. An architectural historian, he is spending the year in Rome assisting in the restoration of a few Vatican buildings.

"We heard nothing about this problem you are having with your American priests until the Vatican announced last week that the cardinals were coming here," Brother Gregorio said. "It's a mystery to us why the Americans consider this so urgent because these things have happened in other countries and been dealt with. But your media gets a story like

this and makes it seem like all priests have erred this way. But I am a celibate monk and love my life given to Jesus. I don't like a question like this confusing the beauty of a day when I have just heard the Holy Father."

Another couple, who said they were from Limerick, Ireland, but preferred not to give their names, said that they were "beyond shock" about the news from the American church because they had already endured similar scandals in Ireland. Still, they're disappointed, they said, because when visiting relatives in the Boston area they were impressed with the vibrancy of the American church.

"What we find tragic about this is that in the Boston area the churches are always full on Sunday, there are many young people, and the sermons were all well-delivered and spirited," the man said. "In Ireland, no one goes to church anymore. The young have deserted the faith and it's mostly a matter of old priests talking down to people. Americans, who seemed to have a need to establish their identity in the church, still had something going in Boston, we thought."

"This will definitely destroy the church in the U.S.," said the woman from Limerick. "In Ireland we had scandals with bishops having children and a long expose about nuns and priests abusing children in orphanages. Church-going was falling away anyway, but those scandals killed it off for good, and not just the young. I personally lost my faith. If the Pope and the cardinals respond and really do something meaningful this week, it will help. But I don't think the hierarchy will really respond and the same thing will happen to the U.S. church that happened in Ireland."

The stroll back toward downtown Rome was peaceful. Afternoon showers had scattered the Vatican City crowds, and pedestrians along the broad avenue by the Tiber River had found the safety of the awnings covering the cafes. At one of them, opposite the stone Garibaldi Bridge, Attilio Cesaro was relaxing over a late lunch and reading the papers. Cesaro, a chemistry professor from the University of Trieste, was passing through Rome after a visit to the United States to attend professional conferences.

"I travel to the U.S. a lot and I think I understand why Americans are making such a cause out of this meeting of the cardinals," Cesaro said. "Americans are always convinced that what's happening to them is the most important thing in the world at the moment. But we Europeans take a broader view and are more skeptical that any one story matters. So, everyone in the U.S. thinks it's so important that their cardinals are coming here. Well, our cardinals see the pope all the time."

A Complete Loss Of Faith In Egan

Hartford Courant, April 21, 2002

By ELIZABETH HAMILTON
Courant Staff Writer

In many ways, Carole Surran was the ideal parishioner - a devout Catholic who attended Mass daily and allowed nothing to interfere with her faith or devotion to the church.

It was that devotion, in part, that led the Wilton mother to seek a meeting in August 1989 with Bridgeport's new bishop, Edward Egan, to discuss a problem she feared would harm her church: The recent assignment to a diocesan high school of a priest who had tried to molest her son seven years earlier.

As an entree to Egan, Surran sought and received the help of a well-known professor and priest at St. John's University, where she was a graduate student in theology. The professor wrote to his friend Egan, commending Surran as an impressive woman who had a "grave and sensitive" matter to discuss with him.

Surran then followed up with a respectful - and, as it turns out, prophetic - letter of her own to the bishop, saying the matter "could have devastating effects on individuals, as well as be a serious scandal for the diocese and the Church. Hoping to hear from you soon."

Egan never responded.

Today, as Surran watches the recent crisis in the Catholic Church, she is furious that Egan defends his handling of numerous Bridgeport sex-abuse cases by saying he aggressively investigated, and cared about, victims' claims. Particularly galling, she said, is Egan's recent contention that he could not meet with victims or their families because they had all sued the diocese.

"One of his points was he didn't approach people because they were surrounded by lawyers - but we didn't sue," Surran said. "We weren't threatening. There was no excuse."

Surran said that even after making repeated phone calls to Egan's office, the most she was offered was a meeting with one of his aides. And despite her concerns, the accused priest, the Rev. Charles Carr, was allowed to continue working in the diocese until earlier this year, when he was finally removed after yet another complaint emerged.

Egan, now a cardinal and the archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, conceded Saturday through his spokesman, Joseph Zwilling, that his previous statement was wrong.

"Mrs. Surran is correct in reporting that she approached the Diocese of Bridgeport regarding Rev. Charles Carr without a lawyer," Zwillling said. "The statement of the Archdiocese of New York in March of this year was therefore in error as regards this case, despite an attentive review of all files in Bridgeport."

Egan also personally acknowledged Saturday that he had mishandled the Carr case. The admission came at the same time the archdiocese released a letter of apology from Egan that will be read from the pulpit today. (See related story, A1.)

"Looking back, if I had it to do again, I would not reassign a priest like Father Carr, even with restrictions and even with the best of professional advice," Egan said in a statement to The Courant.

Surran agreed to speak publicly for the first time this month, after being contacted by a reporter. Although her son cooperated with other victims' lawsuits against the Bridgeport diocese, and his account of abuse by Carr remains largely unchallenged, the Surrans never sued or sought exposure for themselves.

Their names surfaced in sealed court documents obtained by The Courant that show how Egan allowed Carr and other accused priests to continue working in parishes for years, and did not refer complaints to criminal authorities. The documents were sealed after the Bridgeport diocese settled complaints against Carr and five other priests last year for about \$12 million.

Today, Surran, 65, and her husband, Boyd, are Eucharistic ministers in their parish in Arkansas, where they now live, and remain deeply devoted to the Catholic Church. Surran said she wishes she had called the police in 1982, when the incident with her son and Carr occurred, rather than assuming the diocese would handle it.

But, she said, she trusted the church.

"It was always the same motivation," she said. "I never got to the point where I wanted to 'get' them. I wanted the problem taken care of. I still do."

What little confidence Surran might have still had in Egan was dashed last month, she said, when he refused to concede that he made mistakes in Bridgeport and claimed lawyers thwarted his desire to meet with victims of sex abuse by priests.

"It's important that [people] don't take Egan's word that he handled these cases appropriately," Surran said. "I think he should step down."

Early Warnings

The Bridgeport diocese was a haven of sorts for 29-year-old Charles Carr.

After spending more than 10 years with the Order of Carmelites and taking his perpetual vows in 1974, Carr was not allowed to study for the ministerial priesthood with the Carmelites.

Carr was too emotionally immature to become a priest, his supervising priest said when contacted by the Bridgeport diocese for a reference. He wasn't a hard worker, became frustrated easily, didn't want to participate in communal prayer or community affairs, lacked a "physical presence," and had an "inability to express his needs and desires even to peers."

"At the moment, I could not see it as beneficial to Charles to enter the seminary and pursue theological studies for the ministerial priesthood," the Rev. Charles Haggerty wrote to the Bridgeport diocese in 1977.

Despite the blunt assessment of Carr's shortcomings from someone who had known him for years, the Bridgeport diocese accepted him as a candidate for priesthood after a psychological evaluation at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury.

He began in 1980 as a deacon intern at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Wilton, where he met the Surrans and, two years later, invited their 11-year-old son and another boy on a day trip to his sister's home on Long Island. Carole Surran said she gave her permission for the trip because it was a vacation week and her son was cooped up at home.

Her son - who is not being identified by The Courant at the family's request - says he didn't really want to go with Carr, but he didn't tell his mother that. After all, Carr was a priest and deserved respect, he said in a recent interview.

"The only reason I went was because I didn't want to hurt his feelings," he said.

As an outgoing and athletic 11-year-old boy, the son found Carr's "effeminate" mannerisms off-putting, he said, and it made him uncomfortable that Carr was often tickling boys in the parish. The day of the outing was no different.

Another boy was sitting in the front seat on the way there, and Carr was tickling him with one hand while he drove the tan Chevy Chevette with the other. After Carr dropped the other boy off at his house later that night, the priest suggested that Surran's son move to the front seat, and he then parked the car, the son said.

In a deposition he volunteered to give in 1996 when he learned that Carr was being sued for molesting other children, Surran's son described what happened next:

"After we dropped off Stephen, he started tickling me and then he tried to stick his hand down my pants further, trying to touch my penis," he testified.

"I turned to my right to cut his arm off, to shield myself from him. As his hand was there, I took my right hand and I put it over my penis so he couldn't touch it and I rolled, turned

away and kept nudging at his arm so eventually it would come out, and he kept persisting and persisting. Eventually, he pushed - his hand came out and I kicked him and I hit him and I called him a pervert at that point in time, and he was shocked, obviously."

Surran later told diocesan officials that Carr started pounding on her son's back and "laughing this maniacal laugh" as the child insisted the priest take him home. In a written statement she submitted to the diocese in 1989, Surran said her son was drenched in sweat and shaking when he came home that night and told his mother what had happened.

"He was almost in shock," Surran recalled. "He couldn't have been lying, in that condition."

The next morning, one of her son's neighborhood friends called to talk to him. Thinking it might cheer him up and rouse him from his fetal position in bed, Surran called her son to the phone.

But when he took the phone, he discovered it wasn't his friend on the line - it was Carr, who was visiting the other boy's family.

"He kept saying, 'I'm going to get you. I'm going to get you,' and he was laughing that laugh again," Carole Surran said in her 1989 statement to the diocese. "It was very frightening to [her son]."

Rather than go to the police, Surran immediately reported all of this to her parish priest, the Rev. Michael Palmer, who told her it would be taken care of, she said. Palmer confronted Carr, who admitted the tickling, but insisted his hand must have slipped down the boy's pants by mistake, diocese documents show. Palmer simply told Carr to stay away from the Surran boy, and he let the matter drop.

Carr was transferred about a year later to Saint Mary's in Bethel, where he was also assigned to the staff of Immaculate High School in Danbury. Surran, who remained unaware of Carr's new assignment, said she assumed church officials were keeping Carr away from children.

She was wrong.

More Complaints

Within weeks of being transferred to Bethel in 1984, Carr invited a 14-year-old altar boy at Saint Mary's Parish to see the movie "Cloak and Dagger" at the Fine Arts Theater in Brookfield.

According to diocesan memos contained in Carr's personnel file, he began fondling the boy in the car on the way to the theater, continued throughout the film, and resumed again on the drive home.

Another boy from Saint Mary's also complained that Carr fondled him at the movies during the same time period, and the boys' parents went together to the church to make a complaint.

Monsignor Andrew T. Cusack, the vicar for clergy and religious, met with the parents, records show, and then transferred Carr to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in East Norwalk. Cusack required Carr to seek therapy, but he didn't warn Carr's new parish priest that he was getting an accused child molester.

Although Carr later denied molesting any of the boys at St. Thomas, he admitted under oath to inviting several young teenagers to his room at the rectory to watch movies behind closed doors. Carr was later sued by one of those boys, who accused the priest of masturbating him during these movie sessions, as well as by his own nephew, who also claimed he was molested during the same time period.

Carr, who now lives on the grounds of the Sisters of the Holy Family Nazareth compound in Monroe, did not respond to a request for comment last week.

After two years at St. Thomas, Carr was transferred to Fairfield, where he held a teaching position at Notre Dame High School, and then, in 1989, to Central Catholic High School in Norwalk, where he was named spiritual director for boys.

When Carole Surran, who had lost track of Carr after 1984, learned of his high school appointment, she immediately tried to see Egan, who had just been named bishop in December 1988. That's when she had one of her professors at St. John's, Monsignor George A. Kelly, write her a letter of introduction.

Kelly, now retired, said he doesn't remember much about the Surran case and declined to comment on Egan's refusal to meet with his former student. In the letter he wrote for Surran in June 1989, Kelly told Egan, a longtime friend, that he was "impressed with her sensitivity, intellectual grasp of the issues and her good sense."

In her own letter about a month later, Surran told Egan: "I have delayed writing this letter because of the many burdens that you have had to carry during those first months as bishop of this diocese. I certainly have no wish to add to this burden."

With no response, and after numerous calls to Egan's office in a futile attempt to get an appointment, Surran settled for a meeting with the bishop's aide, Monsignor Laurence Bronkiewicz. She recalls telling Bronkiewicz the diocese was making a terrible mistake by assigning Carr to a school, and he "led me to believe he would take care of it."

But the diocese's way of taking care of the problem once again fell far short of Surran's expectations.

Although Bronkiewicz spoke with Palmer, the priest who received Surran's complaint in 1983, and even unearthed a second sexual misconduct complaint from that time period,

Carr was allowed to continue working at Central Catholic after a one-day psychiatric evaluation at the Institute of Living in Hartford.

Egan, who made the decision to return Carr to Central Catholic, pulled him out of the job a second time when the diocese received another complaint against Carr in 1990, and returned him to the institute for three months of treatment.

Then, in June 1990, Egan reassigned Carr to St. Philip Parish in Norwalk. Although the diocese told Carr he could not minister directly to children, there was an elementary school attached to the church.

Surran, who by now was tracking Carr's whereabouts, went ballistic.

"I called the vicar, Monsignor Bronkiewicz, and I expressed my outrage," Surran said. "And he said, and I remember this perfectly, 'I didn't know you meant any school. I thought you just meant that school,' meaning Central Catholic. It was a very telling remark. He was just placating me."

Bronkiewicz, who issued a statement Saturday, did not address Surran's version of their final conversation. But he denied that he gave Surran any assurances in 1989 about how the allegation would be handled.

"I did not - and would not - make a promise to Mrs. Surran regarding Father Carr's future assignment, because I had no authority to do so," Bronkiewicz said. "My responsibility was to report Mrs. Surran's complaint to the Bishop, which I did."

Egan allowed Carr to continue working as a priest until 1995, when he suspended him after the first lawsuit was filed in connection with Carr's alleged molestation of children. Egan eventually allowed him to return in 1999 as a chaplain for the Pope John Paul II Center for Health Care in Danbury.

He remained there until February, when the new bishop, William Lori, suspended him after receiving another complaint of sexual misconduct from years earlier.

As for the Surrans, they wrote a letter in May 2000 to Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo of the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, D.C., expressing their profound concern about Egan being named archbishop of New York.

"Twenty-two cases of pedophilia have been filed against the diocese, and Bishop Egan is under subpoena," the letter said. "Some of the priests accused in these cases have been moved from parish (with school) to parish (with school) during the tenure of Bishop Egan."

They never got a response.

Egan Says He May Have Mishandled Sex Abuse Cases

The New York Times, April 21, 2002

By DEAN E. MURPHY

Cardinal Edward M. Egan acknowledged publicly for the first time yesterday that he might have mishandled allegations of sexual abuse by priests.

In a letter read at Masses in parishes throughout the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal Egan apologized if mistakes had been made in dealing with abusive priests and their victims in both New York and Bridgeport, Conn., where he was the bishop until two years ago. He also asked for prayers for the success of a meeting of American cardinals and Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, for which he leaves today.

Though the apology was offered conditionally, the letter's overall tone was more contrite than the cardinal's previous statements about his role in the scandal. The archdiocese issued instructions that the letter be read at Masses today as well, and it posted the letter on its Web site (www.ny-archdiocese.org).

"If in hindsight we also discover that mistakes may have been made as regards prompt removal of priests and assistance to victims, I am deeply sorry," the letter said.

The spokesman for the cardinal, Joseph Zwilling, said the timing was intended to coincide with the meeting in Rome but the letter itself was not demanded by the Vatican. The contents of the letter were reported yesterday in The New York Post.

"He was absolutely not told to do it," Mr. Zwilling said. "He wanted to ask people for prayers and to acknowledge the situation before he departs."

In the letter, Cardinal Egan describes the meeting in Rome as an "important journey" and denounces the sexual abuse of children as a terrible crime. "I will do everything in my power to ensure, as much as is humanly possible, that such abuse by clergy will never happen again," he wrote. "You should expect nothing less of me, and the other leaders of our church."

Several victims of abuse and their lawyers said they were generally suspicious of Cardinal Egan's motives in making the remarks now. They suggested that he was putting his house in order at the last minute in anticipation of some tough questioning in Rome.

"This statement does sound more compassionate and spiritual than the others, but it is still done as a form of damage control," said Cindy L. Robinson, a lawyer who represented 26 people in a recently settled sexual abuse lawsuit against the Diocese of Bridgeport. "I also think it would be much more forceful if he would speak it rather than constantly issuing statements," she said.

Mr. Zwilling said Cardinal Egan would celebrate Mass this morning at St. Anthony of Padua Church in the Bronx before leaving for Rome, but it was unlikely that he would read the letter aloud himself.

At Mass yesterday afternoon at the Church of St. Malachy in Midtown Manhattan, a priest read excerpts to several dozen parishioners and made copies of the complete letter available. Several parishioners said after the service that they would reserve judgment until the American cardinals completed their meeting with the pope. Some said they found it hard to know what was new in the letter because they had been saturated with information about the sexual abuse scandal.

Lorane Walsh, a waitress from Queens who was visiting the parish before work, praised the cardinal for keeping the lines of communication open. "He has kept us informed all along during this troubling time," she said. "This letter is just another example of that."

One of the parishioners, Colin Adair, interpreted the letter as a call for spiritual support. "He asks for our prayers, and that is the least we can do," Mr. Adair said.

Paul Mones, a lawyer in Portland, Ore., who represents several victims of sexual abuse in New York, said the cardinal's remarks were significant because they came from a leader "who has been at the forefront of resisting any change." But Mr. Mones said the cardinal's reference to possible mistakes was misleading.

"It is getting off easy to say the behavior of the church was a mistake," Mr. Mones said. "It was not a negligent, unthinking action; it was a conscious plan to prevent scandal and to protect the interests of the church."

In the letter, the cardinal revisited the sensitive subject of his reliance on advice from psychiatrists on how to deal with abusive priests. In a previous letter to New York parishioners, issued last month, he defended his handling of sexual abuse cases during his 12 years in Bridgeport by pointing to his policy of sending the priests to "prominent psychiatric institutions" for evaluation. But in an article last month in *The Hartford Courant*, Dr. Harold I. Schwartz, chief of psychiatry at the Institute of Living, where many abusive priests were sent, said church officials sometimes withheld important information about the priests.

In his letter yesterday, Cardinal Egan repeated that he had relied on the experts, but suggested that knowledge of the problem of sexual abuse of minors was more complete now. "Over the past 15 years, in both Bridgeport and New York, I consistently sought and acted upon the best independent advice available to me from medical experts and behavioral scientists," he wrote. "It is clear today that we have a much better understanding of this problem."

Bishop Puts 10 on Sex Panel Board to Monitor Policy, Review Abuse Complaints

Connecticut Post, April 20, 2002

By DIETER STANKO

BRIDGEPORT — Bishop William E. Lori said Friday he has appointed a 10-person board to review sexual-abuse complaints in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport and to oversee implementation of the diocese's sexual misconduct policy.

Lori said the Sexual Misconduct Review Board — only one member is a priest — has met four times in the past month. It will convene on an as-needed basis and more members will be added.

The bishop is expected to discuss the board, and the progress of his review of diocesan clergy records, at a press conference at 3 p.m. Sunday in the Catholic Center on Jewett Avenue.

The Bridgeport Diocese has for years been troubled by sexual abuse claims and last year it agreed to a \$15 million settlement of lawsuits by 26 people claiming abuse by priests.

Lori has pledged to review the files of all priests and deacons to ensure none poses a danger of further abuse. But recent developments, including the disclosure this week that a priest who admitted abusing girls is still working in the diocese, have continued to stoke the controversy.

Assisting the board in review of sexual-abuse cases will be three diocesan officials — Monsignor Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, chancellor; Monsignor Jerald A. Doyle, judicial vicar; and Michael T. Dolan, general counsel.

"The board is playing an integral and active role in ensuring that the protection of children remains of the greatest importance to the Diocese of Bridgeport and its mission," Lori said in a statement. "They are 'looking over my shoulder' and assisting me in my commitment to act swiftly, decisively and fairly to allegations of sexual misconduct.

"Every allegation will be considered by this independent board with a pledge that my decision will be straightforward, based on the wisdom of the board and the merits of the case."

The board's three main objectives are:

- examine possible improvements to diocese's 1991 sexual misconduct policy.
- review how the policy is applied among all diocesan employees, volunteers and clergy.

- examine sexual-abuse allegations brought to the diocese's attention and make sure they are handled properly.

The board will also advise Lori on the need for further investigation and the appropriate response.

Jason Tremont, a Bridgeport attorney whose firm last year settled lawsuits against six priests for about \$15 million, said Friday the board needs to be truly independent and linked to law enforcement in order to be effective.

The review board members are:

- Donald A. Browne, former state's attorney for the Judicial District of Fairfield. The married father of four is a Trumbull resident.
- Rev. Michael Jude Fay, pastor of St. John Parish in Darien. He was ordained in 1978 and served parishes in Newtown, New Canaan and Greenwich.
- Dr. Thomas G. Flynn, a local pediatrician for 31 years, retired since 1994. The married New Canaan resident is the father of nine children.
- John C. Ford, of Fairfield, who served as a Travelers insurance claims manager for 33 years and was administrator of the state Commission on Victims Services. He is married and the father of 13 children.
- Claire M. Hines, a public school teacher and administrator for more than 30 years, now the principal of Farmingville Elementary School in Ridgefield. A wife and mother of three, she lives in Brookfield.
- Philip A. Lacovara, of New Canaan, a senior partner at Mayer, Brown, Rowe, & Law in New York City. He was a counsel to Watergate special prosecutors and special counsel to New York's police commissioner. He is married and the father of seven children.
- James T. Larkin, of Greenwich, president of Global Strategy Advisors. A retired vice president of American Express International and a former U.S. Marine captain, Larkin is a husband and father of two.
- Liane M. Pioli, a clinical psychologist in private practice in Fairfield with expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of childhood disorders. A wife and mother of three children, Pioli lives in Easton.
- Dr. John P. Rogowski, of Fairfield, an attending psychiatrist at Stint Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport, who also serves at Hall-Brooke Hospital in Westport and St. Joseph's Manor in Trumbull. He is married and the father of two children.
- Nancy Sirois, recently retired as a detective after 28 years with the Stratford Police Department, where she investigated sexual assaults of children. She is a married Stratford resident with two children.

Priest sex case raises doubts. Facts appear to contradict firmness of Egan policy

Connecticut Post, April 14, 2002

By DANIEL TEPFER

BRIDGEPORT -- The resolution of a case involving a priest accused of sexual abuse raises doubts about Cardinal Edward M. Egan's recent statements that he acted swiftly and decisively when confronted with such charges in the Bridgeport diocese.

Potential contradictions with Egan's stated policy surface in the manner and timing of the diocese's handling of the case of Rev. Walter Coleman, who was allowed to continue working in his position for more than a year after the diocese began investigating him.

The details of Coleman's case buttress charges brought by families of victims of sexual abuse that the diocese, under Egan's leadership, engaged in a pattern of covering up its investigations, settling quietly out of court and shifting suspected priests to other assignments or allowing them to slip into retirement.

Coleman, accused and investigated by the diocese for sexual abuse in 1994, continued working until the diocese settled a lawsuit against him in 1995.

He was then allowed to retire and moved only a few miles to Milford, where he worked at a church and parochial school in the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Coleman was not suspended from his Milford job until Oct. 1995, when the Connecticut Post confronted church authorities with the resolution of the sex abuse case.

Egan, according to court documents, had authorized the court settlement in June 1995. A month after that, Coleman was allowed to retire for "health reasons."

In a pastoral letter distributed in the Archdiocese of New York three weeks ago, Egan defended his handling of sex-abuse cases involving priests during his 12 years as bishop of Bridgeport.

Egan, who left Bridgeport to take over the New York archdiocese in May 2000, wrote that he had instituted a policy in Bridgeport that "any clergy accused of sexual misconduct with a minor was, after preliminary diocesan investigation, to be sent immediately to one of the most prominent psychiatric institutions in the nation for evaluation."

The letter was written in response to questions about a series of abuse cases handled during Egan's tenure in Bridgeport. Some of the victims and their lawyers claim that Egan either refused to acknowledge the problem and, in some instances, tried to conceal it.

Court documents show, at least in the Coleman case, Egan's stated procedures apparently did not apply.

In 1995, the Bridgeport law firm of Tremont and Sheldon brought a lawsuit against the diocese on behalf of a man who claimed Coleman had sexually molested him between 1978 and 1980 when the man was 11 years old and Coleman was assigned to St. Patrick's Church in Bridgeport.

The suit claimed Coleman, who now is 69, was also having an affair with the boy's mother at the time and, in fact, Bridgeport land records show that Coleman and the single mother bought a house on Lindley Street in 1978 for \$38,000. Milford land records show they also purchased a Beach Avenue house together on June 1, 1982.

In March 1985, the woman sued Coleman at Superior Court in Milford, claiming he failed to honor their agreement to live as husband and wife.

Court documents show that diocese officials were aware in 1985 that Coleman had purchased a home with the mother.

At a hearing in Superior Court in Bridgeport on Sept. 2, 1998, Monsignor Laurence Bronkiewicz, the diocese's Episcopal vicar for clergy, testified that church officials first learned about the abuse in March 1994. He said the accusation was investigated and found to have merit.

Nonetheless, diocese documents show Coleman continued to work as a priest, serving from 1993 to 1995 at St. Margaret Mary Church in Shelton.

On June 26, 1995, Egan signed an agreement to settle the man's lawsuit in the Coleman case, paying the victim an undisclosed amount of money to settle the lawsuit, according to the document obtained by the *Connecticut Post*.

Even after the agreement was signed, Coleman still worked briefly as a chaplain at St. Joseph Manor in Trumbull before retiring in July 1995 for "health reasons," diocesan official stated at the time.

But a short time later, Coleman turned up at St. Ann's Church on Naugatuck Avenue in Milford, and also taught at the parish's school.

St. Ann's Church is in the Hartford archdiocese and, at the time, church officials there said they assumed Coleman had permission from the Bridgeport diocese to work there. They said they had never been notified he was accused of abuse.

When the *Connecticut Post* confronted church officials in late October 1995 about Coleman working in Milford, they immediately suspended him.

"It's an old story and a settlement was reached," said Joseph McAleer, a spokesman for the Bridgeport diocese.

In an ironic footnote to the Coleman case, the mother of Coleman's victim visited Deerfield, Fla., in 1996 with her new husband and attended Mass at the local Catholic church.

She said that during the Mass the pastor announced that a new priest had begun ministering at the church -- Father Walter Coleman.

The woman said she was shocked to hear Coleman's name and after the service approached the pastor to determine if it was the same Father Coleman accused of abusing her son and with whom she had an affair and bought two houses.

"Oh, yes," she recalled the pastor telling her, Coleman "had come from Bridgeport where he recently retired."

The woman said she then told the pastor about the abuse case involving Coleman and her son.

Court documents show that the Archdiocese of Miami subsequently wrote a letter to the Bridgeport diocese inquiring about Coleman, and received a reply stating that Coleman had been suspended.

Coleman was dismissed by the Florida church and his whereabouts are currently unknown.

Other complaints of abuse against Coleman were included in the \$15 million settlement last year the Diocese of Bridgeport made with more than 20 people who claimed they had been abused by priests in the diocese since the 1970s.

Egan ended his recent two-page pastoral letter with the vow that he is "totally and unconditionally committed to protecting our children from abuse of any kind."

Egan Failed To Report Relations Between Priest And Teen Girl

Hartford Courant, April 12, 2002

By ERIC RICH
Courant Staff Writer

While serving as bishop in Bridgeport, Edward M. Egan, now New York cardinal, failed to notify police about a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old member of a church youth group and a priest - a relationship considered statutory rape under Connecticut law.

The teenager, who is now 28, became pregnant with the priest's child in September 1989, two months after her 16th birthday, documents show, and today is struggling as a single mother in Bridgeport.

That same month, the Rev. Joseph DeShan requested a leave of absence from the church and revealed the relationship to diocese officials. Egan allowed him to leave the priesthood and begin a new life as an elementary school teacher in New Jersey - with no record of sexual misconduct.

Diocesan files make no mention of the girl's status as a minor, a spokesman said Thursday evening, but a cursory investigation would have revealed that she was legally underage when the relationship began. Records show that DeShan gave church officials the girl's name, said she worked at the rectory of St. Augustine Cathedral and explained that the relationship began in October 1988, said Joseph McAleer, a spokesman for the Bridgeport diocese.

"Obviously, the church today would not condone what is a criminal act and neither would society," McAleer said. "If it happened today, this would be reported to the authorities without question."

The Bridgeport and New York dioceses said in a joint statement today that the diocese did not know DeShan had fathered a child until he petitioned for laicization - departure of the priesthood - in 1994.

DeShan then said he had a "monogamous relationship with a woman," the dioceses said. The record includes speculation by DeShan's psychologist that the girl was 16, but that is the age of consent in Connecticut, the statement said.

DeShan never told Egan or the Bridgeport diocese that he had sex with a minor, nor did the girl or her family, the dioceses said.

In contrast to Egan's solicitous treatment of DeShan, the mother of the child says she experienced a very different reaction from the church two days after she told DeShan she was pregnant. On that day, she was called in to see Monsignor William Scheyd, a top

aide to Egan, and was told that she was fired from her evening receptionist's job at the Bridgeport cathedral.

After that, no one from the diocese contacted her or offered assistance, and no law enforcement authorities ever inquired about her sexual relationship with a priest twice her age - a relationship that, by all accounts, began before she reached the legal age of consent.

Even as a growing scandal roils the Roman Catholic Church nationally, the incident is the first public example of sexual misconduct that occurred and was apparently concealed - and certainly not explored even minimally - while Egan was bishop. Clergy in Connecticut are required by law to report cases of suspected sexual abuse, including statutory rape, a felony.

Attempts to reach a spokesman for Egan in New York - where he became archbishop in 2000 and was elevated last year to cardinal - were unsuccessful Thursday.

The woman, who now lives in a modest apartment on the east side of Bridgeport, never filed a lawsuit against the church and sought child support from DeShan only after she applied for state assistance. She has never discussed the matter publicly, confiding only in her family and close friends, and says she does not plan any legal action.

After she was contacted by The Courant, she agreed to tell her story on condition of anonymity. She said she has come to believe that the attention DeShan lavished on her a decade ago, which she once found so flattering, amounted to mistreatment by an adult who should have known better.

"I'm angry," said the woman, who has worked for several years at a social service agency for abused women and children. "I feel anger because I got pregnant, because I haven't done anything in life that I wanted to do."

She also said she agreed to come forward because she believes the church concealed DeShan's misconduct - and compounded the wrong by firing her.

"People shouldn't be naïve," she said. "The church hides things, too."

After DeShan was placed on leave of absence, he and the woman lived together in a cabin in Vermont and, later, at his parents' home in a New Jersey suburb. The woman, who is Hispanic and who felt unwelcome in that town, returned to Bridgeport.

DeShan has since married another woman, a doctor. They and their two children live in a Philadelphia suburb. He teaches fifth grade at a public elementary school in Cinnaminson, a small town in New Jersey.

Although he was on a leave of absence from the diocese for more than a decade, the Vatican did not grant his request to formally leave the priesthood until within the past two years.

In a brief interview earlier this week in a parking lot outside the school, DeShan did not dispute the details of the relationship, but declined to say whether Egan knew of the girl's age.

"It was a consensual relationship that didn't work out," said DeShan, who pays child support to this day. "I have no ax to grind with the church."

Scheyd, now the pastor at a church in Norwalk, acknowledged in a brief interview Thursday that he knew the teenager worked at the rectory. He said he could not recall the circumstances of her departure, and does not remember whether he knew she was pregnant at the time.

In the statement today, the dioceses said Scheyd was not aware of the girl's relationship with DeShan and did not ask her to stop working at the rectory, even though he was dissatisfied with her work.

Her job at the rectory put her in close quarters with Scheyd, whom Egan has described as his "most trusted adviser" while serving in Bridgeport. It was in that rectory, the woman said, that she and DeShan first met - and, later, had sex on several occasions.

The woman grew up in Bridgeport, the middle of three siblings. Her father was a factory worker; her mother cared for the children and later worked in retail.

She first met DeShan in the late 1980s, when she enrolled at Bridgeport's Warren Harding High School and joined a youth group and church softball team at St. Augustine Cathedral.

She liked the church. She admired the nuns' selflessness and for a time believed she wanted to become one.

She admired DeShan, too. He was handsome, flattering and easier to relate to than the other priests. He drove her home after youth group sessions, and they soon began spending time together on his days off. As the relationship became sexual, she says, they spent their time far from Bridgeport: There were afternoons hiking at Sleeping Giant State Park in Hamden, and nights at a Chester inn.

DeShan, then 30, told her the relationship was to remain their secret.

Despite their efforts to conceal it, she says, there were signs that others might have recognized: A nun caught her once, in the kitchen, sneaking down a back stairway from DeShan's living quarters in the rectory. Another time, she says, a hastily discarded

condom was discovered on the floor near Scheyd's office, when an unexpected visitor interrupted their liaison.

In addition, she said, Scheyd, who lived in the rectory with DeShan, appeared to grow increasingly suspicious as DeShan took longer and longer to drive her home after youth group meetings.

"He never straight-out said anything," she said of Scheyd, who was the vicar general under Egan and under Egan's predecessor, Bishop Walter Curtis. "It was just a change in the way he'd look at me, and in his tone of voice. He was cold."

"The way he looked at me, I felt like I was being blamed," she said.

When he fired her shortly after she revealed the pregnancy to DeShan, Scheyd told her someone more experienced would fill the job, she said. The woman believes today, as she did then, that she was terminated because of the pregnancy.

But her understanding of how wrong the relationship was only dawned years later when she surveyed the list of life goals unmet. She never became a police officer, never joined the military, never went to college.

"Around my birthdays I look back and think about those things," she said. "I didn't do anything I wanted to do."

She said she feels, at times, that her struggle today to support herself and her daughter is a sort of divine punishment for the relationship she had with DeShan.

"For a long time I blamed myself because I thought I should have known better, that I was old enough to have known better," she said. "I was a teenager. I was young and naïve. He was older. He knew better. He wasn't a child."

Church Leader Offers Apology

Hartford Courant, March 27, 2002

By FRANCES GRANDY TAYLOR

Hartford Archbishop Daniel A. Cronin used the occasion of the annual Mass of Chrism on Tuesday to apologize for the suffering caused by sexually abusive Catholic priests and to remind others in the priesthood that they are needed "now more than ever."

Cronin's homily repeated some remarks he made last weekend, his first public comments since news reports critical of how New York Archbishop Edward Egan handled sex-abuse allegations against priests in the Bridgeport diocese when he was bishop there.

Cronin spoke directly about priests who "have disgraced themselves and brought shame and scandal upon the Catholic community by their misconduct."

"The priests who have sexually abused children and minors have first of all inflicted immense harm on the young victims; they have also wounded the very church they promised to serve at the time of their ordination," Cronin said.

"I join with my brother bishops throughout the country in apologizing to the victims of sexual abuse by priests, and I likewise apologize to the Catholic faithful and the community at large for the scandal that has resulted from these shameful acts," he said.

Priests from throughout the archdiocese attended the late morning Chrism Mass in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford. The Mass, held during Holy Week, includes the anointing of oils that will be used in the parish for the year as well as the vows that constitute the "renewal of commitment to priestly service."

Cronin, noting that he himself is approaching his 50th year in the priesthood, urged his fellow priests to wear their collars with pride.

"The sign of our state in life and our calling is the Roman collar. Wear it with dignity and pride -- but wear it. Our Catholic people need our ministry, and they want to be proud of us," Cronin said. "Society needs us, now more than ever, as signs and examples of righteous living and witnesses to faith in God."

Cronin reassured the congregation that guidelines to prevent sexual abuse by priests and church workers have been in place for some years. He added that the archdiocese "will continue to comply with state law in regard to reporting allegations of sexual misconduct."

Quoting from the Pope, Cronin said: "At this time, too, as priests we are personally and profoundly afflicted by the sins of our brothers who have betrayed the grace of ordination. ... Grave scandal is caused, with the result that a dark shadow of suspicion is

cast over all the other fine priests who perform their ministry with honesty and integrity and often with heroic self-sacrifice."

Cronin recalled the good works of the many priests he has known over the years and described them as "strong, athletic, masculine men busily going about God's work. Daily and Sunday Masses, funerals, sick calls and, above all, knowledge of their parishioners were all hallmarks of these stalwart priests."

Noting that he had ordained 27 priests in the last decade, Cronin also noted that he also has presided "at the funeral liturgies of many more."

"You are good, holy priests serving the people of the archdiocese with distinction," he said. "[T]ake courage in the knowledge that in every age of the church, there have been periods and episodes of disappointment, indeed severe difficulty."

Panel: Tighten Abuse Laws

Hartford Courant, March 26, 2002

By LISA CHEDEKEL
Courant Staff Writer

With pedophile priests dominating the headlines, a key committee of state lawmakers approved legislation Monday that would greatly extend Connecticut's statute of limitations on child molestation and increase penalties for abusers.

The Judiciary Committee sent a bill to the General Assembly that would allow victims to seek criminal prosecution of their abusers for 30 years after they turn 18, or up to age 48, if the crime has not been previously reported to police. The statute of limitations would be waived for the most serious cases of child molestation - first-degree sexual assault, which involves the use or threat of force.

Existing law bars criminal prosecution of child sex abuse after a victim turns 20.

In a last-minute compromise, the committee's final bill did not call for a retroactive extension of the statute of limitations, which would have allowed people now older than 20 to file criminal complaints against their abusers. Instead, the extended criminal statute would apply only to future cases.

In the case of civil claims, however, the legislation would retroactively extend the period of time that victims could file lawsuits against abusers - up until the victim turns 48, rather than the age limit of 35 now allowed.

"We are making a zero-tolerance policy, as a state, with regard to sexual assault of minors," said state Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., R-Norwalk, who offered the compromise expected to pass the full House and Senate later this spring. "From this point forward, let the word go forth that if you sexually abuse a minor, you'd better look over your shoulder."

Cafero made no direct reference to the spate of reports concerning child molestation by Roman Catholic clergy, including recent information that New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan, while serving as bishop of the Bridgeport diocese, had failed to alert police or child protection authorities to allegations of abuse by priests.

A year ago, the Bridgeport diocese settled lawsuits filed in 1993 by 26 victims against five priests. Because those allegations dated to the 1970s and '80s, the statute of limitations for criminal prosecution has expired.

Cafero called the compromise "reasonable and appropriate ... in light of the recent circumstances." He said that he didn't want to see the legislation killed because of a dispute over retroactivity, as it was last year. Cafero had led the opposition against

retroactivity - partly out of concern that it could bring a torrent of accusations, dating back decades, that accused molesters would have difficulty defending themselves against.

Cafero insisted Monday that his opposition to criminal retroactivity wasn't a bow to the Catholic church, with which he's had no contact.

"There wasn't a 'that-a-boy' or 'thank you' - nothing of the kind. There was no contact whatsoever," he said.

Rep. Michael P. Lawlor, D-East Haven, a co-chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said he was generally pleased with the compromise bill, which would increase the penalties for first-, second- and third-degree sexual assault of a minor by creating new categories of crimes.

A new charge of first-degree aggravated sexual assault of a minor would be classified as a Class A felony, subjecting those charged to more severe penalties than under existing law, including a mandatory 20-year sentence. Second-degree sexual assault, now a Class C felony, would be elevated to a Class B crime if the victim was under the age of 16.

Lawlor said he dropped his push for the extended criminal statute to apply retroactively because that might have doomed the bill.

"Ninety-five percent of what I hoped to accomplish is in this bill," he said.

Lawlor also said he intends to amend the bill to compel courts to notify authorities of abuse allegations that might be included in sealed or "secret" civil case files, and to strengthen a requirement that teachers, clergy and others report all child molestation cases.

Some lawmakers were unhappy that the extension of the criminal statute would not apply to past crimes and indicated that they might push for that change later.

"I'd like to have a complete look back and be able to prosecute these people," said David J. Cappiello, R-Danbury. "I think it's disgusting that these people are being moved around."

He was referring to indications in sealed court records obtained by The Courant that Egan, like church leaders in some other states, had allowed some priests facing accusations of sexual abuse to continue working for years.

The Judiciary Committee approved several other bills aimed at strengthening other law-enforcement provisions. Among them are proposals that would:

Require that drivers involved in accidents that cause serious injuries or death submit to blood-alcohol testing.

Allow pet owners to sue to recover punitive and compensatory damages from someone who intentionally kills or injures an animal.

Doctors: Church Used Us

Hartford Courant, March 24, 2002

By ERIC RICH And ELIZABETH HAMILTON

A nationally renowned psychiatric hospital that for years has treated clergy accused of sexual misconduct now says it was deceived by the Roman Catholic Church into providing reports that the church used to keep abusive priests in the ministry.

The church sometimes concealed information about past complaints against clergy sent for treatment, and disregarded warnings that the hospital's evaluations should not determine a priest's fitness for parish work, doctors at Hartford's Institute of Living said in interviews.

As a result, the institute may have unwittingly provided the clinical cover cited by New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan and other church officials as their reason for not suspending some accused priests, including such now-notorious figures as the defrocked John Geoghan in Boston, accused of molesting more than 130 people.

"In some cases, necessary and pertinent information related to prior sexual misconduct has been withheld from us," said Dr. Harold I. Schwartz, the institute's chief of psychiatry. "In some cases, it would appear that our evaluations have been misconstrued in order to return priests to ministry."

Schwartz spoke of the "surprise we have experienced, to learn only recently as these scandals were emerging in the press, that in so many instances we have been providing treatment to individuals while being so inadequately informed."

He said the institute has decided to require that the church attest, in writing, that it has disclosed any past allegations against priests referred for treatment.

That the Institute of Living would make such accusations about the Roman Catholic Church is extraordinary.

As one of the first major psychiatric hospitals to introduce concepts of spirituality to the treatment of clergy, the institute became unusually close to the church. Scores of priests from all over the country have been treated there, priests have worked for the institute, and one of its doctors was even knighted by Pope Pius XII in 1951.

The institute's criticisms of the church underscore the depth of unease among doctors, as it becomes increasingly apparent that various diocesan officials have invoked the institute's evaluations, time and again, as the reason for allowing abusive priests to continue working.

In his annual pastoral letter yesterday, Egan again cited the institute in defending his handling of sex-abuse cases while he was bishop of the Bridgeport diocese. He said it was his policy to send priests facing allegations "immediately to one of the most prominent psychiatric institutions in the nation for evaluation."

"If the conclusions were favorable, he was returned to ministry, in some cases with restrictions, so as to be doubly careful," Egan said. "If they were not favorable, he was not allowed to function as a priest."

But Leslie Lothstein, the institute's director of psychology, said that the church frequently ignored doctors' advice when deciding whether to return abusive priests to work.

"I found that they rarely followed our recommendations," Lothstein said. "They would put them back into work where they still had access to vulnerable populations."

The institute's claims -- made in interviews conducted before Egan issued his statement Saturday -- raise questions about the church's motives and expectations when seeking treatment.

Court documents reviewed by The Courant -- which contain sealed pretrial testimony from the settled Bridgeport cases -- show that the diocese never referred sex-abuse allegations against a priest to civil authorities for investigation. Instead, church officials made clear they believed that an evaluation at the institute would determine the truth of an accusation.

Egan said during a 1999 deposition that he could take little action against an accused priest if doctors did not substantiate the complaint: "We would have to proceed as anyone else would proceed, by presuming innocence until guilt is proved," he said.

A case in point is the Rev. Raymond Pcolka, whom Egan sent to the Institute of Living in 1989, after a mother accused Pcolka of molesting her son years earlier. Egan testified that "an expert of some renown" at the institute concluded "that there was no reason for us to hesitate to allow this person to continue his duty."

What the institute hadn't been told is that Pcolka had faced another complaint, six years earlier, that he molested a 7-year-old girl. Egan told lawyers during his deposition that a 1983 letter containing that accusation had gone missing from Pcolka's personnel file at the diocese.

A spokesman for Egan at the Archdiocese of New York, where Egan was elevated to cardinal last year, did not respond to calls seeking comment. Attorney Joseph Sweeney, who represented Egan during the Bridgeport lawsuits, defended the former bishop's use of the institute's evaluations.

Egan, he said, consulted the Institute of Living every time a priest was accused of sexual misconduct and never went against the advice of professionals there. Sweeney said Egan

used his own judgment when deciding whether to remove priests from active ministry, adding that recommendations from doctors were "not the sole factor," but were "probably the most significant factor."

"The mental health therapists have ways and techniques of finding out the truth," he said. "You can't expect that from the bishops. They're not Dick Tracys. They're not trained to be sleuths."

But a 1990 letter shows that the hospital long ago warned Egan's top aide in Bridgeport, the Rev. Laurence Bronkiewicz, that the church should not rely on its evaluations in deciding whether to remove a priest from ministry. The letter, written by an institute administrator, Dr. Howard Iger, said, "we certainly are in a weak position when we try to make predictions about future behavior."

"As you know from our recent contacts," Iger wrote, "we can be helpful through the use of our `good offices' in helping to sort out what might be appropriate administrative action, but we must all be careful that our use of medical consultation does not overreach its validity."

To be sure, it is difficult to assess the Institute of Living's belated claim that it has been misled. The hospital would not point to specific cases in which the church allegedly withheld information, saying it is prevented by confidentiality laws.

Also, documents show that the institute sometimes did offer assurances that certain priests could return to parish work -- even, in Geoghan's case, after diagnosing the priest as having "atypical pedophilia in remission." Five years after the institute wrote the Boston archdiocese in 1990 that Geoghan was "psychologically fit" to continue working with children, he was again accused of molesting a boy.

One former psychiatrist who worked at the hospital called Schwartz's accusations against the church "self-serving" and said that in the 1980s, when the institute was struggling financially, it viewed the treatment of clergy as a profitable niche. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the psychiatrist said there were conversations, formally and informally, about worries that the church could take its business elsewhere.

"These were good patients for the institute," the psychiatrist said. "The diocese paid cash."

Under financial strain, the institute became a subsidiary of Hartford Hospital in 1994.

Schwartz declined to comment on the former psychiatrist's remarks.

He also would not speculate on the church's possible motivation for not disclosing past allegations. It is clear from the court documents that knowledge of past allegations made doctors less likely to recommend that a priest be returned to parish work.

James Gill, a psychiatrist and Jesuit priest who helped start the Institute of Living's program for clergy, said bishops frequently fail to share information about allegations, although he doesn't believe it is an attempt to mislead. He said the church is simply a secretive organization that is unaccustomed to the full disclosure required in treatment centers.

But, Gill acknowledged, there have been times when he believed a bishop was sending a priest for treatment with a specific outcome in mind -- namely to get a green light to send him back to work. One of those times happened early in his own career, he said, when a cardinal personally appealed to him to pronounce a priest fit for duty.

"I thought this guy was going to need months of therapy," Gill said. "But the cardinal showed up and told me he needed the guy back in his parish and he gave me a date he had to be back at work."

That jibes with an institute doctor's suggestion during a 1987 newspaper interview that the church, concerned about a clergy shortage, was anxious to get priests back into circulation after treatment.

"The bishops and vicars of priests, and leaders of religious communities, want everyone back," Dr. Thomas J. Conklin said.

Though neither the institute nor the various dioceses are willing to discuss individual cases, a review of medical records and diocesan memoranda contained in court files in Bridgeport, Norwich and Boston offers a rare perspective on the decades-old relationship, now frayed, between the church and the hospital.

Pedophile In Remission

The Archdiocese of Boston had received complaints that Father John Geoghan molested at least 15 children before sending him for treatment in 1989 -- but apparently told clinicians about only six.

Geoghan was first evaluated at St. Luke Institute in Maryland, which summarized the reason for his referral as "reports that he had been sexually involved with three boys during the 1983-84 time period," as well as Geoghan's admission that he had fondled "three other boys" in the late 1970s. Eight months later, the Institute of Living cited some of the same incidents in its own evaluation of the priest.

But that was hardly the whole story.

First, Geoghan hadn't admitted to fondling three boys in the late 1970s. Internal archdiocese memoranda show that he had admitted to molesting seven boys, ages 4 to 12, from the same family -- sexual abuse that ranged from fondling to oral sex.

And, according to diocese records subpoenaed in more than 100 sex-abuse cases against Geoghan, church officials received their first complaints about Geoghan as far back as 1968. Over the next 21 years, at least six more molestation allegations, some involving more than one victim, would be registered with the diocese.

Despite the incomplete information, it was enough for clinicians at St. Luke's who evaluated Geoghan in April 1989 to determine he was at "high risk" for offending again and shouldn't be allowed near children, and to recommend inpatient treatment. In short, they diagnosed him a pedophile.

Geoghan received that inpatient treatment at the Institute of Living from August to November of 1989. It is not clear how much information the institute was given about Geoghan's past behavior -- St. Luke Institute, years later, would conclude that Geoghan lied during that 1989 stay at the institute.

Whatever the reasons, the Institute of Living made what would turn out to be a disastrous recommendation. It diagnosed him an atypical pedophile "in remission," but said doctors decided after "meeting with the patient's superior" that Geoghan could return to his parish in Weston, Mass.

When that recommendation was received by the archdiocese, a top church official wrote back to the doctor saying he was "a bit disappointed and disturbed" by the report, and suggested that the diagnosis did not appear to be a firm basis for the decision to reassign Geoghan.

"It seems to suggest that the decision concerning his reassignment was based on one meeting with me, rather than three months of observation," wrote Bishop Robert J. Banks.

The institute doctor, Robert F. Swords, quickly responded with a reassuring letter on Dec. 13, 1989, saying: "It is both reasonable and therapeutic for him to be reassigned back to his parish."

Swords wrote a follow-up letter to Banks in Boston on Dec. 12, 1990, saying Geoghan "continues to do well and remains psychologically fit for pastoral work in general including children."

The civil and criminal allegations against Geoghan in Massachusetts indicate he had at least 30 victims from 1984 to 1993, when he was removed from parish work and sent to a home for retired priests.

Even then, Geoghan was still allegedly pursuing children.

Geoghan was defrocked by the Boston diocese in 1998 and convicted of one count of indecent assault earlier this year.

The church has paid out about \$10 million in 50 cases against the priest, but 84 lawsuits are still pending.

Treatment For 'Burnout'

In the 1970s, before he became a priest, Richard Buongirno allegedly molested a teenager he met at St. Thomas More School in Colchester. When the victim came forward with a complaint in 1994, Buongirno, by then a member of the clergy, was promptly shipped off for treatment at the Institute of Living.

What the Norwich diocese did not mention to doctors at the institute was that, three years earlier, Buongirno was accused of having a 9-year-old altar boy stay in his bed at the rectory at St. Matthias in East Lyme.

Doctors diagnosed Buongirno as depressive. They treated him for self-described "burnout." They believed his claim that he had been celibate since joining the priesthood.

And they saw no reason to keep him from returning to active ministry.

A memorandum to Bishop Daniel P. Reilly, written by the bishop's aide, makes clear the diocese's desire for a written assurance that Buongirno could return to work. The memo contains the following account of the aide's conversation with the Rev. John Kiely, the institute's director of pastoral services: "Jack said the doctor was willing to write that Richard can return to ministry as we spoke about. Officially for the record and for your protection."

Upon release that September, Buongirno was assigned a parochial vicar at St. John Church in Cromwell.

In 1997, he crossed paths again with the altar boy who allegedly had stayed in his bed, now a junior at a Catholic high school. Buongirno renewed a relationship with the teenager, showering him with gifts -- stock in Microsoft Corp., a computer -- and let him drive his 1956 Chevy Bel Air, according to court records.

According to a lawsuit filed by the teenager, the abuse began again later that year. The priest said their relationship was blessed by God, the boy later said. He was 16; Buongirno was 53.

It ended only when the church learned that Buongirno had taken the boy on a cross-country road trip to Mount Rushmore. Reilly ordered them home -- and asked Buongirno to leave the priesthood.

"My faith in God has been shattered," the boy said in an affidavit. "My childhood was destroyed."

Standing before a Superior Court judge earlier this month, a lawyer for the diocese argued that it could not be held accountable for Buongiorno's actions with the teenager because doctors at the institute had recommended that he be allowed back into ministry.

Protecting The Public

When Egan was bishop of Bridgeport, his record on informing the institute about the full scope of sexual misconduct allegations against his priests is not clear.

What is clear, however, is his almost exclusive reliance on the institute and other professionals to determine what administrative action he should take against a priest.

Priests Charles Carr and Raymond Pcolka were sent to the Institute of Living by Egan after abuse allegations and, in both cases, Egan and other church officials cited the institute's findings to explain why they allowed the priests to continue working.

In the Carr case, for example, the priest denied the accusations during his initial meeting with doctors in January 1990, and was returned to parish work. When new allegations came forth a few months later, Carr was returned to the institute for a more extensive evaluation.

An institute doctor advised the diocese to take "some administrative action to protect both Father Carr and the public" from future "lapses" by Carr. Egan allowed Carr to continue as a priest, but on the condition that he remain in treatment and have no contact with children.

A year later, that restriction was lifted -- this time on the advice of a different psychiatrist. Sweeney, the diocese's attorney, said Egan followed the recommendation of a Jesuit priest and psychiatrist from New York who was treating Carr on an outpatient basis.

Egan suspended Carr in 1995 when the diocese was sued over sex-abuse allegations, but allowed him to return to work -- albeit in a restricted capacity -- in 1999 after more treatment. Carr served as a nursing home pastor until last month, when new allegations were made against him.

The same pattern was followed in the Pcolka case, but in a more abbreviated form. Pcolka, who was eventually accused of molesting more than a dozen children in civil lawsuits, was first sent to the institute in 1989 for an evaluation. Egan said in his 1999 deposition that he returned the priest to his parish at the advice of the professionals at the Institute of Living, who indicated "that there was no reason for us to hesitate to allow this person to continue in his duty."

There is no way to determine whether this is an accurate representation of the institute's findings, however, because a judge in the Pcolka lawsuits ruled that the diocese could not turn over the priest's psychiatric records to the plaintiffs. What is clear is that the 1983

letter that would have alerted doctors to an earlier complaint against Pcolka was missing from his personnel file.

Sweeney said a doctor at the Institute of Living told the diocese he'd "found no basis for challenging [Pcolka's] denial of the allegations."

"That's the way it was expressed to the diocese," Sweeney said.

Pcolka continued working at his Greenwich church until 1992, when the diocese received another complaint. Egan ordered the priest back to the Hartford treatment center, but Pcolka stayed only 10 days before leaving against the advice of doctors and against Egan's orders.

Egan Defends Handling Of Abuse Cases

Hartford Courant, March 24, 2002

By RINKER BUCK

New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan Saturday defended his handling of sex abuse allegations against priests, saying that after a review by the diocese, his policy was to send them "immediately to one of the most prominent psychiatric institutions in the nation for evaluation.

"If the conclusions were favorable, he was returned to ministry, in some cases with restrictions, so as to be doubly careful. If they were not favorable, he was not allowed to function as a priest," Egan wrote.

In a much-anticipated letter to parishioners released Saturday, Egan also repeated his controversial position that church authorities would not automatically refer reports of sexual abuse by priests to prosecutors.

The letter, made available to parishes throughout the Archdiocese of New York, responded to a March 17 Courant story that revealed that Egan, while bishop of the Bridgeport diocese, allowed priests accused of sexual abuse to continue working in parishes -- and that he did not refer such complaints to prosecutors or police.

Egan also appeared to back away from his earlier charge that the Courant story contained inaccuracies. He had said in a statement Tuesday he would provide a "detailed outline of how the Archdiocese of New York responds to accusations of sexual abuse," and that the original story "omitted certain key facts and contained inaccuracies." He provided no examples of inaccuracies Saturday.

Egan's letter to parishioners Saturday is not much more detailed than his statement Tuesday. Egan repeated the language of his earlier statement, "strongly encouraging" anyone with an allegation of sexual abuse to alert the "proper civil authorities directly and immediately."

The Archdiocese of New York, however, will not adhere to the same practice. In his letter to parishioners, Egan emphasized that New York church officials will "review" reports of sexual abuse to "determine the validity of each claim." Priests can be removed from their ministries only if a report of sexual abuse is "substantiated" by church authorities. Egan noticeably avoided committing the church to reporting cases to civil authorities in all cases.

"Should the Archdiocese of New York be approached with an allegation," Egan stated in his letter to parishioners, "we will make the appropriate report to the proper authorities, if there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse and the victim does not oppose the reporting."

This hedging of church responsibility was roundly criticized last week by New York district attorneys, who pointed out that New York law requires the reporting of sexual abuse allegations to police or prosecutors. They said that trained detectives and social workers are in a better position to determine the merits of a case than church leaders. Egan's position also departs from church policy in other dioceses across the country, which generally support the reporting of abuse cases to civil authorities.

One prominent theologian and outspoken critic of the church's handling of the sexual abuse scandal questioned the soundness of Egan's position after reading his Saturday letter to parishioners. Hartford native Richard McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, and his best-selling book, "Catholicism," is used as a standard text in college courses throughout the country.

"The diocesan lawyers who handled so many of these cases obviously considered them serious because they recommended substantial outlays of money to settle the cases," McBrien said. "There must have been probable cause if they paid money, and thus civil authorities should have been notified." McBrien also pointed out that reassigning priests against whom charges of sexual abuse have been received violates an ancient church teaching called *pars tutior*, Latin for "the safer course."

"The safer course for a bishop who has received charges against a priest is for him to never assign that priest again to a public ministry."

In his Saturday letter, Egan stopped short of specific criticism of the Courant's article on March 17, and instead insisted that three points should have been made in the article. First, Egan said, the "alleged abuse" in the Bridgeport cases described by The Courant occurred prior to his appointment as bishop of Bridgeport in 1988. Second, Egan insisted he had followed diocesan policy by referring accused priests for psychiatric evaluation before allowing them to return to their priestly duties. Egan also pointed out that the victims alleging abuse were all adults when they brought their allegations to the diocese.

The Courant story on March 17 stated all of these points.

Joseph Zwilling, the spokesman for the New York archdiocese, denied that Egan was retreating from his original statement that the article "contained inaccuracies."

"Cardinal Egan considered the story this past Sunday to be inaccurate," Zwilling said. "These essential points, as outlined in the letter to parishioners, should be known."

McBrien believes that even for critics of the church's handling of sexual abuse cases, there was at least some comfort regarding Egan's two statements this week.

"Cardinal Egan has been forced to move from a position of 'no comment' to one where he's at least attempting to explain his behavior as bishop of Bridgeport and what his policies will be in the Archdiocese of New York."

Egan Breaks Silence

Hartford Courant, March 20, 2002

By RINKER BUCK
Courant Staff Writer

NEW YORK -- New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan, breaking his long-standing silence on sex abuse by members of the clergy, Tuesday released a statement labeling pedophilia an "abomination" and encouraging "anyone who has an allegation to bring it immediately and directly to the civil authorities."

Egan was circumspect, however, on one point that has caused a furor within his diocese and American Catholicism ever since the national wave of reports of sex abuse by priests began to cascade earlier this year: the precise circumstances under which the church is obligated to report cases of abuse.

While saying authorities should be made aware of abuse allegations, Egan stopped short of pledging that the church would, in every case, report them. He allowed that in some circumstances the diocese would decide whether there were sufficient grounds to make such a notification.

"As has been made clear, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse has occurred and if the victims do not oppose the reporting, the Archdiocese will make the appropriate reports to civil authorities," Egan said.

Egan also took the opportunity to respond, for the first time, to a Courant story published Sunday that described how, as bishop of Bridgeport from 1988 to 2000, Egan kept in place several priests facing multiple accusations of sexual abuse and did not report complaints against clergy to the authorities. The story was based on thousands of pages of sealed documents and testimony from civil suits against six priests.

Saying the story "omitted certain key facts and contained inaccuracies," Egan added that he is "confident that these cases were handled appropriately." A spokesman for the cardinal declined to elaborate, saying he would provide more details in a forthcoming letter to New York parishioners.

Egan's one-page statement followed three days of unrelenting criticism by prosecutors, politicians and newspaper columnists, many of whom condemned the church's reflexive policy of silence and its record of not being forthcoming with the public and prosecutors about sexual abuse cases. His response to the crisis - and the questions raised about his personal handling of the Bridgeport cases - is important because the archbishop of New York has traditionally been considered the spiritual leader and voice of American Catholicism.

Egan's reluctance to speak out on the issue is in contrast to some other bishops, including his successor in Bridgeport, William Lori, who held a press conference Tuesday night to field questions about how his diocese intends to deal with sex-abuse complaints.

Lori did not criticize Egan's handling of the abuse cases. Instead, Lori praised Egan for his overall leadership, saying, "He left behind a magnificent diocese."

When pressed to explain some of Egan's actions, Lori said: "I'm only here to answer for the way I've responded in the past year and how I'm going to respond in the year going forward. We can all have 20/20 hindsight."

The Courant's story, based in part on transcripts of closed-door testimony by Egan, showed how the then-bishop openly questioned the veracity of a dozen people who accused one priest of rape, molestation and beatings. It also showed how Egan allowed three priests accused of sex abuse to continue working for years, in one case reinstating the Rev. Charles Carr in 1999 despite multiple claims that he fondled young boys.

Lori defrocked Carr last month after yet another complaint was made against him.

Egan also testified, in a 1999 deposition, that since his arrival in Bridgeport more than a decade earlier, neither he nor anyone else in that diocese had referred a single complaint of sex abuse by priests to police.

That appears to contrast with his statement Tuesday, in which he said he believes allegations of abuse should be reported to the authorities and that anyone who brings such a claim to the New York archdiocese will be encouraged to report it. He added that the archdiocese will make such a report when it finds "reasonable cause" to suspect that abuse has occurred.

Unlike in New York, clergy in Connecticut are mandated reporters, meaning they are among a handful of professionals required by law to refer allegations of abuse to either the state Department of Children and Families or the police within 24 hours. State statutes do not restrict the requirement to a certain time period after the alleged abuse.

But Egan's lawyer said during the deposition that he believed there is no legal obligation to report alleged abuses from the past, if the child victim had turned 18 by the time the allegation was made. Jason Tremont, whose law firm, Tremont & Sheldon, represented 26 people who settled lawsuits against the Bridgeport diocese one year ago, disagreed.

Tuesday, Tremont said he believes such cases must be reported even when the alleged victims have turned 18. Doing so, he said, could help prevent future abuses by the same suspect and could allow police to find other victims.

Tremont said Egan's statement Tuesday is woefully lacking and doesn't acknowledge the mistakes that were made during the cardinal's tenure.

"Obviously, I totally disagree with this," he said. "I don't think this statement is sufficient. I don't believe they handled it appropriately. And I think he owes a greater explanation of his actions."

Tremont said the current Bridgeport bishop's statements at a press conference Tuesday back up his belief.

"When Bishop Lori says he's learned from the past and he's changed the way things are done, I think that proves the point," Tremont said.

Jon Fleetwood, a victim who claimed in a lawsuit that he was repeatedly abused as a child by a priest Egan protected, said he found the cardinal's words to be hollow. His lawsuit was one of more than two dozen settled last year when the diocese paid out roughly \$12 million.

"Back in the 1990s, he didn't want to believe anybody," said Fleetwood, now 30. "I'm not going to believe anything he says."

As if to symbolize that the flood tide of sex abuse by priests cannot be contained, New York was embroiled in still another case as details emerged that a priest accused in a lawsuit of sexual abuse was still performing ministerial duties at a Manhattan church.

The 1997 lawsuit alleges that the Rev. Henry Mills sexually abused a 17-year-old boy while working at a Bronx church. Even though the archdiocese officially lists Mills as on a "leave of absence," the priest is now assigned to St. Elizabeth Church in Washington Heights. Monsignor Gerald Walsh, the church's pastor, said Mills celebrates Mass, but does not teach at the parish school.

Brooklyn Bishop Thomas Daily was also under mounting pressure this week and is considering changes in his diocese's reporting policy, but had not made a decision as of Tuesday, spokesman Frank DeRosa said. Daily, who once served in Boston, was among the church leaders accused of keeping silent about abuse allegations against defrocked priest John J. Geohan. The Boston archdiocese agreed last week to pay up to \$30 million to 86 people who accused Geohan of child molestation.

"These lawsuits are occurring because there is no alternative," said John E. Fitzgerald, a senior partner in the law firm that filed suit against the New York priest. "The bishops have been ill-advised by defense attorneys and insurance people. They have developed a policy of channeling things into litigation so there can be secrecy agreements."

Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau was also highly critical of the archdiocese's handling of the crisis and said Tuesday that church leaders have an obligation to report cases to civil authorities regardless of their own determination of innocence or guilt.

"Responsible officials in all religious institutions who have information about child abuse should make certain that information is brought to the attention of law enforcement," Morgenthau said. "I would expect the Archdiocese of New York to make available to my office all allegations of child abuse, including any past allegations."

Former Mayor Ed Koch was among a host of prominent former politicians and present officeholders who criticized the church for promoting a policy under which ecclesiastical authorities, not prosecutors, should decide which cases are brought to light.

"All of these records should be provided to the district attorney, and then let the D.A. decide whether this should be made public," Koch said.

Joseph Zwilling, the spokesman for the archdiocese, said Tuesday evening that he did not know when Egan's letter to New York Catholics would be released. Zwilling said the "salient and essential facts" of the cardinal's complaint about The Courant's story will be "touched upon" then.

Brian Toolan, the editor of the Courant, said in a statement Tuesday: "We have great confidence in the accuracy of our report, since Cardinal Egan's role in the handling of the Bridgeport cases was described through his own sworn testimony in two depositions and diocesan memoranda."

"We've asked the Archdiocese of New York to detail any inaccuracies in our report, but so far they have not responded to our request," Toolan said. "We will continue to seek an interview with his Eminence."

Meanwhile, as new questions are raised about Egan's handling of perhaps the worst crisis in American Catholicism's history, prominent theologians and church historians are openly wondering whether the church's position on celibacy for priests, and the way church leaders are chosen, can last.

"Keep in mind that all of the bishops in the news right now were created by John Paul II," said Notre Dame theologian the Rev. Richard McBrien, whose book, "Catholicism," is now regarded as a standard college text in courses on the church. "These are men who are more loyal to the Vatican and its policies than to the concerns of vulnerable children."

McBrien feels that the public has seen "only the tip of the iceberg" on the sex abuse scandals so far, and that the resulting wave of revulsion and reconsideration among Catholics may well doom the practice of celibacy.

Experts in handling clergy sexual abuse also seem to agree that the new light thrown on the hierarchy's handling of cases will profoundly change the church's policies.

"These cases clearly reveal that the whole emphasis so far has merely been to protect the church," said Willard Sapp, a Kentucky pastoral counselor with national experience in handling sex abuse cases at churches of many denominations. "But silence never works."

Silence has been used as an excuse to just move the priest around, give him a change of scenery, and then he just abuses new victims. The public is beginning to see that silence isn't a cure. It's a curse."

A Statement From Cardinal Edward Egan

Hartford Courant, March 20, 2002

The statement from Cardinal Edward Egan issued Tuesday regarding child sex abuse allegations:

Sexual abuse of children is an abomination. It leaves scars on its victims that long endure. My heart goes out to any and all victims and their families.

A letter is being prepared for the faithful of the Archdiocese of New York on the tragedy and immorality of sexual abuse. There will be in this letter a detailed outline of how the Archdiocese of New York responds to accusations of sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse of children is not only immoral, it is also illegal. Along with the district attorneys, I believe that allegations of abuse should be reported to the proper civil authorities, and I urge anyone who has an allegation to bring it immediately and directly to the civil authorities. If such allegations are made first to the archdiocese, we will encourage the person making the allegation to report that allegation to the proper civil authorities.

In the Archdiocese of New York, we will continue to enforce the policy of the archdiocese to thoroughly investigate all allegations and respond appropriately and pastorally to the person bringing the allegation and to the clergyman. In any such investigation, of course, we have to respect the rights of all persons involved, the rights of the accuser as well as the rights of the accused. As has been made clear, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse has occurred and if the victims do not oppose the reporting, the archdiocese will make the appropriate reports to civil authorities.

Recently, an area newspaper published a story concerning how three sexual abuse cases were handled in the Diocese of Bridgeport (Conn.). There was an immediate request for a reaction from me as the former bishop of Bridgeport. Since that story omitted certain key facts and contained inaccuracies, it was necessary to review the cases in detail before responding. Having completed the review, I am confident that these cases were handled appropriately. The salient and essential facts of this matter will be touched upon in my upcoming letter.

Our children are to be protected always, and in this the archdiocese will be ever vigilant.

Excerpt Of Egan Deposition

Hartford Courant, March 20, 2002

Excerpt from Egan's 1999 deposition, under questioning by attorneys for plaintiffs who claimed they have been sexually abused by priests in the Bridgeport Diocese, where Egan was bishop from 1988 to 2000:

QUESTION: "Okay. So let me ask you this question. Do you know of any instance since you have been bishop, that anyone on your behalf or any official within the diocese has made a report to the authorities because of a suspicion that a Bridgeport Diocesan priest sexually abused a minor?"

EGAN: "I have no such knowledge. However, I could imagine that a case could go to somewhere else, to a hospital or something of that sort, and somebody else could report it. But I have no such case."

QUESTION: "If someone within the diocese were to have reported to the authorities that a priest within the diocese ..."

EGAN: "Uh-huh."

QUESTION: "... was suspected of committing an offense against a child, would that be something you would have to be made aware of?"

EGAN: "You said a priest?"

QUESTION: "Correct."

EGAN: "Yes, it would"

QUESTION: "Okay. As you sit here today, you know of no instance in which anybody within the diocese has made such a report to the police or the authorities?"

EGAN: "You're correct."

QUESTION: "What is your understanding as to when such a report has to be made to the authorities?"

EGAN: "I believe it should be made immediately."

QUESTION: "In other words, under what circumstances? Any time that someone hears about ..."

EGAN: "Oh, I see."

QUESTION: "... a suspected clergy sexual abuse instance against a child?"

EGAN: "That's right."

QUESTION: "So any time that a person within the diocese, personnel, official, et cetera, learns of that, pursuant to both the written policy of the diocese and Connecticut state law, they would have to go to the authorities with that information?"

EGAN: "You are correct."

Egan Reacts With Silence

Hartford Courant, March 18, 2002

By ERIC RICH
Courant Staff Writer

Cardinal Edward M. Egan maintained a resolute silence Sunday as concerned parishioners at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York reacted to revelations that, as a bishop in Connecticut, Egan allowed priests accused of sexual misconduct to remain in the ministry for years.

Egan's refusal to comment on his handling of allegations in his former diocese seemed likely to inflame criticism that, though the most visible ecclesiastical figure in the country, he has failed to assume a public role in the broader abuse scandal now roiling the church.

"He should come forward and address the allegations because it will get worse," said Dan Sullivan. Like others at the cathedral in New York, he had heard details of a report in The Courant on Sunday.

Inside, Egan offered a homily on the importance of faith and of loyalty to the church.

"We see that not all were able to hold on to their faith or certainly to live it as Jesus Christ would have," he said. "And this is why we have a church. We need to come together as a community."

Meanwhile, in Connecticut, a prominent state legislator called the revelations "pretty shocking" and, based on The Courant's report, said that Egan owes victims of sexual abuse in the Bridgeport diocese "at least" an apology.

"That's exactly how people are not supposed to handle those kinds of situations," said state Rep. Michael Lawlor, co-chairman of the legislature's judiciary committee. "It's the exact opposite of what you're supposed to do."

The Courant reported that Egan failed to thoroughly investigate abuse allegations, did not refer complaints to criminal authorities and - as recently as 1999 - allowed priests to continue working years after allegations of sexual molestation had been made against them.

It was also reported that Egan refused to believe multiple sex-abuse claims against a half-dozen clergy, and testified in sealed court documents that one priest's 12 accusers "have never been proved to be telling the truth."

The report was based on thousands of court documents that were part of the files in the largest sexual abuse scandal involving priests in state history. The documents, which

have never been made public and are under a court-ordered seal, were obtained recently by the newspaper.

In Bridgeport, parishioners at the diocese's cathedral, St. Augustine's, said they were concerned and disappointed by the allegations against the man who was their bishop from 1988 to 2000.

"Do I think it's wrong? If he did it, yeah," said Otto Veglio, a lifelong Catholic and former altar boy. "I think he failed the church and I think he failed us if he did it."

Egan's successor, Bishop William Lori, has promised a zero tolerance approach to the sexual abuse of minors and recently announced a review of all 285 active priests and 86 deacons under its auspices.

"We're very blessed to have Bishop Lori," said John Campbell, 42, a parishioner at St. Augustine's. "When the smoke clears and all is said and done, the Catholic Church will still be standing. It has been for 2,000 years."

Indeed, Lori last month suspended the Rev. Charles Carr, one of three priests whose cases The Courant examined closely. Egan had suspended him in 1995 - allegations against the priest stretched back to 1980 - only to reinstate him to ministry at a nursing home several years later.

Egan's silence Sunday stands in sharp contrast to the outspoken role assumed by Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law, under fire for his own handling of a priest sexual abuse scandal.

Egan's spokesman, Joseph Zwilling, on Sunday reiterated the church's policy on sexual abuse charges. "If there is reasonable cause to believe the allegations and the victims don't object, we will refer cases to authorities," Zwilling said.

Beyond that, he declined comment. He told a swarm of reporters inside the cathedral that questions should be directed to the Bridgeport diocese. A spokesman for the diocese later declined comment.

Until Sunday, details of the claims brought against six priests in the Bridgeport diocese in the 1990s by 26 plaintiffs, some stretching back more than two decades, were largely concealed from public view. The sealed files revealed that, in addition to those, at least nine other priests faced sex-abuse allegations.

A confidential settlement reached one year ago, for a sum said to be roughly \$12 million, brought an end to all the litigation. As part of the settlement, the court file remained closed.

Lawlor said Sunday he believed the disclosures would improve the chances of passage this year of a bill that would extend the statute of limitations for criminal prosecutions of child molestation to 30 years after the victim's 18th birthday. The bill, as it is written,

would apply retroactively - meaning some of the priests named in the Bridgeport cases could potentially face criminal charges.

"You can see the extraordinary lengths to which a variety of people, not just child molesters, went to cover this up," he said. "You can understand why people are reluctant to come forward. They're up against an organization that was prepared to go to great lengths to make sure this doesn't become public."

Outside St. Patrick's in New York, some parishioners said the allegations against Egan reflected a different era - a time when children's claims were more readily dismissed and pedophilia was not necessarily considered a permanent condition.

"We would all have handled it maybe wrongly," said Michael Fitzgerald, from Ireland.

Still, with less prominent clerics now moving swiftly against abusers, they said Egan must address the crisis facing the church if he is to retain his moral authority and credibility.

Dressed in the purple robe of Lent, Egan concluded his sermon with an invocation to St. Patrick.

"Help us to proclaim the strength and to live our life in the Holiness he has taught," he said. "Oh, Patrick, pray for us. Pray for the church."

Courant Staff Writers Dan Haar and Oshrat Carmiel contributed to this story.

Egan Protected Abusive Priests

Hartford Courant, March 17, 2002

By ELIZABETH HAMILTON And ERIC RICH

Secret court documents reveal that New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan, while serving as bishop of the Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocese, allowed several priests facing multiple accusations of sexual abuse to continue working for years - including one who admitted biting a teenager during oral sex.

Egan failed to investigate aggressively some abuse allegations, did not refer complaints to criminal authorities and, during closed testimony in 1999, suggested that a dozen people who made complaints of rape, molestation and beatings against the same priest may have all been lying, the documents show.

In comments that seem starkly out of synch with the current climate of zero tolerance for sex-abuse accusations against priests, Egan said he wasn't interested in allegations - only "realities." He added that "very few have even come close to having anyone prove anything" against a priest.

"Allegations are allegations," he said.

In addition, former Bridgeport Bishop Walter Curtis, Egan's predecessor, testified in 1995 that the diocese deliberately shuffled pedophile priests among parishes to give them a "fresh start," and he admitted destroying records of complaints against some priests, the documents show. Curtis, who is now deceased, also said he didn't believe pedophilia was a permanent condition.

The revelations about Egan's role in Connecticut's largest clergy sex-abuse scandal are taken from thousands of documents in lawsuits that Egan and the Bridgeport diocese fought, successfully, to keep sealed from public view. While the files remain sealed following a settlement of the suits last year, The Courant recently obtained copies of much of them, including transcripts of pretrial testimony of Egan and Curtis, internal diocesan memoranda and personnel files.

The documents reveal that, in addition to the eight priests who were originally sued, at least nine others faced molestation accusations but were never publicly identified. The documents - which do not include details of the claims or their outcomes - name seven of the priests, one of whom continues to serve as pastor at a Fairfield County parish.

While glimpses of the allegations against a few of the priests emerged during eight years of legal battle, details of what the bishops and other church officials had to say about the cases, and how they handled them, have never been reported until now.

The Bridgeport diocese settled complaints against six priests for \$12 million to \$15 million last March, shortly after Egan was promoted to cardinal in New York. Egan, who was bishop in Bridgeport from 1988 to 2000, was a defendant in some of the lawsuits and fought them aggressively from 1993 until the settlement, which ended all of the litigation.

He inherited a budding scandal in the Bridgeport diocese that took root during the 27-year reign of Curtis, who, in pretrial interviews with plaintiffs' lawyers, exhibited a blunt lack of interest in dealing with sexually abusive priests. Asked if he ever transferred a priest "because of pedophilic conduct," Curtis replied, "yes."

"When he was assigned to a different parish, would anyone be advised of the problem which he had previously had?" the attorney asked.

"No," Curtis said.

Under Curtis, the documents show, church officials and other priests often ignored obvious signs of sexual involvement with children - such as Rev. Gavin O'Connor's practice of having boys spend the weekend with him in his bed in the rectory. Typically, when a complaint was made, it was only considered substantiated if the priest confessed.

Curtis also testified that records of complaints against priests would usually be put into the diocese's "secret archive," a canonically required cache of historical documents accessed only with keys kept by the bishop and the vicar. He said he would occasionally go into the archive and remove what he called "antiquated" abuse complaints, and destroy them.

Curtis seemed less interested in pedophilia - which he viewed as "an occasional thing" and not a serious psychological problem - than in weeding out potential gays among clergy applicants:

"We had a policy in this sense, that before a candidate was accepted for study for the priesthood, [they] would have psychological testing, and if there appeared signs of homosexuality, he wouldn't be accepted," Curtis said.

By the time Egan took over in December 1988, complaints were trickling in against several priests, made by adults who said they had been victimized in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The documents show that he defrocked at least one priest for sexual offenses, and put in place the first written policy on sexual abuse complaints.

But he was slow to suspend or remove priestly powers of some others, even those with multiple complaints against them.

Despite a May 1990 memo by a diocese official worrying about "a developing pattern of accusations" that Rev. Charles Carr of Norwalk had fondled young boys, Egan kept Carr working as a priest until 1995, when he suspended him only after a lawsuit was filed. Egan's aide, Vicar Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, wrote a sympathetic note to Carr.

"Trusting that you understand the reasons for these actions, I join Bishop Egan in praying that the Lord will bless you with the graces you need at this time in your life," Bronkiewicz said.

Egan actually reinstated Carr in 1999 as a part-time chaplain at a church-run nursing home in Danbury. But after yet another accusation against Carr surfaced earlier this year, about an incident from long ago, newly installed Bishop William Lori finally defrocked Carr last month and referred him to state child protection authorities.

The expressions of concern for, and willingness to believe, accused priests stand in contrast to the absence of sympathy displayed for the accusers. For instance, regarding a dozen people who made complaints of sexual abuse and violence against the Rev. Raymond Pcolka of Greenwich, Egan said, "the 12 have never been proved to be telling the truth."

Yet, nowhere in the documents is there evidence that attempts were made to seriously investigate the truth of such allegations - accusers were not interviewed, witnesses were not sought, and no attempt was made to learn of other possible victims. Egan allowed Pcolka to continue working as a priest until 1993, when he suspended him after Pcolka refused to participate in psychiatric treatment.

Egan also doesn't believe accusers have a right to know of other, similar accusations against the same priest: "We're dealing with them as a specific case, and I would have no reason to go into other people's concerns with them."

And he disagreed that a 1964 memo, instructing church officials that "hepatitis was to be feigned" as a cover for the sudden absence of a priest, was an attempt to hide the fact that the priest, the Rev. Laurence Brett, had left because he admitted biting a teenager's penis during oral sex.

"I wouldn't read it that way," Egan said of the memo, written long before he got there. "I would read it that this man is going away, and if anyone asks, say he's not well, he has hepatitis. That's quite a bit different than saying you are going to hide it."

Egan added that he wouldn't have made up an excuse about a priest's absence, preferring instead to simply tell anyone who inquired that it was none of their business.

Egan allowed Brett to continue working as a priest outside of the diocese until February 1993, three months after receiving additional allegations of sexual misconduct against Brett from the 1960s. When the allegations came in, Egan's aide, Bronkiewicz, wrote a letter alerting the archdiocese in Baltimore, where Brett had been assigned.

"At the present time, we have no reason to believe the accuser of Father Brett intends to take legal action of any kind, and there has been no publicity concerning the accusation," he wrote.

There is no evidence from any of the documents that the diocese under both Egan and Curtis alerted the police or state child protection authorities when parents or victims came forward with accusations of abuse. In all of the cases during Egan's tenure, the statute of limitations to bring criminal charges had expired.

But the failure to report those cases meant that police and state child protection authorities were never able to investigate the possibility of other victims or possession of child pornography, a federal crime. Under public pressure, Boston and several other dioceses recently began turning over names of all accused priests, no matter how old the incidents.

Revelations of Egan's actions and attitudes toward sex abuse accusations against clergy are likely to further roil the Catholic Church, which has been rocked in recent months by news of the Boston Archdiocese's decades-long mishandling of abuse complaints against pedophile priest John Geoghan. In the wake of that scandal, Boston and other dioceses - including Bridgeport, under the new bishop, Lori - have taken steps to become more forthcoming with the public and civil authorities.

However, Egan, who as cardinal in New York is the highest profile Catholic in the United States, has come under growing criticism for not speaking out. On Friday, in a New York Daily News cover story headlined "Speak Up, Egan Told," Egan's spokesman said the cardinal planned no public statements on the issue.

Egan did not respond to requests for comments about his actions in the Bridgeport cases, including a list of questions e-mailed to his office at the request of his spokesman, Joseph Zwilling. In an e-mail Saturday, Zwilling referred all questions "concerning the Diocese of Bridgeport and/or any actions that may have occurred in that diocese" to Bridgeport.

Joseph McAleer, a spokesman for the Bridgeport Diocese, said in a statement that "this was litigated for 8 years and was in the newspapers practically every day," and that the diocese would have no further comment.

"The diocese of Bridgeport has always acted according to the law and remains proactive on the prevention of sexual misconduct by its clergy and its employees," McAleer said.

Cindy Robinson, whose law firm, Tremont & Sheldon, represented 26 people who settled lawsuits with the Bridgeport Diocese last year, would not comment on any of the information contained in the sealed documents, saying she is prevented by the protective order issued by the judge.

"We have always said we were confident we would prevail at trial proving our claim that both Bishop Egan and Bishop Curtis participated in the ongoing cover-up of these priests," said Robinson.

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What follows is the first inside look, derived from the court documents, of how Egan and other church officials handled the cases of three priests accused of sexual abuse:

Rev. Charles Carr

Though the diocese kept giving Carr new assignments, allegations of sexual improprieties followed him around.

The Rev. Michael Palmer, the parish priest at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Wilton in the early 1980s, knew as early as 1982 that his assistant, Father Charles Carr, might be attracted to children. That was when the mother of an 11-year-old boy came to Palmer to complain about Carr.

Her son, a student at Our Lady of Fatima School, had gone with Carr and a couple of other boys to Long Island for a school holiday trip a few days earlier and came back drenched with sweat and shaking.

When his mother asked what was wrong, her son told her that after the other boys had been dropped off at their houses, Carr had driven him to the church parking lot and parked. Her son didn't like that, the mother told her priest, because it was already dark and the church was out of the way from their home.

Then Carr started tickling the boy, even though he was asking the priest to stop. When Carr tried to put his hands down the boy's pants, she said, her son pushed the priest away and called him a "pervert."

Palmer told the distraught mother he'd "look into it." When he asked Carr about it a few days later, Carr admitted he'd been tickling the boy and that his hand might have accidentally "slipped," but he denied any sexual intent.

Palmer told Carr to stay away from the boy, but never reported it to anyone else because, he testified in a 1997 deposition, he didn't believe it was a "clear cut" sexual complaint. Attorneys questioned why Palmer would not consider the complaint sexual in nature:

Q: What's not clear cut?

A. That it's a direct intended sexual advance.

Q: Let me ask you, as a priest, as a man, you are an athlete as well, you said you enjoy sports, how many times have you stuck your hand accidentally down the front of an individual, a boy or a man's trousers?

A: I can't remember any.

Carr left the Wilton church in 1984 for what would be a short-lived stint on the faculty of Immaculate High School in Danbury and the parish of St. Mary's in Bethel, where he stayed only three months.

Peter DeMarco, who was the parish priest at St. Mary's in 1984, was asked about Carr's quick transfer during a 1999 deposition, and said he knew only that a group of parents complained to the diocese that Carr had inappropriately touched one of their eighth-grade sons at the movies.

"Monsignor [Andrew] Cusack called me up after the meeting and told me he had met with the parents," DeMarco said. "That they were not - this is what I seem to remember. That the parents were not after any criminal or legal repercussions - I'm not sure what the words were - but they just wanted him to be transferred. And Monsignor Cusack said, 'He will be leaving you as soon as possible.'"

Cusack, the Episcopal Vicar of Religious and Clergy for the Bridgeport Diocese, sent Carr for counseling with William Larkin, a Ridgefield therapist with a degree in theology. Bishop Curtis then transferred him to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Norwalk, where he met 13-year-old Jon Fleetwood and his family in September 1984.

Fleetwood, who sued Carr in 1993 and has spoken publicly about the sexual abuse he suffered, worked in the rectory answering phones and ran into Carr often. The priest quickly became friendly with the Fleetwood family and was a frequent dinner guest.

One evening, Carr invited Fleetwood to his room in the rectory, which he shared with three other priests, to watch a movie. The fondling began the same way it did with the other boy, Fleetwood testified in 1995.

"He was poking and tickling and soon it just moved down lower toward my penis and he started playing with the inside of my thigh," he said. "And then it turned into rubbing instead of tickling."

That first time, Fleetwood said, Carr did not unzip his pants and fondle his penis. But he did the second time, as well as on three other occasions, Fleetwood said.

Fleetwood eventually stopped accepting Carr's invitations, which got him in a little bit of trouble with his parents - who thought he was being rude to the priest - but he said he felt too ashamed and upset about the sexual encounters to tell anyone why he didn't want to go.

Then, in July 1986, Curtis granted Carr's request to be appointed to the faculty of the Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield. When asked during his 1996 deposition why the diocese would transfer Carr to a boy's school when he was suspected of making sexual advances on boys, Cusack said he was simply acting on Larkin's advice.

"Isn't that like sending Dracula to guard the blood bank?" asked Attorney Paul Tremont, who was representing the plaintiffs suing Carr and the diocese. "Why didn't you put him some other place?"

"That was not the advice of Dr. Larkin," Cusack responded.

The diocese did not at any time, however, request or obtain any written report from Larkin about Carr's mental health or even his diagnosis, which Cusack characterized as primarily a "self-esteem problem." Carr stayed at Notre Dame High School until 1989, when Egan transferred him to a new job - spiritual director for the boys at Central Catholic High School in Norwalk.

Word of Carr's appointment to the Norwalk school got back to the mother of the 11-year-old boy Carr was accused of fondling in 1982, and she was, her son testified in 1996, "outraged."

The woman, who was getting her master's degree in theology at the time, asked one of her professors to write to Egan on her behalf - to vouch for her, in effect - so she could sit down with him and discuss Carr's appointment, her son told attorneys. But Egan refused to meet with her.

Instead, the woman met with Cusack's replacement, Laurence Bronkiewicz, on Oct. 19, 1989, and told him what Carr did to her son seven years earlier. Bronkiewicz then called Cusack, who was now working at Seton Hall University, and asked him whether there were any other complaints against Carr he needed to know about.

Yes, Cusack said, one - and told him for the first time about the 1984 allegations against Carr at St. Mary's.

Egan sent Carr off to the Institute of Living, a Hartford psychiatric hospital, in January 1990 for an evaluation, but doctors there were unable to determine whether Carr's denial of the accusations was truthful, documents show. So, Egan allowed Carr to return to his job at Central Catholic High School that winter.

But a few months later, another parent came forward with a complaint that Carr had fondled his then 11-year-old son in the early 1980s. Carr was returned in April to the Institute of Living, where a doctor suggested the diocese take some sort of "administrative action to protect both Father Carr and the public" from future "lapses" by Carr.

Carr consistently denied the accusations against him, but said he agreed to treatment because it was church policy.

Egan decided that Carr could return to work, and in June Carr was appointed parochial vicar of Saint Philip Parish in Norwalk, with the restriction that he not minister to children and that he continue in therapy.

One year later, in June 1991, those restrictions were lifted when Egan appointed Carr parochial vicar of Saint Andrew Parish in Bridgeport. In a memo written a few days before the appointment, Bronkiewicz wrote "we are satisfied that Fr. Carr is able to be assigned to Saint Andrew Parish without risk."

The whole thing might have ended there if the diocese hadn't tried to collect back tuition for Immaculate High School in Danbury from one of the families that had accused Carr of fondling their son in 1984 - even after the father in that family lost his job.

One of the alleged victims from 1984, who by 1993 was 23 years old, came to see Bronkiewicz to complain about the diocese's actions. In an internal memo, Bronkiewicz quotes the young man as saying "he finds it difficult to believe that the diocese is trying to collect this unpaid tuition when his parents could have sued the diocese in 1984 for the actions of Father Carr."

The first lawsuit against the diocese in connection to Carr was served on March 30, 1995. Later that day, Egan suspended Carr and placed him on an indefinite leave of absence.

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Rev. Raymond Pcolka

Allegations of abuse against Pcolka stretched back decades and involved more than a dozen accusers.

In 1983, an 18-year-old woman and her counselor came to Cusack, and told him she had been molested by her parish priest, Father Pcolka, 11 years earlier.

Cusack, in pretrial testimony in 1995 and 1996, said the woman told him she'd been "fondled" by Pcolka when she was a young girl attending St. John's in Bridgeport, but that he didn't fully believe her story because it appeared she was being "coached" by her counselor.

Attorneys for the woman, however, say Cusack had been told something far more disturbing: On the girl's seventh birthday, Pcolka told her he was going to give her a "birthday spanking," then he forced her to perform oral sex on him and "beat her while she was naked."

Pcolka denied it. Cusack, who had been placed in charge of handling misconduct complaints for the diocese, sent Pcolka to a psychiatric hospital for an "overnight evaluation," and talked to some of Pcolka's former supervisors and colleagues.

He did not notify the authorities. Nor did he check Pcolka's file for past complaints or specifically ask his former supervisors whether there had been previous sexual abuse charges.

His denials believed, Pcolka was allowed to return to his post at the Holy Name Church in Stratford without restrictions.

In fact, this was not the first time Pcolka had been accused of molesting a child. According to the documents, church officials had been receiving complaints about him since his first assignment, in 1966, at St. Benedict's Parish in Stamford.

In 1976, a parishioner at the Holy Name Church in Stratford wrote to Bishop Curtis complaining that Pcolka was involved in an inappropriate relationship with her daughter-in-law. Curtis wrote to Pcolka's supervisor asking for a response, but no further action was taken.

Pcolka continued on in his ministry, transferring to St. Mary's Church in Bethel and then again, in 1989, to Sacred Heart Church in Greenwich at the behest of newly appointed Bishop Egan. Shortly after Pcolka's reassignment, Egan had Pcolka over to his house for a private dinner, at which, according to Pcolka, the two discussed his transfer to Greenwich.

Asked by plaintiffs' lawyers if the two also talked about any sexual abuse allegations against him, Pcolka denied that they had. On the heels of that dinner came another complaint against Pcolka, this time from a mother claiming her son, James Krug, was molested almost two decades earlier. Egan sent the priest to the Institute of Living for a two-day evaluation.

"It was extensive. It was whatever was required at the Institute of Living and it was enough for an expert of some renown to indicate to us that there was no reason for us to hesitate to allow this person to continue in his duty," Egan testified in 1999.

The 1983 letter written to Cusack by the young woman accusing Pcolka of molestation was missing from Pcolka's file, Egan said, so he was unaware of that earlier allegation when weighing what action to take with Pcolka. He said he relied on the recommendation from a psychologist and the advice of his vicar general, Monsignor William Scheyd.

"He told me that if you were to give him a list of all the priests in the diocese, the last he would ever suspect of any misconduct of this sort would be Father Pcolka," Egan testified, adding that he didn't consider the complaints against Pcolka a "proved reality."

Pcolka was then allowed to resume his duties at Sacred Heart Church without any restrictions.

In 1992, Krug himself came forward, adding weight to the claims his mother made three years earlier. Egan granted Pcolka a leave of absence and returned him to the Institute of Living, where he stayed for approximately 10 days before leaving, against Egan's orders that he stay, Egan testified.

Egan suspended Pcolka at that point, but continued to pay his salary, provide his health benefits and cover the cost of his attorney's fees for several years, documents show.

Egan also did not make any effort to expel Pcolka from the priesthood, as he had done with at least one other priest accused of sexual misconduct. When asked why he had not done this, Egan said he didn't have sufficient evidence that Pcolka had abused anyone.

"If I had proof of his having been out of order, I certainly would have," Egan said.

Later, when asked if he was aware that at least 12 people accused Pcolka of sexual abuse that included oral and anal sex, beatings, violence and sadistic language, Egan responded:

"I am not aware of any of those things. I am aware of the claims of those things, the allegations of those things. I am aware that there are a number of people who know one another, some are related to one another, have the same lawyers and so forth, I am aware of the circumstances, yes."

Two years later, the diocese settled lawsuits against Pcolka, who exercised his Fifth Amendment privilege more than 100 times when questioned in 1994 about abuse allegations stretching back three decades and involving more than a dozen victims.

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Rev. Laurence Brett

Brett was sent out of state - with the admonition that, should anyone ask, "hepatitis was to be feigned" as a cover for his absence.

In December 1964, a teenage student at Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport came forward with an extraordinary complaint: Father Laurence Brett, a spiritual director at the university, had performed oral sex on the student - against his wishes - and had bitten his penis to prevent him from ejaculating.

Brett was confronted that very day. He admitted the claim was true, according to court documents. He said he had a "problem" and confessed to involvement with at least one other university boy.

Church memoranda show that Bishop Curtis discussed the situation with the Apostolic Delegate, the Vatican representative in Washington, D.C. Curtis ended up deciding not to suspend Brett, but to send him out of state - with the admonition to diocese officials that, should anyone ask, "hepatitis was to be feigned" as a cover for Brett's absence.

Thus began a nearly 30-year odyssey for Brett, who bounced around the country, working as a priest in different dioceses, all the while remaining answerable to - and the responsibility of - the Bridgeport diocese.

His first stop after the 1964 incident was New Mexico for psychiatric treatment. From New Mexico and elsewhere, Brett wrote letters pleading with the bishop to allow him to return. Others asked on his behalf.

"He is not welcome," Curtis once told Monsignor Cusak.

In seeming exile, Brett was supported financially by the Bridgeport diocese and was permitted to perform priestly functions under the auspices of the diocese. Almost immediately, an indication came that Brett's misconduct may have been broader than was first suspected.

While he was in New Mexico in 1966, a high school-aged boy from a parish back in Stamford claimed that Brett had made an unwanted advance on him. When the incident occurred, Brett was an assistant pastor at the parish, where he also acted as a mentor and spiritual advisor to a small group of boys who were interested in liturgical reforms in the Catholic Church. The boy who accused him was part of this group, informally known as "Brett's Mavericks."

In a letter that April, Curtis told the Apostolic Delegate that the boy probably was not aware of the actual reason behind Brett's abrupt departure.

"The departure of Father Brett was accomplished very quietly," Curtis wrote.

The boy's parents said their son was traumatized. They were seeking financial support. The Apostolic Delegate suggested meeting with the parents because "such an expression of pastoral concern may relieve them while an official attitude may leave them bitter."

Curtis took the advice and arranged a meeting. He reported back that the parents felt someone in the church had advised the boy not to report the incident to them. In a memorandum, Curtis recounted his portion of the discussion:

"The boy himself ... said he could not bring himself to tell [his parents] and I tried to indicate that this might have been the reason why the advice was given not to tell them, mainly that the boy did not feel up to it and it was judged there was no obligation under the circumstances to do so."

In the years that followed, Brett held a variety of ecclesiastical positions in New Mexico, California and Maryland, to which he finally relocated. There, he held a summer position at a parish and served as chaplain at a school in Baltimore. He became a writer, inspirational speaker and television minister.

Bishop Egan and Brett first met in June 1990. Around the same time, as was his custom when he met a priest for the first time, Egan familiarized himself with Brett's background, Egan testified later.

Egan wrote a memorandum after the meeting: "All things considered, he made a good impression. In the course of our conversation, the particulars of his case came out in detail and with grace."

In February 1991, Egan, after an "investigation" of the priest's history, decided Brett could continue as a priest under the auspices of the diocese. The following exchange comes from Egan's deposition.

A: I had sufficient information for myself and for others to decide that he would continue, but I certainly wouldn't say I stopped keeping an eye on the thing.

Q: But you didn't do anything, you didn't - for example, you didn't...

A: No, I made a decision... on the basis of the information that was given to me professionally, I allowed him to remain in the ministry.

In November 1992, an adult claimed that Brett had molested him, when he was 10 or 12 years old, at a parish in New Mexico in 1966. Two weeks later, Brett admitted past sexual misconduct with at least three other high school-age boys - one in New Mexico and two in Maryland.

In late 1992 or early 1993, another one of "Brett's Mavericks" - Frank Martinelli, then an adult living in Milwaukee - told the diocese that Brett molested him in the 1960s, when he was between 13 and 15 years old.

The allegations were severe and familiar: Brett had performed fellatio on him in a walkway behind the grade school of the church after confession, had induced the boy to perform fellatio on him by telling the child that the act was a way to receive Holy Communion, and he had fondled the boy in a bathroom during a field trip with other boys to Washington D.C.

A short time later, in February 1993, a man claimed that Brett abused him in Sacramento in the 1960s. The new accuser said he expected restitution and compensation.

Nine days later, Egan suspended Brett's priestly faculties.

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The Situation Today

The Bridgeport diocese has set up a special committee to review all complaints on a case-by-case basis.

Four days ago, Lori, the new bishop of Bridgeport, released a strongly worded statement to the 370,000 Catholics in his diocese about the recent sex abuse scandals that have

rocked his church. The statement - part apology and part manifesto - spells out the bishop's zero-tolerance attitude toward the sexual abuse of minors.

First, Lori says, he's beefed up the 1991 diocesan policy to ensure that any complaints, even suspicions of sexual abuse, are immediately reported and investigated. These investigations will now be done by a special committee, made up of psychologists and other experts, who will review complaints on a case-by-case basis.

Second, the diocese is conducting a detailed review of all 285 active priests and 86 deacons under its auspices and, at this point, has determined there are none "who pose any threat of committing sexual misconduct with a minor."

One action Lori also took, but didn't mention, was his removal last month of the Rev. Charles Carr from his job as part-time chaplain of the Pope John Paul II Center for Health Care in Danbury.

In the March issue of Fairfield County Catholic, Bronkiewicz notes at the bottom of a list of staffing announcements that Carr has recently had "his priestly faculties removed" and is "no longer available for priestly ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport."

How is it that Carr, who was suspended by Egan in 1995 for a string of sexual abuse complaints with minors, was still working as a priest?

"This would have been a decision made by Bishop Egan," said Joseph McAleer, the diocese spokesman.

Carr began his job at the nursing home in 1999, McAleer said, after it was decided that it was safe to return him to a "limited ministry where he would have no contact with children or adolescents." When a new claim of sexual abuse - alleged to have occurred years ago - came in at the beginning of this year, Lori decided enough was enough.

"The bishop was not comfortable with the past allegations," McAleer said, adding that the new complaint was reported to the state Department of Children and Families.

Carr still receives a stipend from the diocese, as does Raymond Pcolka, who is living in Southbury and is also suspended from the ministry. McAleer said the diocese is required by Canon Law to pay a modest living allowance to priests even if they are not technically working.

As for Laurence Brett, his whereabouts remain a mystery. He receives no stipend from the diocese.

"We hope he is found and we hope he is brought to justice," McAleer said.

A Defensive, Dismissive Tone

Hartford Courant, March 17, 2002

**By By ERIC RICH And ELIZABETH HAMILTON
Courant Staff Writers**

Hours into a closed-door interrogation, a plaintiff's attorney presses Bishop Edward M. Egan on his view of claim after claim of sexual abuse made against the same priest from the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Egan knows that the allegations follow a pattern. He knows that the Rev. Raymond Pcolka exercised his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 100 times under questioning about allegations of sodomy, rape and brutality.

But now, under oath in 1999, Egan gives the priest the benefit of the doubt, and casts an unbelieving eye at the claims of a dozen former altar boys and parishioners.

"Let us please remember," Egan says, "that the 12 have never been proved to be telling the truth."

Egan's confidential deposition, a transcript of which was obtained by The Courant, offers a rare glimpse into the style, personality and beliefs of the nation's most visible ecclesiastical figure as he faces questions over his handling of the most difficult issue before the church today.

Egan, now a cardinal and archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, appears at times combative and legalistic, defensive of diocesan practices dating back years and dismissive of the claims of sexual misconduct brought against priests. He emerges as a figure out of step with today's prevailing views - arguing, for example, that victims have no right to know whether other accusations have been leveled against their abusers.

In one exchange, attorney Cindy Robinson asks Egan if he is aware that the cases against Pcolka involve oral sex, sodomy and beatings.

A: I am not aware of any of those things. I am aware of the claims of those things, the allegations of those things.

Q: And you are clearly aware of the number of people that are making these similar claims during the same period of time, over a long period of time, involving Father Pcolka, correct?

A: I am aware that there are a number of people who know one another, some are related to one another, have the same lawyers and so forth, I am aware of the circumstances, yes.

Eighteen months later, the diocese admitted that "there were incidents of sexual abuse" and paid out about \$12 million to settle 26 claims against five priests. Egan's depositions were taken in connection with those cases, which remain sealed by a judge.

Egan largely eschews interviews with the media and thus remains something of a mystery to the general public. Last week, despite pressure to follow the lead of lesser Catholic figures across the country, a spokesman for Egan said the cardinal would have no comment on the sexual abuse crisis rippling out from Boston.

Detractors in New York have called Egan clinical and distant, even imperious. It is an assessment that resonates with the criticism that attached to him in 1997 after he testified publicly at the civil trial of the Rev. Laurence Brett, a Bridgeport priest.

Former altar boy Frank Martinelli sued the diocese, claiming he had been sexually abused as a teenager in the 1960s by Brett, then an assistant pastor at a parish in Stamford. Brett had admitted assaulting children and teenagers across the country; the diocese did not deny that he was a child molester.

But Egan testified that the diocese could not be held responsible because priests are "self-employed." The claim struck some as insensitive to the victim and was blamed, in part, for the jury's verdict against the diocese.

The deposition he later gave at a law office in Bridgeport, during two sessions in 1997 and 1999, reveals a similar affinity for legalistic evasion and semantic parsing.

Under questioning, Egan is reluctant to describe allegations of sexual misconduct as true - even in one case in which he had already taken the extraordinary step of asking the accused priest to sever his ties to the church, a process known as laicization.

Q: Would it be fair to say, Bishop, that you felt that these were more than allegations, that you felt that this was truthful?

A: I felt that they were substantial.

Q: So that you felt that Father [Gavin] O'Connor indeed had - was guilty of sexual misconduct with children?

A: I felt there were substantial allegations, felt the circumstances were such as to make them substantial, and it was my judgment that he would be best reduced to the lay state.

Although the settlement is less than 18 months away, Egan says during his deposition that the actual instances of sexual misconduct by priests are extremely limited - and he appears to imply that false allegations may be more common. During a terse exchange with Robinson he claims there were not more than "two or three" cases of clergy sexual abuse in the diocese before the 1980s.

Q: And are you saying that over time, the instances of clergy sexual abuse have increased?

A: Over time the allegations have increased.

Q: OK. Well, I'd like to -

A: Did you hear that? Not instances - your word was instances.

Q: Bishop, I can hear quite well ...

Again and again, Egan extends the benefit of the doubt to the accused while showing little sympathy for the accusers, and appears to minimize the conduct in question. Consider this exchange about Brett's confessed sexual misconduct in 1964.

Q: He admits apparently that he had oral sex with this young boy and that he actually bit his penis and advised the boy to go to confession elsewhere?

A: Well, I think you're not exactly right. ... It seemed to me that the gentleman in question was an 18-year-old student at Sacred Heart University.

Q: Are you aware of the fact that in December of 1964 that an individual under 21 years of age was a minor in the state of Connecticut?

A: My problem, my clarification, had to do with the expression "a young boy" about an 18-year-old.

Q: A young - all right, a minor, is that better then?

A: Fine.

Brett was sent to New Mexico for treatment after admitting that he bit the young man's penis to prevent him from ejaculating. He was allowed to continue working as a priest elsewhere in the country under the auspices of the Bridgeport diocese.

Egan defends the diocese's handling of the Brett case even though much of it occurred years before his arrival in 1988. In so doing, he spars with the attorneys over the meaning of plain language.

Consider his defense of a 1964 directive to mislead anyone who might inquire about Brett's sudden absence. The memo reads: "A recurrence of hepatitis was to be feigned should anyone ask."

Q: So they would hide the complaint of sexual abuse and tell persons that he had hepatitis and that is why he was not around?

A: I wouldn't read it that way.

Q: You wouldn't?

A: No, I would read it that this man is going away, and if anyone asks, say he's not well, he has hepatitis. That's quite a bit different than saying you are going to hide it.

Brett continued to work, out of state but under the auspices of the Bridgeport diocese, for decades afterward. He did so first with the approval of Bishop Walter Curtis and then, when Egan was appointed, with his consent.

Egan shows a similar unwillingness to concede the apparent intent of letters Brett sent back to the diocese while he was out of state. Attorney Paul Tremont maintains that the letters amount to requests - not granted - to come back, apparently implying that Brett was permitted to serve as a priest as long as he was out of the diocese.

Egan resists the interpretation.

In one early letter, Brett writes: "I still hope to return to Connecticut. In fact, I long for the time when I come back. It has been my understanding that I would be able to do so but I will wait until I hear from you upon this matter."

Q: You indicated that the letter of April 21, 1967 is not a request to come back?

A: I don't read it as a request. ... I would think the text is what the text is.

Brett did eventually return, to meet with Egan, in July 1990. At the time, Brett was working in Baltimore even though his authority as a priest came through the Bridgeport diocese.

Egan, who had testified that he familiarizes himself with priests before he meets them, recorded his thoughts in a church memorandum: "All things considered, he made a good impression. In the course of our conversation, the particulars of his case came out in detail and grace."

Egan is pressed on whether the memorandum indicates that he knew of Brett's sexual history when he found Brett so impressive. In response, Egan claims, essentially, that he can't remember what he meant.

Q: Now what did you mean by that [second sentence]?

A: Well, I think someone could take that case to mean some kind of court case or something of the sort.

Q: No, I am asking what you meant.

A: All I mean is that his story came out in some detail ...

Q: Doesn't that relate to sexual misconduct?

A: I cannot be sure it does ...

Q: So you think that [the memo] had nothing to do with the prior sexual complaints against him?

A: Sir, I - that is my current feeling on this thing.

The Egan File

Hartford Courant, March 17, 2002

On Oct. 7, 1997, and again on Sept. 23, 1999, Bishop Edward M. Egan was questioned by lawyers for people alleging sexual abuse by priests in the Bridgeport diocese. Following are excerpts from Egan's depositions, which were sealed by the court as part of about \$12 million settlement last year:

On scope of abuse:

Egan: These things happen in such small numbers. It's marvelous when you think of the hundreds and hundreds of priests, how very few have even been accused, and how very few have even come close to having anyone prove anything. Claims are not of interest to me. Realities are. Claims are claims. Allegations are allegations.

Q: And are you saying that over time, the instances of clergy sexual abuse have increased?

Egan: Over time the allegations have increased.

Q: OK. Well, I'd like to -

Egan: Did you hear that? Not instances - your word was instances.

Q: Bishop, I can hear quite well ...

On Pcolka case:

Q: Are you aware of the fact that it involves instances of oral sex, anal sex, beatings, violence, sadistic verbiage - are you aware of the extent of the claims in this case?

Egan: I am not aware of any of those things. I am aware of the claims of those things, the allegations of those things.

Q: And you clearly are aware of the number of people that are making these similar claims during the same period of time, involving Father Pcolka, correct?

Egan: I am aware that there are a number of people who know one another, some are related to one another, have the same lawyers and so forth, I am aware of the circumstances, yes.

Q: So you understand that there is a significant part of the Catholic faithful that have claimed to be affected by Father Pcolka's sexual abuses, correct?

Egan: I am not aware that a significant part of the Catholic faithful claim to have been affected by father's abuses, no. ... The Catholic faithful of Fairfield County, of which this diocese is comprised, is 360,911 signed up in our parishes. I believe we can safely say there's probably another 150,000 or more not signed up in our parishes. Is 12 a significant portion? And then let us please remember that the 12 have never been proved to be telling the truth.

Q: And Father Pcolka, let us remember, won't tell us the truth because he continues to take the Fifth Amendment ...

On Brett case:

Q: OK. And from that memo you became aware of the fact, did you not, Bishop Egan, that under your predecessor's administration of the Diocese, it was decided that they would feign hepatitis and that is why he was not around?

Egan: That's what the final sentence says on the second page.

Q: So they would hide the complaint of sexual abuse and tell persons that he had hepatitis and that is why he was not around?

Egan: I wouldn't read it that way.

Q: You wouldn't?

Egan: No, I would read it that this man is going away, and if anyone asks, say he's not well, he has hepatitis. That's quite a bit different than saying you are going to hide it. If someone were going to ask - I don't perceive it that way, that's not my style, but I think that it's altogether understandable to anybody reading it. This person has been accused of doing such and such, we're going to be sending him away for attention. I wouldn't have done this, but I don't think it's a serious matter. Someone would say, well, if anybody asks, make it that he's not well, that he has hepatitis. The word "feign," of course, makes it somewhat dramatic, but my reading of it is not - my reading is the one I have just given you.

Q: You say that - he is not only accused but he confesses, does he not?

Egan: Yes, but he is accused and he confesses.

Q: He says, look it, he admits apparently that he had oral sex with this young boy and that he actually bit his penis and advised the boy to go to confession elsewhere?

Egan: Well, I think you're not exactly right. I don't think it was a young boy. Now, I can't remember every detail, but it seemed to me that the gentleman in question was an 18-year-old student at Sacred Heart University.

Q: Are you aware of the fact that in December of 1964 that an individual under 21 years of age was a minor in the state of Connecticut?

Egan: My problem, my clarification, had to do with the expression "a young boy" about an 18-year-old.

Q: A young - all right, a minor, is that better then?

Egan: Fine.

On allowing Brett to remain a priest:

Q: Well, isn't it a fact that by not asking him to remove himself or by not suspending him, in effect you concluded that you would allow him to remain as a priest?

Egan: We had indications from psychiatrists that he was comporting himself appropriately, and our decision was to continue until we came to further conclusions because of the other indications.

Q: The fact that you - at that point you allowed him to remain a priest, that was your conclusion?

Egan: Yes, on the basis of analysis and by a professional.

The Curtis File

Hartford Courant, March 17, 2002

Before Bishop Edward M. Egan took over the Bridgeport diocese in 1988, Bishop Walter Curtis ran it for 27 years. Excerpts from Curtis' depositions, which were sealed by the court:

On transferring priests:

Q: What was the purpose, Bishop, of the reassigning to a different parish?

Curtis: Well, I presume it was to allow him to have a fresh start.

Q: All right, when he was assigned to a different parish, would anyone be advised of the problem which he had previously had?

Curtis: No.

Q: Were there any priests during the time that you were bishop that were transferred to a different diocese because they were found to be guilty, if you will, of pedophilic conduct in the Diocese of Bridgeport?

Curtis: Yes.

On pedophilia:

Q: Did you understand that to be a temporary condition or a disease, or what was your understanding of it when you were bishop of Bridgeport?

Curtis: I don't think I saw this as a permanent condition. It was a - more incidental.

Q: More incidental. And what do you mean by incidental, if I may ask? Incidental to what?

Curtis: Well, it would happen on occasion. It wasn't a sort of a, it wasn't - I'm not sure how to state it.

Q: In other words, it wasn't a continual thing. It was an occasional thing?

Curtis: Yes. Yes.

On secrecy:

Q: You had mentioned before that there were times that you would take a complaint in regard to a priest and take it out of the file. I think you said because it was old, or -

Curtis: Out of the secret file.

Q: Out of the secret file, OK, and where would you put that when you took it out?

Curtis: I would destroy it.

Q: You'd destroy it.

Curtis: Yeah.

Q: And what was - give me an example of what would be the reason you would do that.

Curtis: Well, it would be - it would be an antiquated issue, happened so long before, there was no point in preserving it any longer.

Timeline: The Carr File

Hartford Courant, March 17, 2002

Compiled by The Courant from sealed court documents

May 10, 1980: Charles Carr ordained, assigned to Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton.

Spring 1982: Mother of 11-year-old boy says Carr molested her son in Our Lady of Fatima parking lot (she details the incident in a letter seven years later).

June 21, 1984: Carr appointed to faculty of Immaculate High School in Danbury, living at St. Mary's rectory in Bethel.

August 1984: Father of 14-year-old altar boy at St. Mary's says Carr rubbed his son's leg in movie theater; Carr referred for therapy.

Sept. 20, 1984: Carr transferred from St. Mary's to St. Thomas the Apostle in Norwalk; appointed parochial vicar.

July 1986: Carr appointed to faculty of Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield.

June 1989: Bishop Edward M. Egan transfers Carr to Central Catholic High School in Norwalk; Carr named spiritual director for boys.

Oct. 19, 1989: Mother writes letter to Diocese of Bridgeport, detailing 1982 complaint that her son was molested by Carr at Our Lady of Fatima.

Nov. 17, 1989: Egan briefed by aide about counseling program for Carr.

December 1989: Egan meets with Carr, then writes that Carr denied all charges but was "most cordial and understanding" about staying in therapy.

Jan. 10, 1990: Carr sent to Institute of Living in Hartford for evaluation, then returns to Central Catholic High School.

April 3, 1990: A different parent complains that Carr rubbed his son's leg in a movie theater while Carr was serving at Our Lady of Fatima in 1981; Egan aide notified of complaint.

April 9, 1990: Institute of Living advises diocese to take action "to protect both Father Carr and the public from the possibility of lapses in his judgement [sic] and behavior in the future."

April 16, 1990: Diocese puts Carr on indefinite leave from job as spiritual director of Central Catholic High School in Norwalk.

April 23, 1990: Carr returns to Institute of Living for in-patient evaluation.

May 3, 1990: Egan aide writes of “developing pattern of allegations” against Carr.

June 29, 1990: Egan appoints Carr parochial vicar of St. Philip in Norwalk; restricts Carr from working with children.

June 20, 1991: Egan appoints Carr parochial vicar of St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport; restrictions lifted.

Jan. 8, 1993: Former altar boy, now 23, repeats claim Carr molested him at St. Mary's in 1984 and questions why Carr is still an active priest; diocese responds that it is “reasonably satisfied” Carr is no longer a threat.

March 30, 1995: Civil lawsuit filed by another person accusing Carr of sex abuse; Egan puts Carr on indefinite leave and removes him from St. Andrew.

March 2001: Diocese settles civil suits, acknowledging unspecified incidents and apologizing for them.

Secrecy Over Abusive Priests Comes Back to Haunt Church

The New York Times, March 12, 2002

By DANIEL J. WAKIN

In 1993, lawyers for Sharon See and Brian Freibott, then both 28, served papers on the Rev. Raymond Pcolka that accused him of abusing them as children in Stratford, Conn.

But before the lawsuit was even filed, Ms. See's lawyer said, a lawyer for the Diocese of Bridgeport called with this message: The priest was a good man. Don't sue. We'll handle it. It was a "bolt out of the blue," recalled Ms. See's lawyer, Cindy L. Robinson.

Ms. See and Mr. Freibott were not dissuaded from filing their suit, and over the next eight years the church tried to keep the case from public view. The diocese moved to keep the evidence secret and filed a barrage of legal motions: too much time had passed since the incidents; the church was shielded by the First Amendment protection of religious freedom; the diocese was not liable because a priest abusing a child was not working on behalf of the diocese.

Legal experts say the tough legal approach, with an emphasis on secrecy, has been adopted by other Roman Catholic dioceses. Over the last two decades, plaintiffs lawyers say, dioceses have reached more than 1,000 settlements in cases involving sexual abuse by priests, many of them sealed.

That approach, which is commonly used by many corporations and institutions in their legal battles, has now come back to haunt the church, as diocese after diocese has acknowledged the presence of priests accused of abuse within its ranks.

In recent months, dioceses from Boston to Philadelphia to Los Angeles have disclosed to the public and prosecutors names of priests accused of sexual abuse, many of whom were subjects of secret court settlements.

"In terms of avoiding the scandal, and eliminating the legal liability, this is exactly the wrong thing to have done," said Peter Schuck, a professor at Yale Law School and author of "Agent Orange on Trial" (Harvard University Press, 1986).

Mr. Schuck said the scope of the settlements and recently unsealed documents that show the church knew about longstanding accusations of abuse raised the question of whether the church could be held liable as an institution and be forced to pay punitive damages.

"It's not simply a case of an organization whose agents have erred," he said. "It's an organization that knew about the improprieties and actively concealed it."

Just last week, in an example of a secret settlement taking a toll years later, Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell of Palm Beach, Fla., resigned. Bishop O'Connell acknowledged that he had inappropriate contact with a teenager 27 years ago while rector at a seminary in Hannibal, Mo. The victim reached a secret settlement with the diocese of Jefferson City in 1996 for \$125,000.

Church officials say it is quite possible that because of the secrecy, the Vatican did not know about the lawsuit or the settlement, either at the time or later, when the bishop received the Palm Beach appointment.

Bishop O'Connell said that he never mentioned it before taking on the Palm Beach diocese in 1999, succeeding a bishop who himself had resigned over allegations of sexual involvement with boys.

Lawyers for several dioceses defended the confidentiality of court papers and the settlements, saying it was often necessary to protect the privacy of the priests and the victims. Every move to seal documents, they said, is approved by a judge. And plaintiffs agreed to all of the secret settlements.

"The idea is to protect the confidentiality of information that is not really necessary for the plaintiffs and not really appropriate for public disclosure," said Michael Dolan, the Bridgeport diocese's general counsel.

Lawyers who specialize in civil litigation say the church has acted no differently than other large institutions or industries facing legal attack.

"Publicity would alert lots of other potential plaintiffs that they have a claim," said Robert Mnookin, a professor at Harvard University's law school and an expert on negotiations. "Another reason they want confidentiality is to the extent possible to protect their priests from embarrassment. Moreover, they want to protect the church from adverse publicity."

But another consequence of such secrecy was that when a pedophile priest was transferred from one parish to another, the new parish was unaware of the priest's history.

In Connecticut, the church was forced to make limited disclosures to settle the lawsuit begun by Ms. See and Mr. Freibott in 1993. The case concluded in March 2001 after settlements covering 26 plaintiffs and six priests, with both sides agreeing to keep silent on the terms. The diocese publicly acknowledged the abuse, condemned it, apologized and said the offending priests had been removed from their duties.

Still, personnel records and transcripts of what the diocesan officials said in their depositions remained under seal, making it impossible for the public to obtain a full picture of what the diocese or its bishop -- Edward M. Egan, now the archbishop of New York -- said about the cases.

Ms. Robinson said that several months after the lawyer for the diocese said it had no evidence of abuse by Father Pcolka, another plaintiff's lawyer, Henry Lyons, contacted her to say he had already been talking to the diocese about settling other sex-abuse complaints against the same priest. Mr. Dolan, the diocese's general counsel, said that he did not remember making a phone call saying Father Pcolka had an unsullied record, but that whether or not the suit had already been filed was irrelevant.

"You always say, in any case, is there something that we should be talking about, is there a way to resolve this before gearing up for a full-fledged trial," Mr. Dolan said. "There is no harm in sitting down to resolve differences."

As the case progressed, the diocese successfully argued that six plaintiffs had no right to sue because they were over 35 when they went to court. That is the cutoff age under Connecticut law for people to sue over claims that they had been sexually abused as children.

The Bridgeport cases presented another tactic that often pops up: tough, aggressive questioning of the plaintiffs in pretrial depositions.

"What grates is not so much hardball tactics, but the fact that the church is doing it," said Stephen Rubino, a lawyer in Margate City, N.J., who said he had handled more than 300 cases against the church.

The hundreds of lawsuits accusing priests of pedophilia in recent years vary widely, but interviews with plaintiffs lawyers show, broadly, other common strategies by the church: fight on the grounds of freedom of religion and statute of limitations.

While each diocese is independent, lawyers for the various dioceses have consulted and even collaborated with one another, the plaintiffs' lawyers say.

Lawyers for the church, however, do not always take a tough line with plaintiffs.

In a lawsuit over abuse by Rudolph Kos, a priest in Dallas at the center of a major scandal, Sylvia Demarest, the plaintiffs' lawyer, said the lawyers for the diocese treated her clients with particular decency. Wilson Rogers Jr., who represents the Boston archdiocese, has been described as compassionate in settlement talks. Many cases are handled sensitively by the church, with concern for the victims, their advocates say.

The United States Bishops Conference officially urges openness in addressing abuse cases and pastoral care for the victims. Most dioceses show "compassion and accountability" in handling them, according to a review by the conference placed last month on its Web site. But the conference also urged that "while maintaining a pastoral tone, the policy be clear that there are occasions when the church may in justice defend itself."

As early as 1985, canon and secular legal experts warned the bishops conference in an internal report that pedophilia involving priests was looming as a nationwide legal and public relations disaster for the church.

How much of the report's recommendations were adopted and how seriously it was taken is in dispute.

But one of its recommendations was that bishops should protect themselves in case of a legal challenge by temporarily suspending a priest against whom credible accusations had been made. It added, "Failure to report the child abuse suspicion by a cleric by the diocese is probably the most common error and greatest vulnerability in the long term with respect to civil suits."

The report suggested that the church establish "uniformity of case management" because the same issues will come up: the confidentiality of diocesan records, legal arguments against liability, legal arguments on behalf of defendants, the public relations problem.

The legal effort "should be coordinated so that a single, carefully choreographed theme is presented," the report said.

Nonetheless, the general counsel for the bishops conference, Mark Chopko, says there is no such coordinated effort.

"If you've seen one case, you've seen one case," Mr. Chopko said. "Each set of facts is different." State law is too varied to draw up general principles, he said.

Sins of the Father

Good Housekeeping, January 2002

By ELIZABETH S.*, as told to MOLLY M. GINTY

When I was raped as a teenager, I couldn't ask our priest for help—because he was the attacker. Now, with dozens of other victims, I am finally getting justice.

On a snowy day last March, neighbors in my Connecticut hometown read about the six Catholic priests who had sexually abused 26 children in the Bridgeport diocese for more than 20 years. They read accounts from girls and former altar boys who were assaulted on church grounds, and from one teenage girl who was forced to confess her "sins" afterward. They learned that the church authorities hadn't punished these priests, but instead had covered up their crimes and transferred them to other parishes. The newspaper described the protracted legal battle and reported that the victim's settlement, reached just the day before, was \$15 million.

As the town gossiped over the story of the settlement, I spent the day with my mother. I didn't want anyone to know the secret I had kept hidden since I was a girl. I was one of those children, attacked and raped at the age of 14. I had been waiting for justice for 28 years.

Before my trust, my innocence, and my faith were stolen from me, I had been a devout Catholic. My family was active in the local church. My father, a truck mechanic and skilled carpenter, did construction projects for our priest, while my mother, a housewife, helped decorate the altar before services. My parents sent us to parochial school and to church every Sunday and holy day. We were a run-of-the-mill, working class Catholic family: Italian father, Polish mother, two sons, and three daughters. I was the shy, quiet girl in the middle—the one with round cheeks and chestnut hair, who dreamed of someday becoming a nun.

I was around ten years old when a new priest came to our parish. He was an outgoing man with black hair, a thick mustache, and a gentle sense of humor. When I was 14, he struck up a friendship with my older brother. Once or twice a week, they would go out to dinner or a movie. On weekends, they would head to a cabin that the priest used in New Hampshire. I wanted to go too. I was a lonely kid, and my parents weren't the doting type. We never had enough money to go on vacations, so the idea of a weekend trip was especially intriguing.

I thought my chance was just around the corner when my brother told me one summer afternoon that the priest had said that all of us—my brothers, sisters and I—might be able to go to New Hampshire together soon.

So I was happy when, a few Sundays later, the priest told my parents after mass that he wanted to spend the afternoon with me instead of with my brother. They knew him and

apparently thought nothing of it. He picked me up and drove me to a neighboring town. We were silent during the ride, and I got a strange uneasy feeling as we pulled up to an empty convent that the parish used for Sunday school.

As we walked past the storage boxes and up the stairs to the second floor, where the nuns' sleeping quarters used to be, I began to feel nauseous. The priest led me into an empty bedroom and shut the door. Before I could say a word, he pulled off the blue dress that I was still wearing from church and pushed me onto the mattress. He was a huge man—about five feet ten inches tall and at least 250 pounds. When he got on top of me, I remember feeling crushed beneath his weight, terrified because I couldn't breathe. I didn't fight as he raped me. I think I was in shock. All I remember thinking was, *Please, let this be over.*

The next thing I remember is him driving me to a nearby ice cream shop, buying me a cone, and saying, "Don't tell your mother." Then he drove me back to my house. I spent a few hours in front of the television, just staring at the screen. My brothers and sisters drifted through the living room, but I didn't look up or acknowledge them. From that day forward, I learned to survive by blocking out the pain.

As promised, we did go to New Hampshire that summer. The priest took a whole group of children to his cabin. One afternoon when the other kids were swimming, the priest asked me to come upstairs with him. When he finished raping me, he called out to my cousin, who was four or five years younger than I and the only other person in the house. When she saw that he was naked, she screamed. I started sobbing, grabbed my clothes, and ran out of the room.

I didn't talk to my cousin about what happened. In fact, I didn't discuss the abuse with anyone until years later. Our priest was so well liked in our community that I feared people would never believe me. As the months passed, I retreated further into my own little world—hanging out alone in my room evening after evening or taking walks by myself. I longed to have friends and to be part of a group, but over time, I just stopped trying.

Gradually during the next few years, I stopped attending church. I hated sitting through the priest's sermons and thinking, *Why do I have to listen to this hypocrisy?* I certainly didn't want him to hear my confession or offer me the Eucharist. Every Sunday, I would lie in bed as my mother screamed, "We have to leave in two minutes!" After a while, she got tired of fighting and gave up.

My schoolwork also suffered. By my junior year in high school, I had skipped so many classes that I was almost held back a grade. Throughout high school and for years afterward, I was haunted by the same thoughts—that I was a terrible person, and that I was somehow responsible for what had happened.

I purposely chose a college on the other side of the country. There, I started seeing a therapist and began to feel better about myself. But in the middle of the semester, my

mother called with terrible news. My younger sister, then in junior high school, was having serious emotional problems and had just told my mother that she'd been molested by our priest when she was seven years old. I told my mother that the same thing had happened to me, but I didn't go into detail. My mom asked me if I was all right, but I felt awkward, fell silent, and was relieved when we finally said goodbye.

The next time I came home from college, my sister asked if I would join her in reporting the abuse to the church officials. Saying no to her was the most cowardly thing I've ever done in my life. But I just didn't have the strength to come forward. My sister wrote to the monsignor on her own in 1983. A letter came back several months later asking her to send all correspondence to the church's lawyer. That was it.

In 1993, more than ten years after my sister asked me to take a stand, I read in the newspaper that the priest who abused us was being sued by 16 other victims in civil court. I called my sister, and we called my cousin. We all decided to join the lawsuit. We couldn't bring criminal charges because we hadn't reported the abuse within five years after it happened, and the statute of limitation had run out. But under Connecticut law, victims of childhood sexual abuse can press civil charges until they reach the age of 35.

Once others came forward, we learned that six priests from Bridgeport diocese had molested 26 children between 1972 and 1993. Meeting the other victims in our lawyers' office was difficult, but it helped me realize that I was no longer alone. Together, we sued church authorities for ignoring complaints of rampant sexual abuse and for repeatedly assigning priests to new parishes when these troubling reports surfaced.

For eight years after we filed our case, the Bridgeport diocese tried to sweep the accusations under the rug. At first, the authorities said they had no documentation of sexual abuse charges, then they refused to submit personnel records for the priests in question. Ultimately, however, their files and other testimony showed that repeated complaints of sexual abuse had indeed been made for years.

In 1996, three years after our initial complaint was filed, a lawyer representing Bishop Edward M Egan, who had been named to head the Bridgeport diocese in 1988, and Bishop Walter Curtis, the previous head of the diocese, told a judge that if Bishop Curtis were forced to testify, all the "dirt from the distant past would cripple the diocese and its ability to staff its local churches." Over and over, it seemed that maintaining their image was more important to the church leaders than helping victims—or making sure these pedophiles didn't strike again.

Church leaders never reached out to us or offered us an apology. Mostly they refused to talk about the situation. As late as June 2000, when Bishop Egan left Bridgeport to head the archdiocese of New York, he told a reporter that our suit was giving his priests "a bad rap."

With so much resistance from the church, the settlement last March was quite a surprise—and an incredible relief. Coming, as it did, just one month after Archbishop

Egan was elevated to cardinal (the highest rank in the Catholic church under the pope), it meant that he wouldn't have to testify in public. Nor, thankfully, would I.

The Bridgeport diocese did finally issue an apology for what it called "incidents of sexual abuse." But Cardinal Egan's personal statement, printed in several newspapers, was disappointingly cold. "Any incidence of sexual abuse is painful for all persons involved," he wrote, "particularly those who are victims of such abuse." And though the six priests involved were suspended, they were never defrocked. They never paid for their crimes.

I've forgiven my parents for failing to reach out to me more while I was growing up. My brother has apologized for putting me in contact with the priest, although I never asked him if he had any idea what was going to happen to me once he did. I also don't know if my brother was ever molested himself. What I do know is that he feels terrible about what happened, and we are still close. My younger sister went into therapy as a teenager and has stuck with it ever since. Today she's an elementary-school teacher and has two children of her own. We talk often, and I'm very proud of her.

The money I received from the settlement allowed me to pay off my bills and invest for the future. I'm anxious to enter a new stage of my life. At 43, I've never had a romantic relationship. I don't know whether I'll have one in the future, but at the very least, I'd like to get closer to more people. For now, I'm turning to therapy to rebuild my sense of security and trust. I doubt that I'll ever participate in any kind of organized religion again.

It was painful to confront my past, but in the end, I'm glad I came forward. By pursuing this lawsuit, I may have helped prevent what happened to me from happening to another innocent child. And the new bishop of Bridgeport says he will have zero tolerance for priests who commit acts of sexual abuse. That, at least, is a start.

*Name changed to protect privacy. No other facts have been altered.