

Attorney General Raoul Releases Report Concluding Multi-Year Investigation Into Child Sex Abuse By Catholic Clergy In Illinois

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today released a comprehensive report detailing decades of child sex abuse by members of the Catholic clergy in Illinois. The report concludes a multi-year investigation into child sex abuse by members of the clergy in all six Catholic dioceses in Illinois. Attorney General Raoul’s report reveals names and detailed information of 451 Catholic clerics and religious brothers who abused at least 1,997 children across all of the dioceses in Illinois.



[The Attorney General's Report on Catholic Clergy Child Sex Abuse in Illinois](#) – released this morning during a press conference in Chicago – represents the state of Illinois' first comprehensive accounting of child sex abuse by members of the Catholic clergy in the six dioceses across Illinois. The nearly 700-page report features detailed narrative accounts of child sex abuse committed by Catholic clerics. Many of the narratives were written in consultation with survivors, are based upon their experiences, and told from the survivor's point of view. Although the report formally concludes the investigation the Attorney General's office opened in 2018, it contains 50 pages of the office's recommendations to the dioceses for the handling of future child sex abuse allegations.

"I was raised and confirmed in the Catholic church and sent my children to Catholic schools. I believe the church does important work to support vulnerable populations; however, as with any presumably reputable institution, the Catholic church must be held accountable when it betrays the public's trust," Raoul said "It is my hope that this nearly 700-page report will provide some closure to survivors of child sex abuse by Catholic clerics by shining a light both on those who violated their positions of power and trust, and on the individuals in church leadership who covered up that abuse," Raoul said. "These perpetrators may never be held accountable in a court of law, but by naming them here, the intention is to provide a public accounting and a measure of healing to survivors who have long suffered in silence."

Before Raoul's investigation, the Catholic dioceses of Illinois publicly listed only 103 substantiated child sex abusers. By comparison, Raoul's report reveals names and detailed information of 451 Catholic clerics and religious brothers who abused at least 1,997 children across all of the dioceses in Illinois.

Attorneys and investigators in Raoul's office reviewed more than 100,000 pages of documents held by the dioceses and received more than 600 confidential contacts from survivors through emails, letters, interviews and phone calls. Raoul's office also worked closely to record accounts of the survivor experiences of children who were sexually abused by clerics.

"I am extremely proud of the work done by my office's team of investigators and attorneys who faced challenges and intervening factors including a pandemic and a ransomware attack to the office's IT infrastructure. The emotional impact of the work was unique to this investigation, and our team committed to approaching the investigation with grace and compassion," Raoul added. "I thank each of them for the tireless work and commitment to allowing survivors to share their experiences."

Raoul's nearly 700-page report is organized into five sections, with sections highlighting detailed information on each diocese's historic handling – and inaction – of

child sex abuse, data analysis showing the extent of child sex abuse by clerics in each Illinois diocese, and specific recommendations from the Attorney General's office to the dioceses for handling future child sex abuse allegations.

The survivor narratives demonstrate a troubling pattern of the church failing to support survivors, ignoring or covering up reports of abuse, and survivors being revictimized by the church when they came forward to report being abused. Repeatedly, church officials prioritized the reputation of the institution over protecting children, frequently giving abusive priests the benefit of the doubt – giving abusers the chance to abuse again – and even covering up the abuse by misleading the public. The Attorney General's investigation also found instances in which church officials were in a position to report abuse but chose not to do so. As a result, many narrative accounts demonstrate the continued trauma and impact survivors continue to experience decades later.

As a result of the Attorney General's investigation, Illinois Catholic dioceses have adopted uniform policies to improve the handling of alleged child sex abuse. Among those are policies requiring dioceses to investigate allegations against clerics who are deceased, have resigned or been laicized. Additional policies require the dioceses to ensure that allegations against religious order and extern clerics are investigated, and to publicly list a religious order or extern cleric who is substantiated as a child sex abuser if the cleric had sufficient connection with the diocese.

While these policies demonstrate a step in the right direction, they do not go far enough. Attorney General Raoul's report includes 50 pages of recommended policies the office strongly encourages the dioceses to enact to further improve the handling of future allegations of child sex abuse. Those recommendations range from how the dioceses communicate with and support survivors, investigate and make determinations related to alleged abuse, as well as disclosure and transparency protocols, mediation and compensation, and the handling of allegations related to religious orders.

Raoul's report contains detailed descriptions of child sex abuse, assault and trauma. Resources for survivors of child sex abuse can also be found in Attorney General Raoul's report.