

# WORLD & NATION

## Archdiocese suspends eight priests in scandal

BOSTON (CNS) — The Boston Archdiocese suspended six priests Feb. 7 from all ministry due to past allegations of sexual abuse of children. Five days earlier two pastors were removed for the same reason.

Three days later, faced with a local poll reporting that nearly half of area Catholics think he should resign, Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston said he plans to stay on and work to improve the church's prevention of sexual abuse and handling of such cases when they arise.

Through his "experience of being here when all of this was taking place, I have the ability to do something as bishop to make things better for the future," he told an applauding congregation at Holy Cross Cathedral Feb. 10. He added that his resignation "would not serve the cause of protecting children."

A *Boston Globe*/WBZ-TV poll of 800 adult Catholics in the archdiocese, published in the *Globe* that morning, indicated that 48 percent thought the cardinal should resign and 38 percent thought he should not.

Boston media have been dominated since mid-January by news of clergy sex abuse of minors, sparked by the criminal trial of a former priest, a public apology from the cardinal and an archdiocesan decision to give local prosecutors the names of all priests ever accused of such abuse.

In a Feb. 7 news release, archdiocesan spokeswoman Donna M. Morrissey said five of the newly removed priests were involved in ministry and the sixth was employed by a parish in a nonministerial role.

She said their names were among those on a second round of lists submitted to law-enforcement authorities as part of the archdiocese's thorough review of personnel files going back more than 40 years. The first lists were sent to county prosecutors Jan. 30.

"The ongoing review of our records continues," Morrissey said Feb. 7, "and any clergy member found to have a substantial allegation of sexual abuse of a minor will be immediately removed and suspended from all assignments in the archdiocese pending a full investigation. Our priority is the protection of children."

In January Cardinal Law publicly apologized for past mistakes in giving pastoral assignments to child molester John Geoghan, who was removed from ministry in 1994 and defrocked in 1998.

The cardinal announced a new policy of zero tolerance, saying, "Any priest known to have sexually abused a minor simply will not function as a priest in any way in this archdiocese."

He said the archdiocese also was insti-

tuting a policy requiring all clergy, employees and volunteers in the archdiocese "to report any allegations of abuse against a minor."

In January Geoghan was convicted of indecent assault on a 10-year-old boy in 1991. He faced a second criminal trial in February on charges of raping a minor and has been accused of sexual abuse of minors in about 130 civil lawsuits. The archdiocese reportedly has settled about 50 of those suits out of court.

Morrissey said the priests removed from their posts Feb. 7 were:

- Father James F. Power, 71, who was ordained in 1962 and has been a temporary parochial vicar since 1997 at St. James the Great Parish in Wellesley.

- Father David C. Murphy, 65, who was ordained in 1963 and has been a chaplain at Brockton Hospital since 1997. Of the six, he is the only one against whom more than one allegation of sexual abuse was made.

- Father Robert A. Ward Jr., 55, who was ordained in 1974 and has worked in the archdiocesan development office for the past year.

- Father Thomas P. Forry, 60, who was ordained in 1968 and since 1999 has been part of the archdiocesan temporary emergency response team — a group of priests who have no fixed assignment in order to be available to fill in wherever needed.

- Father Gerald J. Hickey, 64, who was ordained in 1963. Although unassigned since 1994, he was assisting at St. Helen Parish in Norwell at the time of his suspension.

- Father Richard A. Buntel, 56, who was ordained in 1971. Also unassigned since 1994, he was employed in a nonministerial position as a business manager at St. Thomas of Villanova Parish in Wilmington at the time of his suspension.

The pastors suspended Feb. 2 were Father Paul J. Finegan, 57, of St. Bernadette Parish in Randolph and Father Daniel M. Graham, 57, of St. Joseph Parish in Quincy. The archdiocese said Father Graham had one past allegation against him, while Father Finegan had more than one.

County district attorney's offices received a first set of lists Jan. 30 and a second set Feb. 6. Citing information from those offices, the *Boston Herald* reported Feb. 11 that the total number of priests facing allegations was 80. The *Boston Globe* reported Feb. 9 that the total of names filed with district attorney offices in six counties was 87 — 38 in the first set of lists and 49 in the second.

The *Globe* said the number of priests represented could be fewer than 87, how-

ever, because if allegations against a priest occurred in two or more counties, his name would have appeared on more than one list.

When the two pastors were removed Feb. 2, Auxiliary Bishops Richard J. Malone and Walter J. Edyvean went to the affected parishes to speak to parishioners at all weekend Masses.

The archdiocese also offered pastoral and counseling support in both parishes,

and has said it plans to improve such services for victims, their families and affected parishes throughout the archdiocese.

Ripple effects of the Boston scandal began to be felt in neighboring dioceses. Bishop Daniel P. Reilly of Worcester, in a letter read or distributed in all parishes the weekend of Feb. 9-10, said the Worcester Diocese also was moving immediately to a mandatory reporting system for all allegations, similar to the one adopted in Boston.



Nancy Wiechec/CNS

### Guide book shows Vatican art

A detail is seen from the fresco that occupies the Room of the Immaculate Conception inside the Vatican Museums. The room is one of several featured in Enrico Bruschini's guide book, "In the Footsteps of Popes: A Spirited Guide to the Treasures of the Vatican."

## MISSION NEWS



*These Indian seminarians are on their way to a local village for persons with leprosy. They travel by bike for more than five miles — but do not mind. Said one:*

"I never get tired though the journey takes an hour and a half. The happiness of the people when we arrive to serve them makes the journey joyous."

*The rector of their seminary, writes:* "Thanks to the generous support we receive from you, we are able to ensure that these young men will be able to complete their studies and be ordained."

*Every day, stories like this one are repeated throughout the Missions — and, with God's grace and your help, such stories may continue well into the future.*

*Through a Gift Annuity with the Propagation of the Faith, you can help the future missionary work of the Church and benefit as well. A Gift Annuity with us can provide you with income for the rest of your life at a favorable rate of return. Please write for more information.*

#### THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

Please mail coupon to: Reverend John E. Kozar, National Director, Propagation of the Faith, 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10001

Please send information on your Gift Annuity for the Church in the Missions today, I enclose...

\$100     \$50     \$25     \$10     \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (other)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please remember The Society for the Propagation of the Faith when writing or changing your will. 2/02

## Artificial wombs condemned

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

ROME — A Vatican official has condemned plans to create "artificial wombs" that could be used to bring human beings to birth outside a mother's body.

"This pushes technology to extremes and dehumanizes procreation. Having a baby no longer is an act of a father and mother, but a pure laboratory process," said Bishop Elio Sgreccia, vice president of the Pontifical Academy of Life.

"The church's judgment is totally negative," Bishop Sgreccia told the Italian state radio network Feb. 11.

He was reacting to recent newspaper reports on the research of a Cornell University professor, Liu Hung-Ching, who has experimented with the creation of artificial wombs using cells extracted from women's bodies.

Liu has attached embryos to artificial womb prototypes, where they have developed for up to six days. She said she plans to experiment up to the 14-day limit allowed under in-vitro fertilization legisla-

tion, then ask for permission to exceed the limit.

Liu was quoted as saying she thought it would be another five or 10 years before a human being could be brought to birth using such techniques.

Other church experts warned that such a technique would gravely damage the relationship between mother and child.

Luisa di Pietro, a professor at the Institute of Bioethics at Rome's Sacred Heart University, said artificial wombs would mark the "complete depersonalization of pregnancy."

"The woman would merely receive a 'product' without having been involved in gestation. In addition to the ethical problems, there could be psychological problems because of the loss of the mother-child relationship during pregnancy," she told the Rome newspaper *Il Messaggero*.

Di Pietro added that developing this technique, like many other areas of embryonic research, involves the inevitable loss of human embryos, which are discarded after experimentation.