

# BOSTON

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include-priests until 2002," it said.

Father Christopher Coyne, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Boston, said in a brief statement July 23 that the lengthy report "requires a serious and thorough reading before any substantive response can be made."

But he reiterated the archdiocese's commitment to "treat sexual abuse of a child as a criminal matter, ... end any culture of secrecy in the handling of such matters, ... adopt and implement comprehensive and effective measures to prevent child abuse" and "work at every level to ensure the safety of children."

The report said Cardinal Bernard F. Law, who resigned in December as archbishop of Boston, and his senior managers "preserved the culture of acceptance of child sexual abuse within the archdiocese and adhered to the tragically misguided priorities of supporting the perceived needs of offending priests more than those of children who had been, or were at risk of being, abused."

Cardinal Law "bears ultimate responsibility for the tragic treatment of children that occurred during his tenure," the report said. "But by no means does he bear sole responsibility."

The cardinal "and his senior managers had direct, actual knowledge that substantial numbers of children in the archdiocese had been sexually abused by substantial numbers of its priests," the report said.

But because of "tragically misguided priorities," the report added, archdiocesan officials failed to adequately investigate claims of clergy sexual abuse of children or to adequately supervise priests known to have sexually abused children in the past, and put children at risk by transferring abusive priests to other parishes, other U.S. dioceses or abroad and accepting abusive priests from other dioceses.

Among the former Boston archdiocesan officials named in the report were Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes of New Orleans and Bishops Thomas V. Daily of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Robert J. Banks of Green Bay, Wis.; William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y.; and John B. McCormack of Manchester, N.H.

"I want to re-express my sorrow that any young people have been seriously victimized," said Archbishop Hughes, who was vicar for administration in the Boston Archdiocese from 1990 to 1993. "The sexual abuse of one child is one too many."

Acknowledging that there were "a few instances wherein I may not



Reuters/CNS

**Cardinal Bernard F. Law stands at a podium at the archdiocesan chancery in Brighton, Mass., Dec. 16, 2002, for his first press conference following his resignation as head of the Archdiocese of Boston amid continued controversy over clergy sex abuse.**

have acted quickly enough," the archbishop said he relied in each case "on a professional psychological assessment and/or recommendations that endorsed continuation in restricted priestly ministry."

"Some of these recommendations proved to be quite faulty," he said in a statement. "I will now rely much more on pastoral and moral conviction."

Frank DeRosa, spokesman for Bishop Daily, expressed agreement with the report's "major theme ... that every effort must be made to protect children and assist victims."

"Given the understanding and knowledge that people had about this issue 20 or more years ago, Bishop Daily followed procedures in Boston that he believed were appropriate at that time, guided by the advice provided by professionals in various disciplines whose counsel he sought," DeRosa added.

Bishop Daily was vicar for administration in the archdiocese from 1976 until 1984.

Bishop Banks, who succeeded Bishop Daily as vicar for administration and remained in the post until 1990, said that although his actions were "well-intentioned at the time, I deeply regret that I did not act more decisively in taking out of ministry those who abused our children and young people."

"For this I am truly sorry," he added in a statement.

"I want to assure people that in the Diocese of Green Bay we are taking the issue of child sexual abuse very seriously," Bishop Banks said.

A lengthy statement from the

Rockville Centre Diocese outlined steps taken by Bishop Murphy in that diocese since he arrived in 2001. It said he is "determined that any charges of sexual abuse be handled quickly, openly and with a priority being placed on the safety and security of the victims."

Earlier in July, in what he called a "report to the diocese," Bishop Murphy said that during his service in Boston from 1987 to 1993 as archdiocesan secretary for community relations, he "had no responsibility outside of those that had to do with community relations, social justice issues, ecumenism and communications" and "had no access to information about any priest who may have been involved in the abuse of a minor."

"In the few cases in which I was involved as vicar general for the Archdiocese of Boston (from 1993 to 2001), my efforts were directed at keeping such priests away from minors, either making sure that they were not in pastoral situations or removing them from the priesthood entirely," he said.

Bishop McCormack, who was secretary for ministerial personnel from November 1984 to 1994 and served as Cardinal Bernard F. Law's first delegate for clergy sex-abuse matters, said he "worked to improve the way (abuse) complaints were handled by the archdiocese" during his tenure.

"My desire to help heal everyone affected and to protect children continues today as the diocesan bishop of Manchester," he said in a statement.

During his press conference, Reilly said the decision not to prosecute "was not even a close call legally," because the laws in Massachusetts at the time did not require church officials to report suspected incidents of child sexual abuse. In 2002, the Legislature passed a law making clergy mandatory reporters of such incidents.

Reilly identified himself as a Catholic at the press conference and said he is "proud to be a Catholic."

"This is not about my faith, my religion," he said. "My faith teaches and values the basic sense of right and wrong. My faith protects the most vulnerable, especially our children."

The report found no evidence of "recent or ongoing sexual abuse of children by priests or other archdiocese workers."

But it added, "Given the magnitude of mistreatment and the fact that the archdiocese's response ... remains inadequate, it is far too soon to conclude that the abuse has, in fact, stopped or could not reoccur in the future."

The report called the Boston Archdiocese's "Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children," adopted in May, "a disappointment" because of various failures, including a lack of truly independent monitoring boards, their reliance at various stages on the discretion of the archbishop about whether to proceed, and the exemption of bishops from its requirements.

The archdiocese "has yet to demonstrate a commitment to the protection of children that is proportionate to the harm it has caused to children for decades," the attorney general said.

Reilly said the figure of at least 789 children victimized by 237 priests and 13 other church workers in the archdiocese came directly from archdiocesan records.

But he said he thought the actual figure was much higher, in light of his own experience of being approached by "scores of people" who have told him they were abused but did not want to go public.

Even the number of those who have disclosed their abuse "likely exceeds 1,000," when all sources of information are taken into account, the report said.

Saying that the Archdiocese of Boston had shown "an institutional reluctance to adequately address the problem (of child sex abuse) and, in fact, made choices that allowed the abuse to continue," the report called on church leaders to "reverse this institutionalized culture of acceptance of the sexual abuse of children and adopt a greater commitment to the protection of children rather than the protection of priests and the reputation of the church."