



# 301 Predator Priests Named In Pa. Grand Jury Sex Abuse Report They Were Raping Little Boys & Girls

By [Andy Sheehan](#)

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PITTSBURGH (KDKA) — The long-awaited state grand jury report into sexual abuse in six Pennsylvania dioceses, including Pittsburgh and Greensburg, has finally been released.

The 884-page document, two years in the making, shines a light into the dark corners of these dioceses going back seven decades, exposing the predators and the efforts of their bishops to protect them.

“Today, the most comprehensive report on child sexual abuse within the church ever produced in our country was released,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. “Pennsylvanians can finally learn the extent of sexual abuse in these dioceses. For the first time, we can all begin to understand the systematic cover up by church leaders that followed. The abuse scarred every diocese. The cover up was sophisticated. The church protected the institution at all costs.”

Several clergy abuse victims who had testified before the grand jury attended Shapiro’s news conference. At least one of them could be seen breaking down in tears.

 josh shapiro clergy sex abuse report 301  
Predator Priests Named In Pa. Grand Jury Sex  
Abuse Report: 'They Were Raping Little Boys  
& Girls'

(Photo Credit: KDKA)

The report begins with the following statement:

*"We, the members of this grand jury, need you to hear this. We know some of you have heard some of it before. There have been other reports about child sex abuse within the Catholic Church. But never on this scale. For many of us, those earlier stories happened someplace else, someplace away. Now we know the truth: it happened everywhere."*

**KDKA's Ralph Iannotti Reports:**

- [CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL REPORT AND LIST OF NAMES OF PREDATOR PRIESTS](#)
- [CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL LIST OF NAMES RELEASED BY THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH](#)
- [CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL LIST OF NAMES RELEASED BY THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG](#)

The report cites 301 priests, clergy and lay teachers with credible allegations against them. There are 99 in the Diocese of Pittsburgh alone.

Of those 99, a group of four groomed and violently sexually assaulted young boys, said Shapiro.

“One boy was forced to stand on a bed in a rectory, strip naked and pose as Christ on the cross for the priests. They took photos of their victim, adding them to a collection of child pornography which they produced and shared on church grounds,” Shapiro said.

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Shapiro said the priests would mark their victims by giving them gifts.

“To make it easier to target their victims, the priests gave their favored boys gifts – gold crosses to wear as necklaces. The crosses were markings of which boys had been groomed for abuse,” Shapiro said.

Because of an on-going legal battle, more than a dozen names and identifying information have been redacted. But the report shows a consistent pattern of bishops having prior knowledge of the actions of these predatory priests, reassigning them and not alerting law enforcement.

Shapiro said his office is not satisfied with the release of the redacted report. Shapiro said each one of those redactions represents a story of abuse that deserves to be told. He went on to say that he will fight to reveal the names currently redacted in the report.

The report states:

*“All victims were brushed aside, in every part of the state, by church leaders who preferred to protect the abusers and their institution above all. The main thing was not to help children, but to avoid scandal.”*


*“Priests were raping little boys and girls and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing: they hid it all.”*

*“Diocesan administrators, including the Bishops, had knowledge of this conduct and yet priests were regularly placed in ministry after the Diocese was on notice that a complaint of child sexual abuse had been made. This conduct enabled offenders and endangered the welfare of children.”*

In addition, the report says administrators and Bishops “often dissuaded victims from reporting abuse to police, pressured law enforcement to terminate or avoid an investigation, or conducted their own deficient,

*biased investigations without reporting crimes against children to the proper authorities.”*

“Above all else, they protected their institution at all cost,” Shapiro said.

 clergy sex abuse report news conference  
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(Photo Credit: KDKA)

The report includes some priests who stood trial and were convicted of sexual assault. In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, they include: Father Robert Wolk of St. Thomas More in Bethel Park; Father Richard Zula of Saints Mary and Ann in Marianna, Washington County, and Father Richard Dorsch, convicted of sexually assaulting a 13-year-old boy in North Park.

Until now, the Pittsburgh Diocese had been considered a leader in those reforms since now Cardinal, then bishop, Donald Wuerl defied the Vatican back in 1993 by refusing to reassign pedophile priest Anthony Cipolla. Wuerl was a leader in formulating policies to protect children, but in the report, his record here also comes under fire.

Cardinal Wuerl responded to the allegations in a statement saying:

*“As I have made clear throughout my more than 30 years as a bishop, the sexual abuse of children by some members of the Catholic Church is a terrible tragedy, and the Church can never express enough our deep sorrow and contrition for the abuse, and for the failure to respond promptly and completely. While I understand this Report may be critical of some of my actions, I believe the Report confirms that I acted with diligence, with concern for the victims and to prevent future acts of abuse. I sincerely hope that a just assessment of my actions, past and present, and my continuing commitment to the protection of children will dispel any notions otherwise made by this report.”*

The Archdiocese of Washington, which Cardinal Wuerl leads now disputes some of the report.

In a statement, they say, in part: “The document referenced by the Report contains the hand-written phrase “circle of secrecy.” However, the handwriting does not belong to then-Bishop Wuerl as the writers of the Report mistakenly assumed. Indeed, the Cardinal confirmed the handwriting is not his, and confirmed he neither wrote nor used the phrase while serving as Bishop of Pittsburgh. When the Cardinal’s legal counsel informed the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office about this error – prior to the Release of the Report – the Attorney General and his Senior Deputy refused to acknowledge the mistake and refused to take any steps to correct the dramatic use and misattribution of the phrase in the Report.”

To read the full statement, [visit this link](#).

### **KDKA’s Andy Sheehan Reports:**

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- [Retired Greensburg Diocese Priest Pleads Guilty In Child Sex Assault Case](#)

Just last week, current [Pittsburgh Bishop David Zubik](#) [warned the faithful](#) that the report would be graphic and disturbing.

“I’m concerned about our people that they may be scandalized and tempted to turn their backs on God,” Zubik told KDKA.

In a letter read at Sunday mass, Bishop Zubik also said 90 percent of the cases involved incidents that occurred before 1990 and that the church has instituted safeguards and reforms to identify and weed out the abusers. He said no priest or deacon with a credible allegation against them is in active ministry today.

“I really felt it was important, the letter, to get people ready for the report because it’s going to be tough, and at the same time, to realize the decisions that the Diocese of Pittsburgh makes today are far different than what would have been made over the course of the last 10, 20 years,” Zubik said.

As for the Diocese of Greensburg, the grand jury named 20 priests in the report.

“One priest, Fr. Raymond Lukac, impregnated a 17-year-old girl, forged another pastor’s signature on a marriage certificate then divorced the girl shortly after she gave birth. Despite having sex with a minor, fathering a child and being married and divorced, Fr. Lukac was allowed to stay in ministry while the diocese sought a benevolent bishop in another state willing to take the predator, hiding him from justice,” Shapiro said.

According to Shapiro, coverups by the church were done in an attempt to run out the clock on the statute of limitations.

“The grand jury detailed that the coverups by the church served a key purpose – the longer they covered up abuses, the less chance that law enforcement could prosecute predator priests because the statute of limitations would run out,” Shapiro said.

While most of the cases are old and the clergy accused are retired or deceased, just two weeks ago Shapiro announced that Father Tomas Sweeney of the Greensburg Diocese [had pled guilty to indecent assault](#).

“There can be no doubt that Father Sweeney is a predator priest,” Shapiro said.

In Erie, Fr. David Poulson was also charged with the abuse of an 8-year-old boy over the course of eight years.

### **Grand Jury Reform Recommendations**

As part of the report, the grand jury has recommended four changes be made to Pennsylvania law:

#### **1. Eliminate the criminal statute of limitations for sexually abusing children**

“This grand jury exists because Pennsylvania dioceses routinely hid reports of child sex crimes while the statutes of limitations for those crimes expired. We just do not understand why that should be allowed to happen. If child abusers knew they could never become immune for their crimes by outrunning the statute of limitations, maybe there would be less child abuse.”

#### **KDKA's David Highfield Reports:**

#### **2. Create a two-year “civil window for child sex abuse victims who couldn't file lawsuits before.**

“Victims don't just need sex criminals prosecuted; they need care and compensation for harm done by the abusers and the institutions that empowered them. The way you get that is by suing. We understand that civil cases are different than criminal prosecutions, and that it's appropriate to have a statute of limitation that prohibits lawsuits after a certain amount of time. We're OK with a time limit for lawsuits, as long as it's a long time limit, and Pennsylvania's is pretty good – until the victim reaches age 30, which is longer than in most other states.



The problem is that this law doesn't apply to most of our victims. It's only been in effect for about 15 years, and most of the victims from before then were under a much tighter time limit for suing – only two years. But even that two-year limit was something of a sham. Until not too long ago, the church was actively and systematically concealing clergy sex abuse. Victims didn't know if their attackers had a history of abuse, and they didn't know the diocese had been enabling that abuse. You can't very well exercise your right to sue when the people responsible are doing their best to cover up."

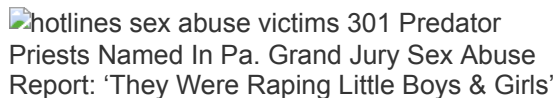
### **3. Clarify the penalties for a continuing failure to report child abuse.**

"Reporting child abusers isn't just a moral obligation; it's the law. We can't pass laws telling the church how to administer its internal operations – but we can demand that it inform authorities about rapists and molesters. Unfortunately, document after document told us the same story: church officials repeatedly received word of crimes against kids, yet repeatedly refused to alert law enforcement."

### **4. Prohibit "non-disclosure" agreements regarding cooperation with law enforcement.**

"We also think it's time to tackle an issue that hasn't been mentioned in prior grand jury investigations of clergy sex abuse. We've heard the reports over the last year about the use of confidentiality agreements to make sexual harassment suits go away. We can tell you that it doesn't just happen to women in the workplace; we've seen the same tactic used by the dioceses to hush up child sex abuse in the church. In the rare case where a child was able to report abuse within the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit, the bishops would avoid "scandal" by paying off the family to keep quiet."

There is help available for victims of abuse.

hotlines sex abuse victims 301 Predator Priests Named In Pa. Grand Jury Sex Abuse Report: 'They Were Raping Little Boys & Girls'

The first is the Attorney General's Hotline at **1-888-538-8541**. You can call that number if you or someone you know is a survivor of abuse in the church.

The second is the number for SNAP, a survivors' network, at **1-877-762-7432**.

And if you are aware of ongoing child abuse anywhere in Pennsylvania, you are urged to call ChildLine at **1-800-932-0313**.