

Review Board: Statistical Chart IV

Article 1.2 of the *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children* describes the function and responsibilities of the archdiocesan Review Board. Since the promulgation of the *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children* in July 2003, the Archbishop has sought the recommendation of the Review Board on a number of cases regarding allegations of sexual abuse of a minor. The Archbishop may seek the Board's advice at any time after an allegation is received, but this normally occurs at the conclusion of a preliminary investigation. Based in part upon the Board's recommendation, the Archbishop makes a determination as to whether or not an allegation requires further canonical action.

The primary and immediate focus of the Review Board in the past two years has been the canonical processing of the cases that emerged during or after the crisis of 2002, although cases themselves may have referred to incidents that took place prior to 2002. Thus, during the past two years, the Review Board has examined a backlog of cases connected to the abuse crisis, some of them going back decades. To their great credit, and observing the requirements of the Charter and the Essential Norms, the Review Board and the Archbishop's Delegate for Investigations have managed a very heavy work load, completing many cases and getting many others into the necessary pipeline towards completion.

In some cases where preliminary investigation has occurred and the Review Board has made a recommendation, it has been the decision of the Archbishop that an allegation cannot be substantiated, and all restrictions upon the priest are lifted. In other cases, while the allegation cannot be substantiated, there remain sufficient concerns about the priest in question (for example, due to mental illness, substance abuse, or other issues) so as to necessitate ongoing restrictions upon his exercise of ministry.

If the Archbishop decides that there is probable cause that some canonical crime occurred, he is bound by canon law to refer the case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the Congregation determines in what way the matter should be adjudicated. For example, the case may be returned to the Archdiocese to be decided by means of a canonical trial or an extrajudicial penal process. In cases involving admitted offenses where the priest is elderly and/or infirm, he may be permanently restricted from the exercise of any priestly ministry in order to live a life dedicated to prayer and penance. Finally, a priest may request to be laicized or, in particularly egregious matters, the Holy Father may dismiss him from the clerical state.

The following data chart indicates the work of the Review Board in reviewing all cases in this time period covered by this report (July 2003-December 2005).¹⁴

¹⁴ This narrative and data chart were prepared by the Vicar General, Bishop Richard Lennon, and the Delegate for Investigations, Amy Strickland, and reported to the IOAC through Father John Connolly.

Cases Reviewed by the Review Board (July 2003-December 2005)

In the period July 2003 through December 2005, the Review Board considered cases involving 71 Boston Archdiocesan clerics (priests or deacons). The cases break down as follows:

In 38 of these 71 cases, the Review Board recommended to the Archbishop that some further canonical action be taken. In these cases, the Board found probable cause that sexual abuse of a minor had occurred. Upon acceptance of the Board's recommendation by the Archbishop, each of these cases was transmitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF") in Rome for determination of the appropriate canonical process. The current status of these cases is as follows:

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| 11 | cases - | priest is no longer in the clerical state due to laicization or dismissal from clerical state |
| 5 | cases - | Priest is permanently restricted from ministry and directed to live life of prayer and penance. |
| 13 | cases - | CDF has directed further penal process, consisting of either a canonical trial or extrajudicial penal process; priest restricted from exercise of any ministry. |
| 9 | cases - | Still pending before CDF; priest restricted from exercise of any ministry. |

In one of the 71 cases reviewed in the period July 2003 through December 2005, the Review Board has considered the case, but a preliminary investigation remains open. The priest is restricted from the exercise of any ministry pending further investigation and review by the Review Board.

In the remaining 32 cases, the Review Board recommended to the Archbishop that the case did not merit transmission to the CDF in Rome. In these cases, the Review Board did not find probable cause that sexual abuse of a minor had occurred. In 9 of these 32 cases, the priest is restricted from ministry for other reasons, including mental illness or substance abuse.

II. D Overview: Going Forward

Thus, greatly helped by the largely psycho-social and civil recommendations of the Commission for the Protection of Children in October, 2002, the Archdiocese has made a solid beginning in addressing the tragic revelations of 2002 in four areas of activity: 1) safe environment education in schools, 2) safe environment education in parishes, 3) pastoral outreach and support, and 4) the review of cases by the Review Board. Simply by trying to implement the policies and procedures of 2003 across the board, the Archdiocese of Boston has in many ways launched a major cultural and organizational change whose energy must be sustained and supported.