

## **As the Vatican addressed priest abuse, more people are reporting sexual abuse by nuns**

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sexual-abuse-by-nuns-reports-growing/>

At the Vatican summit on clergy abuse Friday morning, attention turned to abuse by nuns. Victims' advocates delivered a letter to an organization representing nuns asking predator nuns be exposed so survivors can begin to heal. This call to action comes as more victims speak out.

Nun abuse survivor Virginia June was at home in Ann Arbor, Michigan, when she heard fellow survivor Trish Cahill talking about her experience on "CBS This Morning."

"I whipped around. I could not believe that somebody was actually talking about it," June told CBS News' Nikki Battiste.

In a CBS News report last month, Cahill called nun abuse "the secret not yet told." Hearing that made June feel "validated" for the first time.

Facing a troubled childhood at home in the Detroit

suburb of Farmington Hills, June said she turned to Sister Pat Kulwicki for guidance. Kulwicki taught June's religious study class at what was then Our Lady of Mercy High School.

"She seemed to be very consoling and very nurturing and very wonderful and she became a mentor to me," June said.

The 57-year-old said Sister Kulwicki began molesting her when she was 14 years old. The first time was at Kulwicki's apartment.

"I knew it was wrong and I didn't know who to tell ... I was so confused it was like this sister is doing these sexual things to me and I thought she was married to God," June said.

June said the abuse continued for a decade and fueled her addiction to drugs and alcohol. She claims the school and the Detroit Archdiocese failed to act when June and her family say they reported the alleged abuse in the late 80s. June said Kulwicki denied any wrongdoing, allegedly calling June troubled. She continued to teach at the school until she died in 1994.

- Survivor "aggravated" pope skipped clergy sex abuse meeting: "He delegated"

In response to June's allegations, Mercy High School said it is "deeply saddened" and "immediately contacted local police and initiated an internal investigation" upon receiving our request for comment.

In a statement, the Archdiocese of Detroit told CBS News, "investigating, and substantiating a 40-year-old claim is a matter that takes time and careful consideration." They added, "the complainant deserves nothing less than to be assisted and accompanied on her journey towards healing."

Last month, former nun Mary Dispenza revealed to CBS News a nun allegedly forcibly kissed her while she trained to join the convent many years ago. Now working with SNAP – the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests – she is helping other survivors tell their stories.

"We think of nuns as caregivers and maternal and loving," Dispenza said.

After CBS News' first report aired in January, nearly 40 people reported allegations of nun abuse to SNAP – that's in addition to at least 18 other reports the organization received last year. She said that after CBS News aired its report, more survivors reached out.

"They did ... And they're being believed for the first time," Dispenza said.

Dispenza is in Rome calling on the church to lay out a plan to fight sex abuse. "We don't need people praying for us; we need actions," she said.

Now sober for 31 years and married with two sons, June has a message for catholic leaders.

"Stop victimizing the victims ... let's put the blame where the blame needs to sit – with the perpetrators," June said.

June said she thinks there could be other victims of Sister Pat Kulwicki. She said she is glad the summit in Rome is happening and it is a start, but she said there's still a lot of work that needs to be done to protect children.

