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Separate internal audits of the Roman Catholic dioceses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa have identified nearly two dozen clerics for whom investigators found substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of children.

An investigation released Thursday by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City named 11 priests who worked in the region from 1960 through 2018. A separate report released Wednesday by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma also found 11 Catholic clerics “credibly accused” of sexual abuse against children since that diocese began in 1973.

The investigation into the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, conducted by Oklahoma City-based McAfee & Taft, additionally found disorganized record keeping related to sexual abuse allegations, including the intentional and accidental deletion of records, along with inadequate and inconsistent investigations and, in some cases, failure to act after credible allegations surfaced.

“The long and the short of it is you trusted us, and we failed,” Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley wrote in a public letter Thursday in which he apologized to victims of sexual abuse by anyone representing the church. “I also am sorry for the complicity and negligence of those who failed to respond adequately to reports of abuse, for whatever reason, whether they are bishops, priests, deacons, religious or

lay persons representing the Church.”

The 77-page McAfee & Taft report outlines detailed investigations into each of the 11 accused priests, most of whom are now deceased. James Francis Rapp, who had worked in six states before he was defrocked as a priest, was sentenced to prison in Oklahoma and Michigan for sexually abusing minors.

The report also makes a number of key recommendations to the archdiocese, including taking steps to modernize and preserve its record keeping, hiring outside investigators, improving public communication and clarifying that all reports of child sexual abuse should immediately be reported to appropriate authorities.

Zach Hiner, executive director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, praised the Oklahoma City report as one of the most comprehensive investigations commissioned by church officials that he’s ever seen

“One thing we always ask for is information on when the allegations were received and what the diocese did in response,” Hiner said after reviewing the report. “I’m incredibly impressed with the level of detail in this report.”

By comparison, Hiner was critical of the five-page report produced by the law firm GableGotwals for the Archdiocese of Tulsa, which contained significantly fewer details, and called on Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter to launch an independent investigation.

“The list released by church officials in Tulsa is woefully lacking in necessary information to better protect children and support survivors,” Hiner said. “The list contains only names, dates of ordination and current status.”

Of the 11 individuals named in the Tulsa report, seven are identified as deceased.

The report does not include information on the Rev. Joe Townsend, a priest placed on administrative leave earlier this year following an allegation of sexual misconduct involving a minor. Townsend has not been charged and has denied wrongdoing. The diocese told the Tulsa World newspaper the investigation into Townsend is “still ongoing.”

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