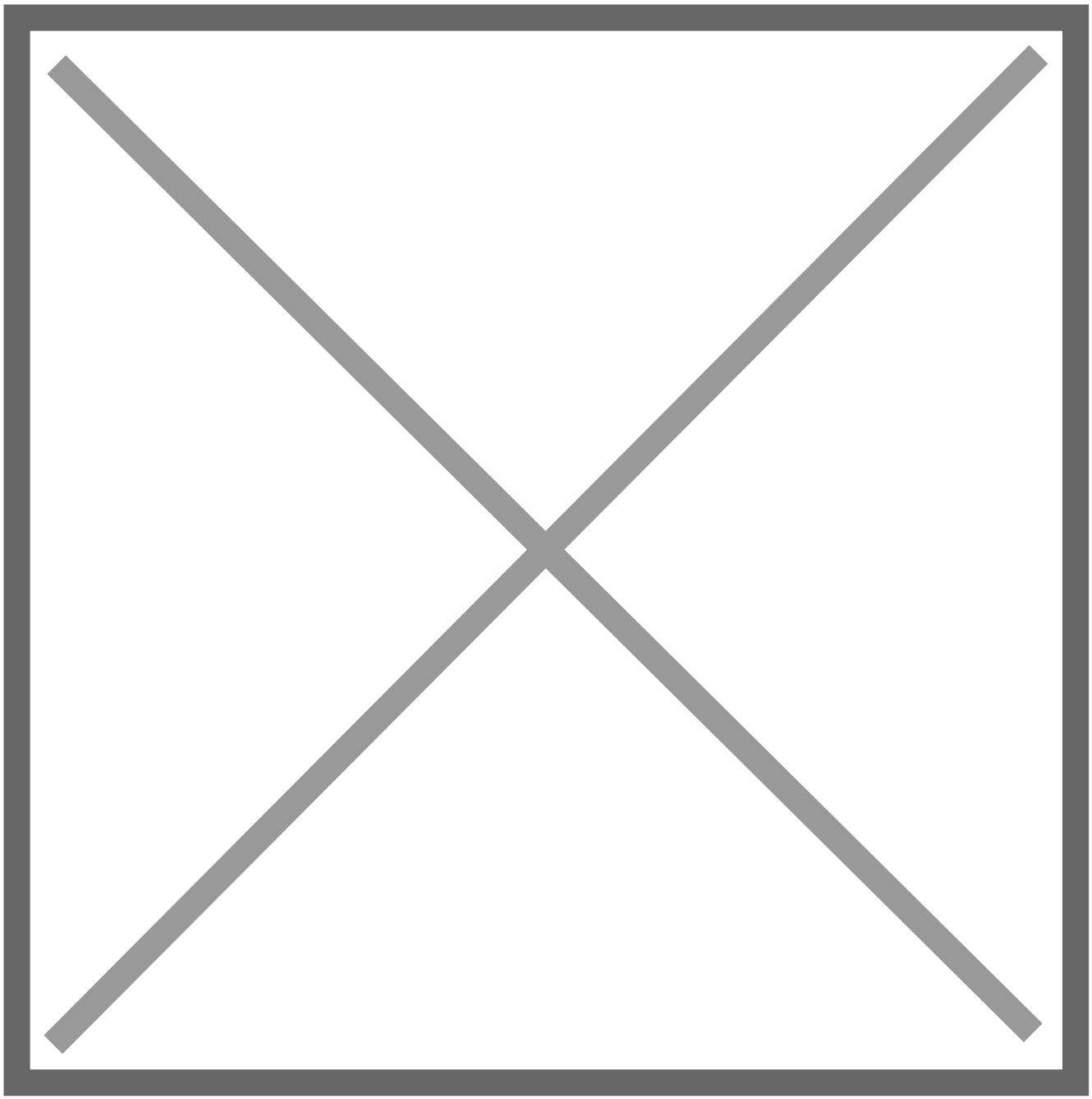
News



Former Bishop Eamonn Casey of Galway, Ireland, is pictured in an undated photograph. The remains of the bishop, who resigned from office in 1992 after it was revealed he had fathered a child in 1974, have been removed from their burial place in Galway Cathedral in the wake of a number of allegations of child abuse that came to light in 2024. (OSV News/The Irish Catholic)



Sarah Mac Donald

View Author Profile



OSV News

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Dublin — July 23, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

The remains of former Bishop Eamonn Casey of Galway, who resigned from office in 1992 after it was revealed he had fathered a child in 1974, have been removed from their burial place in Galway Cathedral in the wake of a number of allegations of child abuse that came to light in 2024.

Related: Galway Diocese urged to move disgraced Bishop Eamonn Casey's remains

He is the first Irish bishop to undergo such public censure. The move follows a yearlong consultation in the diocese in the west of Ireland.

Casey died on March 13, 2017, at age 89. He served as bishop of Galway 1976-1992 and as bishop of Kerry 1969-1976.

He was buried in the crypt of the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St. Nicholas in Galway in 2017 after a funeral Mass concelebrated by 11 bishops and 61 priests.

On July 19, a spokesperson for the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, Fr. Diarmuid Hogan, announced in a statement that the remains of the disgraced bishop had been removed after a "significant consensus emerged around the unique role of a Cathedral as a place of unity rather than division, healing rather than hurt and peace rather than disquiet."

The removal was done, he said, with the assent and cooperation of members of the late bishop's family and following prayers for the dead. Hogan said the Casey family had expressed the wish that the former bishop's final resting place remain private.

Once one of Ireland's most charismatic bishops, Casey was prominent during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ireland in 1979, the first papal visit to the Irish church.

His fall from grace began with the revelation in 1992 of his affair with U.S.-born Annie Murphy and the birth of their son, Peter. The disclosure rocked Ireland and caused him to flee to the United States. After some months there, he went to work in Ecuador for six years. Later, he lived in a parish in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton in the south of England and worked as a hospital chaplain.

Advertisement

In 2006, Casey returned to the Galway Diocese with the permission of Bishop Martin Drennan and lived in Shanaglish parish in County Galway. However, he was not allowed to exercise his ministry in public, and most people believed the stricture related to his affair with Murphy and his misappropriation of diocesan funds for his son's upkeep.

In fact, the Vatican at this stage had already received two allegations of child sexual abuse concerning him and had restricted his ministry. This was never publicly known in his lifetime.

The July 2024 documentary "Bishop Casey's Buried Secrets" — produced by public broadcaster RTÉ in association with The Irish Mail on Sunday — alleged that the disgraced prelate was investigated by the Vatican before he died over allegations concerning five people, including his own niece, Patricia Donovan. She alleged in 2005 and again in 2019 that he abused her from the age of 5 for a decade.

The documentary provoked a public outcry in Ireland with many calling for his remains to be disinterred from Galway Cathedral. The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora appealed for time and space to allow for appropriate reflection and consultation — with a decision eventually made public July 19 of this year.

Responding to the latest development, retired Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin told the Sunday Independent newspaper that Bishop Michael Duignan of Galway had made the "right decision" to remove Casey's remains from the crypt and had "kept his promise" to address the appropriateness of the prelate's burial in the cathedral crypt.

Following the airing of the documentary in July 2024, the then-Taoiseach, or Irish Prime Minister, Simon Harris appealed to the Galway Diocese to make its decision over the internment of Casey's remains "victim-focused."

Following the announcement of the removal of Casey's coffin from the cathedral, Harris told the Sunday Independent, "I know the reappearance of Eamonn Casey's name in the news will be a difficult moment for those who suffered appalling abuse. However, I do hope the decision now made brings some small level of comfort to them."

The Diocese of Limerick received the first complaint of child abuse by Casey in 2001; two further complaints were received, one in 2005 and another in 2014. The complaints referred to the 1950s and 1960s. The Limerick Diocese paid compensation of 100,000 pounds (U.S. $135,280) to one of Casey's victims in 2019.