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Details of report on clerical abuse in Dublin leaked

by Cian Molloy by Catholic News Service

DUBLIN, Ireland -- The *Sunday Independent* newspaper has leaked details of the report resulting from a government investigation into clerical child abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

In its Nov. 22 edition, the *Sunday Independent* said the report finds that four previous Dublin archbishops knew about child abuse by priests but did not report it to civil authorities; when cases of child abuse were reported, frequently the abusers were moved to other parishes where they were free to abuse again. The paper reported that the commission found that civil authorities also failed children, for example, by releasing convicted clerical abusers from prison without any further supervision.

It also reported that the insurance company, Church and General, which had indemnified the Dublin Archdiocese against damages resulting from allegations of clerical child abuse, destroyed all files relating to such claims prior to 1996.

Among the details highlighted by the *Sunday Independent* were a girl who was abused while being given the sacrament of reconciliation, a child being abused with a crucifix, and two abusive priests "sharing" their victims between them.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin has frequently warned that the contents of the report of the statutory Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse in the Dublin Archdiocese will prove shocking to both the faithful and those outside the church.

In response to the reporting in the *Sunday Independent*, the Dublin archdiocese issued a statement noting that Archbishop Martin had warned about the report's contents.

"Of paramount importance is that survivors and victims of abuse and their families, who will be most affected by the report's publication, will get the support they need at this difficult time," the statement said.

"The High Court has given detailed directions, in recent days, on its publication, and it is hoped it will be published without delay. It is regrettable that several months after the completion of the report, selected sections of it or a draft thereof have been published; however, all involved should be mindful of those most in need of help," it said.

At a graduation ceremony Nov. 20, Archbishop Martin told newly qualified lay religious education teachers: "In these days we will be reading of sordid events that took place within the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin, about the abuse of children and about how it was managed. Such events happen when the community of the church becomes centered on itself and its position in society and when it drifts away from its roots in the message of Jesus Christ."

Publication of the report was delayed because two of the priests implicated are currently awaiting trial, but Dublin's High Court ruled Oct. 15 that a partial version of the report could be published.

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