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Second Irish bishop resigns over clerical abuse

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A second Irish bishop has resigned following a government report into the sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy.

Bishop Jim Moriarty submitted a letter of resignation Dec. 23. He is bishop of Kildare and Leithlin, southwest of Dublin. Moriarty was not directly criticized in the Murphy Report, but was a member of the Dublin archdiocese leadership for more than a decade before it put proper protections for children in place, he said.

Moriarty said he "should have challenged the prevailing culture" of protecting the church rather than children when he was an auxiliary bishop in Dublin from 1991 to 2002.

"I know that any action now on my part does not take away the suffering that people have endured," he said in a written statement.

"I again apologize to all the survivors and their families. I have today offered my resignation as bishop of Kildare and Leighlin to the Holy Father. I hope it honors the truth that the survivors have so bravely uncovered and opens the way to a better future for all concerned."

Moriarty has been a priest for 48 years, he said in the statement.

"I fully accept the overall conclusion ... that the attempts by church authorities to 'protect the church' and to 'avoid scandal' had the most dreadful consequences for children and were deeply wrong," Moriarty said after the government report came out last month.

Bishop Donal Murray, the bishop of Limerick, resigned on December 17.

An analysis of the resignation by Patsy McGarry, Religious Affairs Correspondent for *The Irish Times* said, "One telling line in Bishop Jim Moriarty?s statement [Dec. 23] will have made it extraordinarily difficult for fellow bishops and others mentioned in the Murphy report to stay on in office.

"{Moriarty] said: "I accept that, from the time I became an auxiliary bishop, I should have challenged the prevailing culture." It is the kernel of the issue where all in positions of authority in the archdiocese between January 1st, 1975 and April 30th, 2004 are concerned.

"Bishops Éamonn Walsh, Ray Field and Martin Drennan must by now have reached the same conclusion as Bishop Jim Moriarty and Bishop Donal Murray," McGarry wrote.

Moriarty is 73, two years short of the church's mandatory retirement age. Five other past Dublin bishops identified in the report have already retired, while several others are dead.

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