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Irish sex abuse victims ask church for \$1 billion

by Francis X. Rocca by Religion News Service



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, Ireland and Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, address the media just outside St. Peter's Square in Rome Dec. 11. (CNS/Paul Haring)

VATICAN CITY -- Irish victims of clerical sex abuse have asked Pope Benedict XVI for over \$1.37 billion in compensation, in a letter that the head of Ireland's Catholic Church will hand-deliver to the pope next week.

The letter also requests a meeting with Benedict during his forthcoming visit to Britain, expected to take place in September.

Cardinal Sean Brady received the letter from representatives of sex abuse victims on Monday (Feb. 8), according to a report in the *Irish Independent*.

Bishop John McAreevey of Dromore said the pope will receive the letter when he meets with Irish bishops next Monday and Tuesday, reportedly to discuss last November's Murphy Commission report. That report traced a pattern of clerical physical and sexual abuse over three decades, from 1975-2004, which had been covered up by the Archdiocese of Dublin.

In December, Benedict expressed ?outrage,? ?shame,? and ?profound regret? over the report's revelations, and the Vatican announced he would write a letter to Irish Catholics ?in which he will clearly indicate the initiatives that are to be taken in response to the situation.? The pope's letter is widely expected to be published shortly after next week's meeting.

Four Irish bishops have already resigned as a consequence of the Murphy Commission's revelations.

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