

# Vatican finally breaks silence on sex abuse bombshell

The Vatican has finally broken its silence on the “predator priests” grand jury report, saying the church is on the side of the victims.

“Those acts were betrayals of trust that robbed survivors of their dignity and faith,” said Vatican spokesman Greg Burke.

“Victims should know that the pope is on their side,” Burke added. “Those who have suffered are his priority, and the Church wants to listen to them to root out this tragic horror that destroys the lives of the innocent.”

This week’s grand jury report, which was released Tuesday, outlined the sexual abuse of more than 1,000 children at the hands of Pennsylvania priests.

The Vatican described the abuses as “criminal and morally reprehensible” — but failed to say whether any church personnel would be removed or punished.

“The Holy See treats with great seriousness the work of the Investigating Grand Jury of Pennsylvania and the lengthy Interim Report it has produced,” Burke said. “The Church must learn hard lessons from its past, and there should be accountability for both abusers and those who permitted abuse to occur.”

The Vatican pointed out how most of the abuses occurred before the early 2000s, before the “Catholic Church reforms in the United States.”

“By finding almost no cases after 2002, the Grand Jury’s conclusions are consistent with previous studies,” Burke said, “showing that Catholic Church reforms in the United States drastically reduced the incidence of clergy child abuse.”

Furthermore, “the Holy See encourages continued reform and vigilance at all levels of the Catholic Church, to help ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults from harm.”

The Vatican had been silent for two days before issuing their official statement through Burke. Catholics across the country were calling on Pope Francis to come

forward and say something.

According to the grand jury report, “predator priests” were raping little boys and girls in Pennsylvania “for decades.”

“Monsignors, auxiliary bishops, bishops, archbishops, cardinals have mostly been protected,” the report said. “Many, including some named in this report, have been promoted.”

The Vatican said Thursday that they “understand” how much these crimes “can shake the faith and the spirit of believers.” But it insisted that things were being done to “create a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults in the Church and in all of society.”

“There are two words that can express the feelings faced with these horrible crimes: shame and sorrow,” Burke said. “The Holy See condemns unequivocally the sexual abuse of minors.”

*With Post Wires*

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