

# Lawyers Take Clergy Abuse Documents Public

Lawyers for victims of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy on Tuesday released thousands of related documents from the Chicago Archdiocese, the latest in a series of such disclosures in the Midwest.

The documents concern 30 former Chicago-area priests accused of abusing minors during the last half century, according to the archdiocese, one of the largest in the United States with 2.2 million Catholics.

The release, expected to reveal how the church responded to the allegations, is part of a mediation agreement between the archdiocese and lawyers.

Ninety-five percent of the cases occurred prior to 1988, according to Chicago church officials. All of the priests involved in the document release are out of ministry, and 14 are deceased.

In a letter to Chicago-area Catholics earlier this month, Francis Cardinal George, who has led the archdiocese since 1997, apologized for the crimes, and said the publication of the records would raise transparency to a new level.

"It will be helpful, we pray, for some, but painful for many," George wrote.

Similar disclosures regarding clergy abuse have been made by church leaders in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and Milwaukee in the past year.

Nick Ingala, spokesman for Voice of the Faithful, a progressive Catholic group formed in response to the sex abuse scandal, said the disclosures would help survivors and the

church.

“It helps both in terms of healing,” Ingala said. “Until the survivors are given the satisfaction of knowing that someone is taking responsibility for the terrible things that were done to them, many of them can’t recover and can’t live their lives.”

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*Reporting by Mary Wisniewski; Editing by David Bailey and Stephen Powell*

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