

Archdiocese of Vancouver report names more abusive priests

The Archdiocese of Vancouver has released the names of three priests involved in settlements related to sexual abuse and confirmed 13 more people have come forward with abuse allegations.

In the most comprehensive update on sexual abuse by priests to date since its initial report in 2019, the archdiocese on Dec. 11 provided a progress report on 31 recommendations made last year, including the names of three priests involved in abuse settlements that have not been previously published. The previous report named nine abusive priests with criminal convictions or lawsuits settled against them for sexual abuse dating back to the 1950s.

The priests named are John Edward Kilty, Johannes Holzappel and Armand Frechette. Kilty served in the archdiocese from 1945 to his death in 1983. Holzappel was born and ordained in Germany but served in the archdiocese for periods of time from 1955 to 1974. Frechette served at Our Lady of Lourdes from 1953-1970.

In the cases of Kilty and Frechette, allegations mentioned include abuse of minors. For all three priests, allegations surfaced after their deaths, sometimes more than 20 years later.

In a statement, Archbishop J. Michael Miller again apologized for the wrongs done by clergy.

"We again want to acknowledge the deep suffering of the victims and their loved ones and I apologize to each of them for the trauma caused by the abuse by a priest," said Miller. "They are in my prayers."

The update said while the subject matter and findings are "troubling," responses received to the 2019 report were "positive overall" and "much good has come" from publishing the news.

"We understand that some people think that we should speak less about this issue because it may seem that it feeds into an 'anti-faith' narrative ... others, including some victims/survivors, think that we are still not doing enough to address the issue," the report says.

"We believe that greater transparency allows us to reach and care for more victims/survivors while increasing vigilance and safe environments within our parishes."

The progress report shares recommendations that have been implemented since

2019, including establishing an independent intake office, staffing a clergy review board with a majority of lay people and removing all known memorials, honours and public celebrations of priests known to have abused. The report acknowledges that with the vast amount of content published online, some may have been missed.

The archdiocese has also formed a committee to study and improve priestly formation and informed all religious orders that have sent priests to work in Vancouver about their priests who have been accused of clerical sexual abuse.

The update also lists recommendations that have not been fully implemented. The progress report was originally to be released in March, but the archdiocese said pandemic-related bans on gatherings affected its ability to host in-person meetings and investigations.

“We hope that 2021 will offer the opportunity to make better progress and engage more fully with victims/survivors and others within the Church and the broader community.”