

Latest revelations about Catholic child abuse bring promises of stricter laws

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The missing chapter of the Cloyne Report into Catholic child abuse in Ireland, and its subsequent cover up by the Catholic hierarchy, has now been published. The chapter was withheld from the original report so as not to prejudice a trial that was ongoing at the time.

Once more a catalogue of cover-up and lies is revealed at the very highest echelons of the Church. Its publication has prompted Irish Justice Minister Alan Shatter to reassert that stricter laws are needed to protect children. He hopes to publish a reformed Criminal Justice Bill in the New Year that deals with withholding information on crimes against children and the vulnerable.

"The publication of the redacted portions of the Cloyne Report yet again details the failure of the Church to comply with its own child abuse guidelines and its failure to ensure that allegations of abuse when first received were brought to the notice of [the police]," said Mr Shatter. "The litany of allegations made and the failure to appropriately report cases of abuse reinforces the need to enact a statutory measure for the protection of children in the future."

The newly-published chapter tells how former Bishop John Magee did not adequately deal with complaints in his Co Cork diocese against a cleric with the pseudonym of Fr Ronat. The earlier report had shown that Bishop Magee deliberately misled authorities and was failing to report abuse until as recently as three years ago.

Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald, said she was deeply disturbed by the latest revelations. She said that there could be no exceptions and reporting child abuse allegations could not be discretionary. "All allegations must be reported so that the allegation itself is investigated and any potential risk to other children is assessed," she said.

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