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Pope 'visibly upset' over Irish abuse report

Dennis Coday | Jun. 8, 2009 NCR Today

NCR reported over the weekend [1] on the meeting of Cardinal Sean Brady, president of the Irish bishops conference and Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Benedict XVI in the Vatican.

The Irish Times is reporting that Pope Benedict was "visibly upset" [2] when he heard details contained in the Ryan report on abuse in State institutions run by religious orders. (That's the 2,600 page report by a government commisison released last month). The newspaper cites Archbishop Martin for this quote.

Today Martin and Brady are briefing the Irish bishops on their Vatican meeting. Some kind of statement is expected from the conference later this week.

A bit of background:

> The Irish government established the Ryan commission in 2000 to hear evidence from anyone alleged to have suffered child abuse at institutions since 1940. These institutions, funded by the state but often run by Catholic religious orders, included schools, orphanages, hospitals, children's homes and other institutions where children were in the care of nonfamily members.
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> The report, released May 20, said a climate of fear created by pervasive, excessive and arbitrary punishment permeated most of Ireland's institutions for children and all those run for boys. During the period examined, more than 25,000 children were in the care of these institutions.
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> More than 3,100 people testified before the commission over a nine-year period and more than 800 priests, brothers, sisters and laypeople were implicated as abusers.
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> The 2,600-page report said sexual abuse was reported by approximately half of all those who testified before a confidential committee of the independent commission.

The Dáil, Ireland's parliament, has scheduled two days for debate on the Ryan report this week.

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