

Fifth Irish bishop faces pressure to resign

Ray McMenamin | Jan. 7, 2010

DUBLIN (RNS/ENI) -- A fifth Irish bishop is resisting calls to resign following the release of a government-commissioned report into how the Roman Catholic Church dealt with allegations against priests of sexual abuse.

Since the publication of the Nov. 26 report led by Judge Yvonne Murphy, four bishops in Ireland have offered their resignation to Pope Benedict XVI.

The Murphy Report concluded that church authorities had covered up abuse for three decades, and that bishops in the Archdiocese of Dublin were more concerned with the reputation of the church than the welfare of children.

All four resignations put pressure on the sole remaining bishop who was named in the report and continues to serve, Bishop Martin Drennan of Galway. He became an auxiliary bishop of Dublin in 1997 and served there until his appointment to Galway in 2005.

Drennan, however, maintained that he will not be resigning.

His spokesman, the Rev. Sean McHugh, told national broadcaster RT on Dec. 26 that the bishop had "done nothing wrong" and that "his situation was different to that of other bishops named in the ... report."

Bishop Jim Moriarty of Kildare and Leighlin announced his resignation on Dec. 23. "With the benefit of hindsight, I accept that ... I should have challenged the prevailing culture," he said.

The two other bishops who resigned, on Dec. 24, are Raymond Field and Eamonn Walsh, both auxiliary bishops in Dublin. Their resignations followed that of Donal Murray, the former bishop of Limerick, whose resignation was accepted by the Vatican on Dec. 17.

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