NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Abuse victims meet with Irish cardinal

Cian Molloy Catholic News Service | Mar. 31, 2010

DUBLIN, Ireland -- Victims of clergy sexual abuse met with Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, and said they still believed the cardinal should resign.

Amid continuing investigations into clerical child abuse and the high-level church cover-up of that abuse, the cardinal held a series of meetings March 31 with representatives of the survivors of clerical child abuse and representatives of those who suffered neglect and mistreatment while in the care of religious-run institutions, such as orphanages and industrial schools.

A statement from the cardinal's office said the primary purpose of the meetings, held at the cardinal's invitation, was for the church representatives to continue to listen to the views of survivors of abuse in the aftermath of the March 20 publication of Pope Benedict XVI's pastoral letter to Irish Catholics. Cardinal Brady is the primate of all Ireland and president of the Irish bishops' conference.

John Kelly, one of the representatives of the Survivors of Child Abuse organization who met with the cardinal, said there were positive aspects to the discussions, but he and other survivors' representatives believed Cardinal Brady should consider resigning.

"We felt there is a perception in the public that he was a lame duck primate," he told Ireland's RTE Radio. "We said that to him and we asked would he end the speculation one way or the other, and he said he was reflecting on it.

"His answers were rather ambiguous. He said he received a lot of support in Newry (in his archdiocese) to stay, but we said he was the national primate and he needs to take a view from around the country and end the speculation. Talking to us, he didn't categorically say that he wanted to stay."

Some expected pressure on the cardinal to ease after the papal letter to Irish Catholics. In the letter, Pope Benedict personally apologized to victims of priestly sexual abuse and announced new steps to heal the wounds of the scandal, including a Vatican investigation and a year of penitential reparation.

Earlier in March Cardinal Brady apologized and acknowledged that he never told police about statements from victims that he collected about a pedophile priest in 1975.

Kelly told RTE Radio March 31 that one of the positive elements of the meeting was that the church's leadership appears to be happy to work to find justice for women incarcerated in so-called Magdalene laundries. Operated by religious orders, the laundries were asylums for "fallen women." The incarcerated women were required to do hard physical labor for little or no pay. Some people felt that the 30,000 women held in the laundries over the years were being forgotten because of the spotlight put on the hundreds of survivors of clerical sex abuse and the thousands of survivors of neglect and mistreatment while in residential care.

In three separate meetings at his Armagh home, Cardinal Brady met with John Kelly, Patrick Walsh and Marie

Seo of the Survivors of Child Abuse organization; Dublin clerical abuse survivor and justice campaigner Marie Collins and her husband Raymond; and Michael O'Brien of Right to Peace and Christopher Heaphy of Right of Place, both of whom represent the survivors of abuse while in institutional care. Also present with the cardinal were Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore; a church-survivor communications facilitator, Lucy McCaffrey; and the cardinal's assistant, Father Timothy Bartlett.

Source URL (retrieved on *08/21/2014 - 01:55*): http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/abuse-victims-meet-irish-cardinal