



The longest-serving bishop in Belgium resigned Friday after admitting to sexually abusing “a young man in my close entourage” many years ago, becoming the latest cleric to quit in a spreading abuse scandal.

The development dealt a new blow to the Roman Catholic Church, and marked a new entry in a corrosive catalog of disclosures that has damaged its credibility and shaken the trust of many believers in their spiritual leaders.

In a statement issued by the Vatican on Friday, Roger Vangheluwe, 73, the bishop of Bruges since 1984, said that the abuse had occurred “when I was still a simple priest and for a while when I began as a bishop.”

“This has marked the victim forever,” the statement said.

The bishop said he had on several occasions asked the victim and his family to forgive him but the wound had not healed, “neither in me nor the victim.” A media storm in recent weeks had merely deepened the trauma, he said.

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