



Victims of a Florence priest who was defrocked for sexually and psychologically abusing his young parishioners are now demanding that his bishops be held responsible for keeping his crimes quiet.

The victims' appeal is the latest sign that clerical abuse in Italy, long so taboo that it was rarely spoken of much less acted on, is increasingly getting public attention and forcing the Vatican to confront the problem in its own backyard.

In a letter to the pope obtained Wednesday, 17 victims of Lelio Cantini said that his bishops—one in particular—should be forced from office for having allegedly tried to keep his crimes quiet. They noted that bishops have resigned in countries like Ireland for similar inaction, but not in Italy.

"We ask for definitive clarification from all those responsible for our case, and that those who are to blame be definitively recognized as guilty and isolated and that justice—the daughter of truth—takes its course," they wrote in the letter.

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