



More than half of Chicago's Roman Catholic parishes have had a priest accused of sexually abusing a child working there at some point, according to a study released today that was quickly questioned by the Chicago Archdiocese.

In some cases, multiple priests accused of misconduct worked at the same church, according to the study, conducted by reform groups Voice of the Faithful, African American Advocates for Victims of Clergy Sexual Abuse and the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.

"In almost 60 percent of the parishes, an accused predator worked there," said Barbara Blaine, president of SNAP.

For example, from 1980 to 1990, 57.7% of Chicago parishes had an accused priest working there, said Bob Kopp, one of the study's researchers and vice president of Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful. Other decades examined in the study had similar percentages of affected parishes, he said.

She is calling for victims to speak up. "Silence protects predators." "We need to start talking about this and ... not bury it under the carpet," Kopp said. A spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Chicago said officials have not seen the study, but told of the report's highlights questioned its conclusions.

"From the description of what we have heard, it appears that the analysis and conclusions are questionable," said Colleen Dolan of the archdiocese in an e-mailed statement. "The priests referred to in the ... report have all been removed and are not in ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago."

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