

# *Vatican says Pope Francis is on the side of victims of predator US priests*

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Vatican City, August 17 (RHC)-- Pope Francis is on the side of victims of more than 300 “predator” priests in the U.S. accused of abusing children in one state, the Vatican says. In a statement, it said the Church wanted to listen to the victims to “root out this tragic horror”.

This comes after U.S. prosecutors found that more than 1,000 children had been molested by clergy in Pennsylvania.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is now calling for an urgent investigation led by the Vatican.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the group's president, called the scandal a “failure of episcopal leadership”. It comes days after the largest-ever probe of Catholic sex abuse in the United States.

The report from a Pennsylvania grand jury found that 301 priests abused children in the state over the past 70 years.

It also found that some abusers and those that covered up their crimes were later elevated to senior roles in the church.

Cardinal DiNardo of Texas said in a statement on Thursday - two days after the report was issued - that the church is now "faced with a spiritual crisis that requires not only spiritual conversion, but practical changes to avoid repeating the sins and failures that are so evident in this recent report".

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