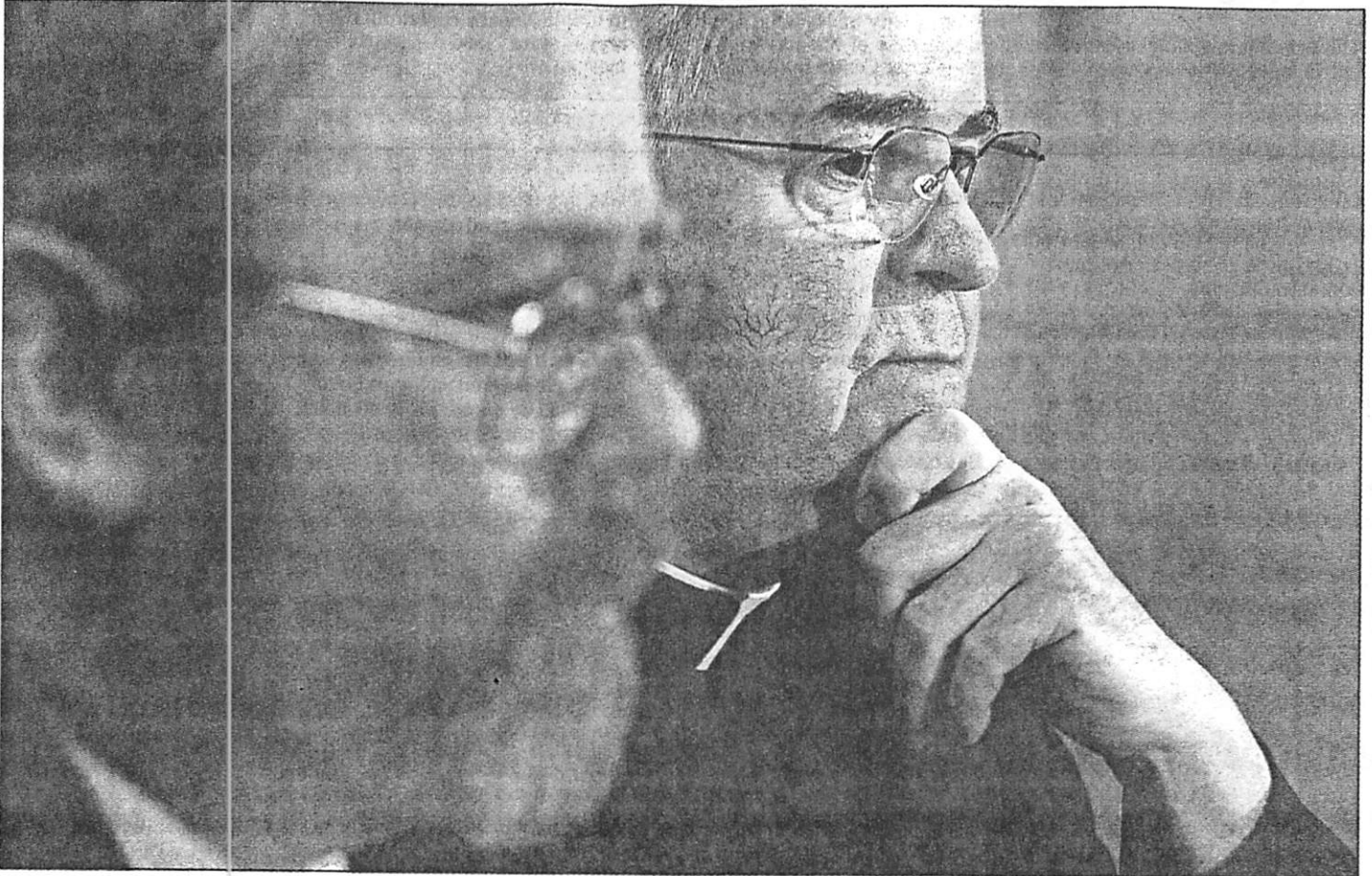


"I know (some parishioners) feel betrayed."

Archbishop Thomas Kelly

Kelly discusses abuse cases



BY MICHAEL CLEVENGER, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Archbishop Thomas Kelly, right, made his first public comments about allegations of sexual abuse by priests at a news conference yesterday. With him was Brian Reynolds, chief administrative officer for the Archdiocese of Louisville.

Archbishop says more allegations received

By **PETER SMITH**
psmith@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

Catholic officials in Louisville continue to receive allegations of past sexual abuse by priests, beyond those outlined in 32 recent lawsuits against the archdiocese, Archbishop Thomas Kelly said yesterday.

The archdiocese is deciding whether it will publicly disclose some of those allegations, Kelly said in his first public comments since the nationwide scandal over clergy sexual abuse hit Louisville last month.

Speaking at archdiocesan headquarters, Kelly said that aiding victims of abuse is "our primary concern" and that the church is working to prevent future abuse.

The archbishop did not discuss specifics about six current or former priests accused of abuse in lawsuits filed against the archdiocese since mid-April.

But asked whether there are other active priests who have faced allegations that their parishioners would want to know about, Kelly said, "We'll be having a couple of conversations."

Brian Reynolds, chief administrative

officer for the archdiocese, said church officials "are hearing literally every day from parishioners and parishes asking questions about individual priests. Priests are asking questions about themselves. This is an active ongoing process now. We'll take them one at a time."

The archdiocese is also now informing all people who report abuse of their right to report the matters to police, Reynolds said.

Kelly said it is too soon to predict

See LOUISVILLE
Page 8, col. 1, this section

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2002

THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Louisville archbishop discusses abuse allegations against priests

Continued from Page One

the potential financial impact on the archdiocese from 32 lawsuits filed against it in the past month, alleging abuse by priests and a teacher. But he said the worst impact is a feeling by some parishioners that the church has let them down, particularly in congregations with current or former priests accused of abuse.

"I know they feel betrayed, and I somehow feel that I somehow very unwillingly have been part of that betrayal and of their pain," Kelly said in a news conference at archdiocesan headquarters. "We promise to work with each one of those parishes to determine how best to deal with them."

Kelly and Reynolds said the church

is reviewing allegations it has received in recent weeks.

The only active priest accused in a recent lawsuit, the Rev. Thomas Creagh, resigned this week as pastor of Holy Family Church after parishioners complained they should have been told about a 1982 allegation that came to light in a lawsuit filed last week. The suit accuses the archdiocese of reneging on an agreement to keep Creagh out of ministry with children — an allegation disputed by Kelly, who was archbishop at the time of the accusation. Creagh was accused of sexual abuse in 1983 in another suit filed yesterday.

Kelly said he and his colleagues knew little about pedophilia 30 years ago.

"I don't think (my predecessors) understood anything about the psychological dimensions of this."

Archbishop Thomas Kelly

"We knew there were some moral lapses, but we treated them (by telling an alleged offender to) go on retreat and come back and maybe go to a different assignment," said Kelly,

who has led the diocese since 1982. "I think that's what my predecessors did. I don't think they understood anything about the psychological dimensions of this. We saw only the moral side of it."

While not commenting on pending lawsuits, Kelly said: "If we knew then what we know now, it could have been prevented. I feel very sad that we didn't know it."

In more than a dozen lawsuits accusing retired priest Louis E. Miller of abuse in the 1960s and 1970s, plaintiffs allege the archdiocese assigned Miller to at least four parishes and a hospital chaplaincy despite knowledge of abuse. Bishop Charles Maloney confirmed to The Courier-Journal last week that he had passed on a

complaint of unspecified misconduct to a previous archbishop in the early 1960s.

Kelly also said he laments that innocent priests are being stigmatized, citing the case of one priest who heard one woman tell another, "Watch your children."

"I find this to be very painful indeed. Our priests have given their lives in the service of their people," he said. "To have this all called into question is . . . the most painful thing after" the victims' suffering.

Kelly said he respects the right of people to sue the archdiocese if they choose to, though he repeated earlier invitations that anyone who believes they have been abused come and talk with church officials.

He said that once a lawsuit is filed, court procedure forbids archdiocesan officials from talking directly to accusers, making it difficult to offer pastoral ministry. But he said he respects those legal boundaries.

Kelly cautioned against oversimplifying the issue, saying it is difficult to put into one category various types of allegations.

"When you've seen one case of child abuse, you've seen one case," he said.

He said the archdiocese has not received any allegations of a priest molesting a child after 1993, when the archdiocese implemented policies on preventing and responding to abuse. All allegations involve incidents in earlier decades.