

# BISHOPACCOUNTABILITY'S REPORT ON POPE FRANCIS

According to BishopAccountability.org, "He [the pope when he was a bishop in Argentina] released no documents, no names of accused priests, no tallies of accused priests, no policy for handling abuse, not even an apology to victims."

The report excerpts a quote from a 2010 interview where Archbishop Bergoglio was asked about pedophilia. In part, he responded by saying, "in my diocese it never happened to me." What the report left out was his condemnation of pedophilia, and his criticism of the way some bishops handled the problem of sexual abuse.

BishopAccountability highlights five cases where Bergoglio may have had knowledge of abuse allegations, but it is clear that it has no evidence that he knew about any of these cases. Moreover, only one of the priests was an archdiocesan priest from Buenos Aires (more on him below); two were religious order priests and two were from other dioceses.

The report estimates that between 1950 and 2013, "more than 100 Buenos Aires archdiocesan priests offended against children." Again, the report cites no evidence for this claim. It further undermines its credibility when it makes a strained analogy: it compares the size of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires to the number of priests accused in the dioceses of Manchester, Providence, and Los Angeles. Even a high school dropout would have chosen a Latin American analogy.

The report tries to sound authoritative by compiling a list of 42 clergy who have been accused of abuse in Argentina. Perhaps it thought that no one would check its own sources. We did. Here is what we found:

- Thirty-four of those priests had no connection to the

Archdiocese of Buenos Aires.

- One was acquitted when the allegations could not be proved.
- One was tried in the United States, and the charges were dismissed before he moved to Argentina.
- One priest admitted to abusing a 15-year-old in the Diocese of Quilmes, and was transferred to the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires to live.
- One priest was credibly accused in the United States, and was then assigned to missionary work by his order. He was sent to Buenos Aires in August 2013, after Bergoglio was elected pope.
- One priest was accused of abuse in Uruguay, and was then transferred to Buenos Aires.

Of the three remaining clerics, only one was an archdiocesan priest, Father Carlos Maria Gauna. He was accused of inappropriately touching two girls (he allegedly touched their buttocks) at a Catholic school, and was disciplined as a result. One was a Marianist brother, and there is no evidence that Bergoglio ever heard about, much less failed to report him. Finally, he is accused of commissioning a “secret” study of a Salesian priest, aimed at discrediting the accuser, but absolutely no evidence is provided to support this charge.

This so-called report is the most McCarthyite attack on Pope Francis that we have seen. We will be sure that the bishops learn of it.

**Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights**

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