

Pope Francis meets with abuse survivors in Ireland

Dublin, Ireland, Aug 25, 2018 / 01:21 pm (CNA) - Pope Francis met early Saturday evening with eight abuse victims in Ireland, during his visit to the country for the World Meeting of Families.

A statement from the Vatican press office said the pope met “for an hour and a half with eight Irish survivors of clerical, religious and institutional abuse.”

“Those present included Mrs. Marie Collins; Rev. Patrick McCafferty, P.P.; Rev. Joe McDonald; Councillor Damian O’Farrell; Paul Jude Redmond; Clodagh Malone; and Bernadette Fahy. One survivor, a victim of Fr. Tony Walsh, preferred to remain anonymous,” the statement said.

The pope’s trip to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families follows ongoing revelations of sexual abuse and cover up in numerous countries, including Ireland, Australia, Chile and the United States.

Upon arriving in the country, the pope **addressed the abuse crisis** in his first public speech, decrying “the failings of many” in the Church.

“With regard to the most vulnerable, I cannot fail to acknowledge the grave scandal caused in Ireland by the abuse of young people by members of the Church charged with responsibility for their protection and education,” he said to Irish authorities Aug. 25.

“The failure of ecclesiastical authorities – bishops, religious superiors, priests and others – adequately to address these repugnant crimes has rightly given rise to outrage, and remains a source of pain and shame for the Catholic community.” He added: “I myself share those sentiments.”

Pope Francis affirmed a commitment “to eliminate this scourge in the Church; at any cost – moral and suffering.”

This past week, the pope **issued a letter** to the entire Church, calling for prayer and fasting in penance for the evil of clerical sex abuse, and for reform in the Church.