

# Five accused in sex abuse scandal appear in court in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA - A March 14 preliminary hearing for three priests, a former priest and a male former lay teacher was recessed until March 25 by presiding Common Pleas Judge Renee Cardwell Hughes.

The hearing will take place at the Criminal Justice Center in Center City.

On March 11, the District Attorney's office requested that charges of conspiracy be added to the original charges against all five.

On Feb. 10, a Philadelphia grand jury released a report and a presentment following an investigation into allegations that two priests and a teacher sexually abused a 10-year-old boy at St. Jerome Parish in Philadelphia, and that another priest assigned to St. Jerome sexually assaulted a 14-year-old boy.

The presentment recommended criminal charges, including rape and indecent sexual assault, against a former archdiocesan priest, Edward V. Avery; Father Charles Engelhardt, 64, of Wyndmoor and an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales; an archdiocesan priest, Father James J. Brennan, 47, of Linfield; and a former lay teacher, Bernard Shero, 48, of Bristol. All four were arrested Feb. 10.

The grand jury also recommended charging Monsignor William J. Lynn, a former secretary for clergy for the archdiocese and current pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Downingtown, with two counts of endangering the welfare of a child in connection with his role as secretary for clergy, from 1992 to 2004. In that position, he was responsible for recommending the assignment of priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

He is believed to be the first high-ranking diocesan official indicted under a criminal statute in the United States for charges related to the sexual abuse scandal that came to light in 2002.