

Irish priest uses Nixon quote to describe church after abuse scandal

DUBLIN, Ireland - A Redemptorist priest has used a quote by the 37th president of the United States to describe the situation of the Catholic Church as the Irish clerical sex abuse scandal continues to unfold.

Writing in the current issue of the monthly Redemptorist magazine *Reality*, its editor, Father Gerry Moloney, recalled remarks former President Richard Nixon made in an interview with journalist David Frost when, admitting that he had given his enemies the ammunition that they were looking for, he said, "I gave 'em a sword."

Father Moloney was writing about the plight of the Catholic Church in Ireland in the wake of the publication of the Ryan report, which detailed decades of abuse by children in residential institutions run by religious orders. He said the church's troubles will increase when a report is published on how the Dublin Archdiocese dealt with clerical child abuse allegations.

"There is no doubt the church has brought a lot of its troubles on itself," he said.

"Like Nixon, it has given its critics plenty of ammunition. Like Nixon, you could say the church 'gave 'em a sword, and they stuck it in and they twisted it with relish.'

"The sword, of course, has been the long litany of scandals that have unfolded over the last 15 years or more," the priest wrote. "Scandals to do with the physical and sexual abuse of children; scandals to do with the breaking of vows and the breaching of a sacred trust; scandals that revealed a glaring contradiction between what some church people professed and what they practiced; scandals that have led to the publication of devastating reports into abuses in the Diocese of Ferns and Dublin and to the Ryan report, with its account of the appalling mistreatment of thousands of children by priests and religious."

The Ryan report was published in May, and the report on abuses in the Diocese of Ferns was published in 2005. The report on the Archdiocese of Dublin was expected

earlier this year but has not yet been released.

The church's enemies have been "sticking in the sword and twisting it with relish," Father Moloney said, adding, "It's hard to blame them."