

# The Star-Ledger

## **Calls to clergy abuse hotline spike after N.J. expands statute of limitations**

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More people are calling the state's priest abuse hotline since lawmakers expanded when victims can file lawsuits.

The New Jersey Clergy Abuse Hotline has received 568 total calls as of Dec. 9, according to the state Attorney General's office.

"More survivors have come forward," state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said during an interview earlier this month. "That's been a positive."

Starting Dec. 1, people who were previously barred from filing a lawsuit because the statute of limitations had expired now have a two-year window to pursue their case. Dozens of suits have already rolled in against local Catholic dioceses, the Boy Scouts of America and other organizations.

Grewal said renewed attention has led to more information about potential abuse.

"We are looking at every single one," he said about the new calls.

Even if a tip doesn't result in criminal charges, Grewal said new information could be incorporated into the state's ongoing investigation into sex crimes throughout the Catholic Church. That inquiry was launched after a grand jury report in Pennsylvania found that more than 1,000 children were sexually abused by hundreds of priests, including four from New Jersey.

Grewal said he hoped New Jersey's report would be finished this coming fall, in 2020, but that new information could push that timeline back.

The state's Clergy Abuse Task Force has filed two cases to date, according to Grewal's office.

A Phillipsburg priest named Thomas P. Ganley was arrested at the beginning of this year, pleaded guilty to second-degree sexual assault and was sentenced to four years in prison. A second man was arrested in September and later indicted on three counts of second-degree sexual assault, according to court records.

Both were "credibly accused" of sexually abusing a child, according to a list released by New Jersey's five Catholic dioceses.

New Jersey Clergy Abuse Hotline number is 855-363-6548.