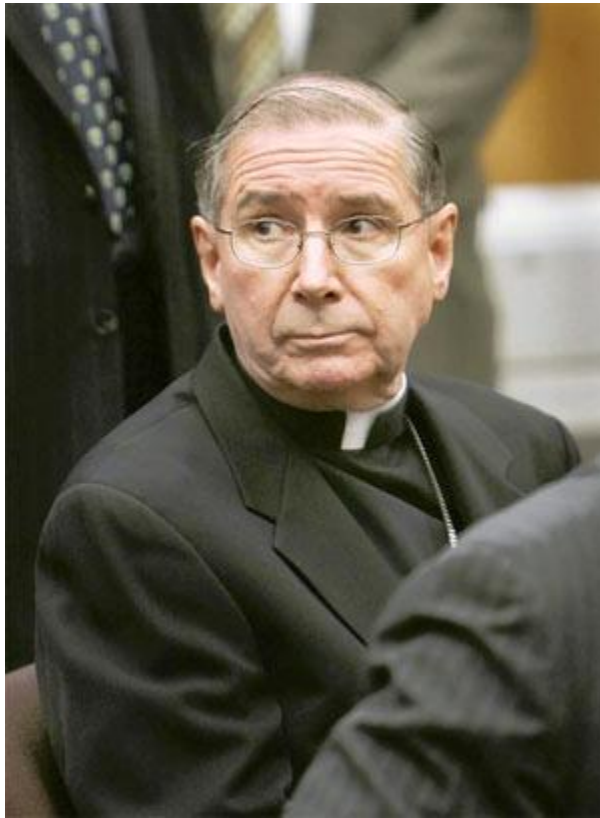


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New chapter in church sex abuse scandal is written in Cardinal Roger Mahony's final weeks



Cardinal Roger Mahony is retiring soon, but new details in the church sex abuse scandal have been revealed in his final weeks. One abusive priest was appointed to the sexual abuse advisory panel of the Los Angeles Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church. (Al Seib, Los Angeles Times / February 20, 2011)

- Steve Lopez



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A priest who admitted to being a molester kept his job, joined the Los Angeles Archdiocese advisory panel on sexual abuse, and contacted his former victim decades after the abuse. He was dismissed only this month.

By Steve Lopez

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Cardinal [Roger Mahony](#) is down to his last week on the job, but my invitation to the going-away party must have been lost in the mail.

Before His Eminence passes the torch, I put in one last request for an interview, to no avail. That keeps my record intact, but it's a shame because I had several questions about the latest scandal at the archdiocese. This one involves a priest who admitted he was a molester but remained in ministry. The good reverend was even appointed, if you can believe this, to Mahony's sexual abuse advisory board.

The priest in question is the Rev. Martin O'Loughlen, who was abruptly dismissed Feb. 10 from his post at a parish in San Dimas. The next day, another clergyman lost his job. Mahony accepted the resignation of Msgr. Michael Meyers, who was vicar of clergy for the archdiocese and directly responsible for vetting priests who are assigned to parishes.

These events transpired after a member of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests went to [the New York Times](#) with information about O'Loughlen's past, and the L.A. Times and other news organizations followed with stories. In reading those accounts, though, it wasn't clear to me exactly what Mahony might have known about O'Loughlen and when he knew it.

Here's the background.

While assigned to Bishop Amat High School in La Puente back in the 1960s, O'Loughlen had a series of sexual encounters with a teenage student in his debate class. Three decades later, O'Loughlen began leaving phone messages for his former victim, Julie Malcolm, who had moved to Phoenix. She filed a complaint with the diocese there.

"I am deeply sorry for our becoming involved and readily accept the fact that I was the responsible one in our relationship," O'Loughlen said in a letter to Malcolm in which he called himself a sex addict.

In the creepiest part of the letter, he wrote: "I sincerely hope that there were some moments of joy for you in our relationship."

Relationship? Moments of joy?

Malcolm was outraged at the suggestion and felt abused all over again. She said that the liaisons with O'Loghlen when she was 16 and 17 left her a mess. She felt intimidated by the priest, who was more than twice her age, and she was afraid to speak up, though she said she did report O'Loghlen to a parish priest, to no avail.

"I was a suicidal, crazy little girl when all this was happening," she told me from Phoenix, where she has retired from a nursing career with a stress-related disability after years of psychological trauma.

Malcolm said the first phone message from O'Loghlen, when he tried to contact her after decades, was chilling.

"I was making macaroni and cheese for my 4-year-old when the phone rang, and I ignored it. When I played it back, he said, 'Hello, Julie, this is Martin O'Loghlen.' I couldn't believe it. He said he wanted to get together with me. Get together? Like hell I would."

Malcolm sued O'Loghlen and his religious order, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and settled the case in 1999 for \$100,000.

And yet O'Loghlen did not lose his job. In fact, after psychiatric evaluation and therapy and an exchange of letters between Los Angeles Archdiocese officials and leaders of O'Loghlen's order in [Rome](#), O'Loghlen was quickly cleared to return to work.

"I am happy to tell you that there are no restrictions placed on your ministry," Msgr. Richard Loomis, Mahony's vicar of clergy, wrote to O'Loghlen on Oct. 10, 1996. "I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for your willingness to serve on the Sexual Abuse Advisory Board. Cardinal Mahony, Father Curtis Bryant ... and myself, all feel that you will bring valuable insights to the work of the Board."

Valuable insights?

Members of the abuse board, established by Mahony, were supposed to review allegations against priests like O'Loghlen. Did they think a molester would know how to sniff out other molesters?

O'Loghlen served on that board for about two years before becoming a pastor in the Philippines for five years. In 2009, he was assigned to San Dimas despite having been named in Mahony's 2004 "Report to the People of God" for sexual misconduct.

How could that have happened?