



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

"Crimen Sollicitationis" - A Charter for the Continuance of Abuse

Commenting on the latest revelations affecting Cardinal Brady, TUV Leader Jim Allister QC, said among the many shocking aspects of this matter is the fact that oaths of secrecy was required from the minor injured parties, guaranteeing cover up and protection for the perpetrator. "This was done", continued Mr Allister, "on foot of an appalling and secret document of direction from the Vatican, 'Crimen Sollicitationis', which appears to be still in place and which specifically directs such an oath of secrecy.

"It was issued to Bishops in 1962 by "the Supreme and Holy Congregation of the Holy Office". It states it is to be stored in the "secret archives" and is to be treated as "strictly confidential". It specifically tells bishops how to handle allegations that a priest made sexual advances towards a parishioner, particularly in the confessional. It speaks of transferring such priests – something which was frequently done in the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere. However, the document goes on to declare that these matters are to be pursued "in a most secretive way" and investigators "are to be restrained by a perpetual silence" and are required "to observe the strictest secret, which is commonly regarded as a secret of the Holy Office in all matters and with all persons, under the penalty of excommunication..." (para 11). Moreover, an oath of secrecy also is required of those accusing the priest and any witnesses.

"It seems to me that this document provides the link in the thinking of all those who hid the truth for so many years. Admonitions that information regarding accusations against priests are to be deemed "a secret of the Holy Office" explains much of the success in burying allegations for decades.

"During my term as MEP I investigated and pursued this issue, following the expose of Crimen Sollicitationis by the BBC Panorama Programme, but sadly the EU Commission was less than enthusiastic about pressing the issues with the Vatican. See [here](#) for further details and parliamentary questions."