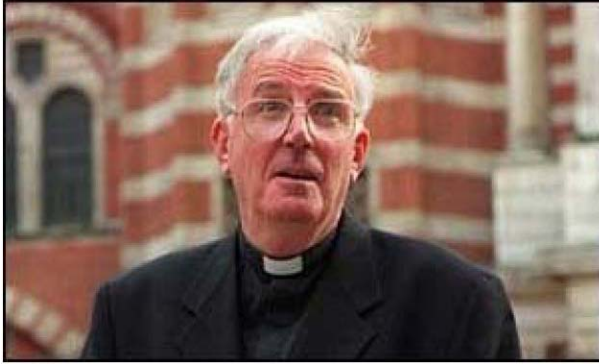




The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Police investigate Cardinal's role in priest scandal



Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor

A complaint by a member of the public to the police, following an investigation by the BBC Radio 4's Today programme, two years ago, into allegations of a "cover-up" of the evil activities of a priest, later convicted of offences against children over a 20-year period, has sparked a police investigation. The police have asked the BBC to provide details of documents, relating to an investigation into claims that the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac

Murphy-O'Connor covered up the activities of a paedophile priest. The reporter involved in the investigation, Angus Stickler, says that he has already responded to the police request.

The BBC are co-operating with police after being asked for 25 letters sent between the cardinal, the priest and health professionals.

The allegations relate to the 1980s, when Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor was the Bishop of Brighton and Arundel.

A priest was allegedly transferred from the area when accusations about his child abuse emerged. He was later convicted of offences over a 20-year period. Parents say they had told the church about the abuse, but the police were not informed. possible trial Angus Stickler, the Today reporter who carried out the original investigation, said: "We've responded already to the police request for information regarding documents we've seen. "Now it's up to the CPS and the police to decide if there's enough evidence to press charges, if any offence has been committed."

A statement released on behalf of the cardinal said: "Before the appearance of media reports Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor had no knowledge of any formal inquiry concerning moves 20 years ago of a former priest within the diocese of Arundel. This inquiry is apparently in response to complaints made by a particular individual. The police have never contacted the cardinal in this or any other connection." Mark Morley, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, said the church would fully co-operate if contacted by the police. Archbishop Murphy-O'Connor, 70, is the spiritual leader in England and Wales of more than four million Roman Catholics. He was made a cardinal by the Pope in February 2001.

The police have asked the Crown Prosecution Service for help in this investigation involving the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The Sunday Mirror has reported that Surrey police are trying to establish whether, during the 1980s, the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor knew that a priest in his diocese was a paedophile. The newspaper reports claim that the priest was transferred when allegations



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

about him came to light, but no contact was made with the police by the Roman Catholic church. A CPS spokeswoman said: "Sussex Police contacted the CPS for advice as part of their inquiries involving the Cardinal and we gave them advice." The spokeswoman stressed that this advice was confidential, and said: "We have not had a file from the police yet and I do not know at what stage the police inquiries are at."

Despite many claims of having learned from the mistakes of the past, Rome appears to be demonstrating again that maintaining an outward appearance of uprightness and propriety is considered by her to be more important than truth or justice for members of her flock against whom a great wrong has been done.