



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

US Priest jailed for sex-abuse



John Geoghan

A Roman Catholic priest, convicted of child sex abuse, has been murdered in prison in the United States. John Geoghan, a central figure in the Roman Catholic Church's abuse scandal in Boston, was injured in an incident with another inmate at the Souza-Baranowski Correction Center, in Shirley, Massachusetts. He died shortly after in hospital. Authorities say Geoghan appeared to have been strangled by fellow prisoner Joseph Druce, who is serving a life sentence and who will face murder charges in relation to the death. Geoghan was bound, gagged, strangled, and stomped by a fellow inmate who followed the notorious

child molester into a cell while one prison guard was distracted with other prisoners and another officer was temporarily away from the area, according to correctional officer union officials.

Thirty years

Geoghan, 67, was given a six-year prison sentence last year for molesting a 10-year-old boy. The accusations against Geoghan went back more than 30 years and documents which were revealed in court sparked the scandal which has shrouded the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. They showed that his superiors knew of the complaints against him, but they covered them up and moved him repeatedly to new parishes in the Boston area. He was believed to have attacked more than 130 children over the last three decades.

Shock

Churchgoers in Boston were shocked by the revelations about the extent of sexual abuse by priests. As the abuse came to light, more people came forward, alleging abuse by scores of other priests. More than 300 priests resigned or were removed from their duties as a result - including the Boston Cardinal Bernard Law.

Worst ever

The Attorney General, Thomas Reilly, who recently released a report into the cover-up of the crimes committed by the Roman Catholic church in the Archdiocese of Boston, said that the abuse was "the greatest tragedy to befall children — ever" in Massachusetts.