

Archbishop quizzed in sexual abuse lawsuit claims he didn't know it was illegal for priests to have sex with children in the 1980s

- Archbishop Robert Carlson was chancellor of the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul in the 1980s
- He has been deposed as part of a sexual abuse lawsuit in Minnesota involving the archdiocese and the Diocese of Winona
- In a testimony filmed last month he was asked whether he had known it was a crime for an adult to engage in sex with a child in the 1980s
- 'I'm not sure whether I knew it was a crime or not,' he responded

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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A St Louis archbishop embroiled in a sexual abuse scandal has claimed he didn't know it was illegal for priests to have sex with children in the 1980s, according to a court deposition released on Monday.

Archbishop Robert Carlson, who was chancellor of the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul at the time, was deposed as part of a sexual abuse lawsuit in Minnesota involving the archdiocese and the Diocese of Winona.

In a testimony filmed last month and released by the St. Paul law firm Jeff Anderson & Associates, the Catholic archbishop was asked whether he had known it was a crime for an adult to engage in sex with a child.

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Archbishop Robert Carlson, who was chancellor of the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul in the 1980s, has been deposed as part of a sexual abuse lawsuit in Minnesota involving the archdiocese and the Diocese of Winona

‘I’m not sure whether I knew it was a crime or not,’ Carlson responded. ‘I understand today it’s a crime.’

When asked when he first realized it was a crime for an adult - including priests - to have sex with a child, Carlson, 69, shook his head.

‘I don’t remember,’ he testified.

Yet according to other documents released by attorney Jeff Anderson, who is representing an alleged clergy abuse victim, Carlson showed clear knowledge that sexual abuse was a crime when discussing incidents with church officials during his time in Minnesota.

In a 1984 document, for example, Carlson wrote to the then-archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis - John R. Roach - about one victim of sexual abuse and mentioned that the statute of limitations for filing a claim would

not expire for more than two years.



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He also wrote that the parents of the victim were considering reporting the incident to the police.

Carlson's role at the time was to investigate abuse claims. He admitted in his deposition that he never personally went to police, even when a clergy member admitted to inappropriate behavior.

In the testimony, Carlson responded 193 times that he did not recall abuse-related conversations from the 1980s to mid-1990s.

Carlson also said that even in 1996 he did not know that pedophilia was a disorder that couldn't be cured. "I did not know that, but as a pastor, I was becoming increasingly concerned," Carlson said.



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Carlson left the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1994, and eventually became St. Louis archbishop in 2009.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis said in a statement on Monday that Carlson had given testimony 'several times many years ago' about the same allegations.

'In this most recent deposition, while not being able to recall his knowledge of the law exactly as it was many decades ago, the Archbishop did make clear that he knows child sex abuse is a crime today,' the statement said.

'The question does not address the Archbishop's moral stance on the sin of pedophilia, which has been that it is a most egregious offense.'

The trial against the Twin Cities archdiocese is set to begin in September.