

Mostly sunny

HIGH 40 LOW 19

SEE PAGE A-3



And the Grammy goes to .../C-12



EASTON AREA EDITION

The Express-Times

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Valley diocese reveals abuse

Catholic Church's silence angers local parents

From staff reports

Some Lehigh Valley parents are faulting the Diocese of Allentown for not being more forthcoming about priests who sexually abused children decades ago.

Following news reports of similar scandals in Boston and Philadelphia, the Diocese of Allentown reviewed its clergy earlier this month

MORE INSIDE

◆ Statement from the diocese. /A-2

◆ In Our View: Diocese should make public identities of pedophile priests. /A-10

and found substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct involving priests.

The diocese refused to release the names of the priests involved Wednesday. The Rev. Richard Ford,

Please see **PARENTS** /A-2

Priests face new image as potential pedophiles

By **JOHN A. ZUKOWSKI**
The Express-Times

A few decades ago, the most popular image of a priest was the easy-going, streetwise priest Bing Crosby played in movies such as "The Bells of St. Mary's" and "Going My Way."

But with the allegations of priests abusing children in Allentown,

Philadelphia and Boston, the image of priests as potential pedophiles is overshadowing the image of Crosby's friendly neighborhood priest.

The Catholic Church has a public image problem to battle now, said Larry Chapp, chairman of the philosophy and theology department at DeSales University.

"This is a real problem that hasn't been made up by the media," he said. "And there's no short-term or public relations easy solution like putting up a billboard or putting an ad in the newspaper."

The Catholic Church has released
Please see **CHURCH** /A-2

Five local priests molested minors over last two decades

By **EDWARD SIEGER**
The Express-Times

ALLENTOWN — The Diocese of Allentown refuses to identify five priests removed from active assignments after they were accused of sexually abusing minors over the past 20 years.

Diocese spokesman Matt Kerr said Wednesday that diocesan officials will not reveal names of the priests or the parishes in which they

served in order to "preserve the confidentiality of the victims and the priests." When asked if the diocese feels it has a responsibility to the community in which a priest may live, Kerr would only say that he could not go into any more detail.

"We're confident they are in a place where they are a danger to no one," Kerr said.

The priests escape criminal prosecution.
Please see **PRIESTS** /A-2

He shined on family, faith and equality

Mourners pack Easton church to remember Thomas "Brother" Bright.

By **RUDY MILLER**
The Express-Times

EASTON — Thomas "Brother" Bright moved his wife and three sons to Easton in 1951 from Bronx, N.Y. According to his biography,

every phone call he started with "God bless you — Brother Bright. I love you."

Bright moved his wife and three sons to Easton in 1951 from Bronx, N.Y. According to his biography,



...Wednesday on South Side. Mourners sitting in folding chairs lined the aisles along the rear and sides of Union A.M.E. Church for Bright's funeral. Bright, a local civil rights leader described by some as Easton's version of Martin Luther King Jr., died Friday at age 90.

The church was so crowded that some people were forced to listen to the noon service through a sound system in the basement.

"I knew him as a man who loved God," said Waltar Bright, Bright's only surviving son. "He showed it in every conversation, every visit,

handed out at the funeral, he moved due to the "changing personality of his sons."

"You know what that means, don't you? We were bad," Waltar Bright said.

He said his father did everything he could to make a better life for Waltar's two brothers and the twin sisters who were born in Easton.

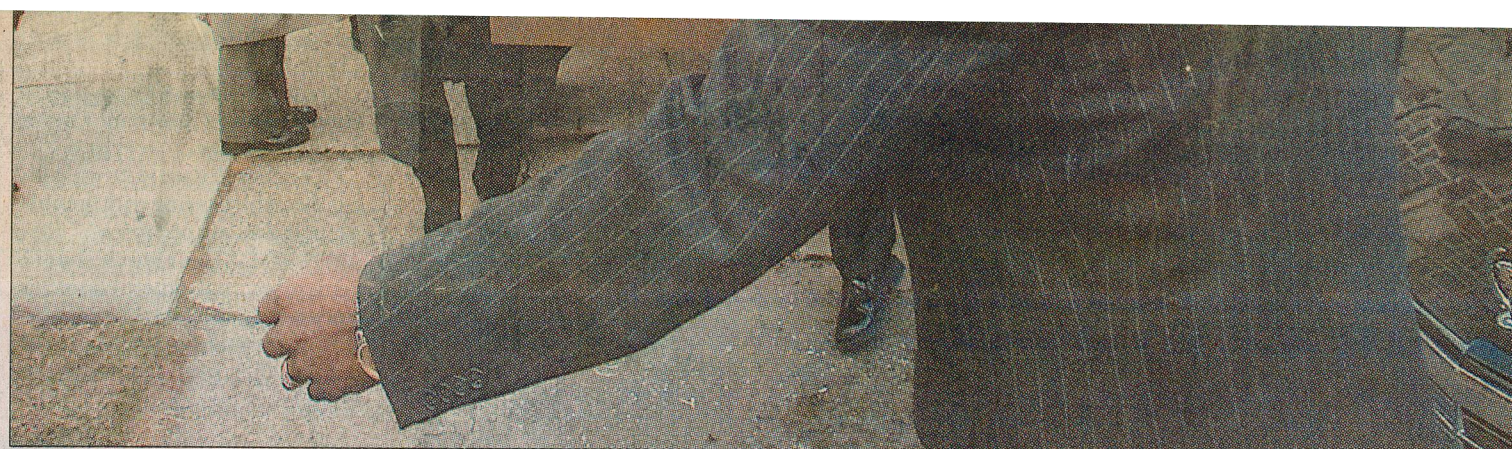
Little did the Bright family know Thomas "Brother" Bright's influence would be felt far beyond their household.

Many young black leaders from Easton credit Bright with encouraging them to make a better life for Waltar's two brothers and the twin sisters who were born in Easton.

Please see **BRIGHT /A-2**

INSIDE

- ◆ 'Brother' changed city forever. Tony Rhodin column./B-1
- ◆ Calling 'Big Daddy' home. The day in pictures./A-12



Express-Times photo/BRUCE WINTER

At Thomas "Brother" Bright's request, an NAACP banner was draped over his casket during the funeral Wednesday at Union A.M.E. Church in Easton. Bright, a local civil rights leader described by some as Easton's version of Martin Luther King Jr., died Friday at age 90. More photos on Page A-12.

U.S. seeks kin's DNA to tell if Osama is dead

By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. government is seeking samples of DNA from Osama bin Laden's family to determine if human remains found in Afghanistan belong to the terrorist leader, government sources said Wednesday.

Human remains have been collected from a number of U.S. airstrike sites, including the site of a Feb. 4 CIA Predator missile strike on a meeting of suspected al-Qaida leaders, the sources said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

U.S. officials have been seeking the DNA samples from bin Laden's family for months, but recently stepped up the effort following the Predator strike, one source said.

The wealthy bin Laden family of Saudi Arabia has disowned the terrorist leader.

Tim Metz, a family spokesman in New York, said he was unaware of

Please see **DNA /A-4**

Time for a story



Express-Times photo/JOE GILL

Peter Rabbit's romp through Mr. McGregor's garden excites Nafsikaa Sekkidou-Mueller, 4, of Easton as Moravian Book Shop employee Jane Clugston of Bethlehem leads story time Wednesday at the Bethlehem store.

Council, housing board agree to work out a plan

By KURT BRESSWEIN
The Express-Times

EASTON — City council heard details of two plans to repair houses and increase home ownership during a contentious public hearing Wednesday.

In the end, council members agreed with city administrators and a public-private committee — the two sources of the proposals — to "sit down and hammer out a plan," as Councilman Mike Fleck put it.

Fleck sat on the committee with council Vice President Sandra Vulcano and nine housing proponents and bank officials. The panel presented its five-year plan to council Feb. 13. City administrators, whom committee members did not invite to help draft the plan, gave council their own list of housing initiatives Tuesday.

"If they had served on the committee or been part of the committee, I think the group would have been here tonight (with

one plan ... instead of having two separate plans," Councilman Burns Bamford said.

Councilman Dan Corpora said he shares Bamford's interest in compromising the plans into one.

"If the result of this hearing is to increase programs, we will come out winners,"

"If the result of this hearing is to increase programs, we will come out winners."

Tim Pickel,
council president

council President Tim Pickel said. Council members, who could simply pass laws to make the committee's proposals into city policies, noted the time has come to increase the housing programs available to residents.

Mayor Thomas Goldsmith, who would have to approve those laws, voiced concerns that some of the proposals conflict with existing city programs and could violate state law in how they would be funded.

Fleck cited research he said proves the funding would be legal.

Tensions between Goldsmith and council rose immediately after roll call — minutes into the meeting and before the public

Please see **HOUSING /A-4**

INSIDE

Alive!	C-10	Famous Faces	A-3	Opinion	A-10
Ann Landers	C-11	Local	B-1	Our Town	B-4
Bridge	C-11	Lotteries	A-2	Scoreboard	C-4
Classifieds	D-1	Money	C-7	Sports	C-1
Comics	C-6	Movies	A-8	Stocks	C-8, 9
Crosswords	A-8	Obituaries	B-5, 6, 7, 8	TV	A-8

No stopping him
Marine who lost a foot in Afghanistan wants to rejoin fight.
A-9



State College bust
Western Pennsylvania ring brought large quantity of Ecstasy and cocaine to college town.
A-5



Flip side
Retailers and fans wonder why music industry is killing off the single.
C-7

PRIESTS

Continued from A-1

ecution, as well, because the statute of limitations has expired. Northampton County District Attorney John Morganelli said Wednesday that the statute of limitations on abusing a minor is five years after the victim's 18th birthday.

Had the reported abuses occurred in New Jersey, however, charges could have been filed. Warren County Prosecutor John Laky said Wednesday that up until about 10 years ago, the statute of limitations in New Jersey had been the same as Pennsylvania. But now there is no expiration date on charges of abuse.

"(Pennsylvania) should address that issue as quickly as they can," Laky said. "We can prosecute someone 20 years later or 25 years later. That's the way it should be. There should be no protection for that person."

In a prepared statement, the diocese said it implemented a comprehensive policy addressing "sexual misconduct by clerics with minors" in 1998 when Rev. Edward P. Cullen was named bishop of Allentown. Lehigh, Northampton, Berks, Carbon and Schuylkill counties make up the diocese.

Allegations of misconduct are reviewed and recommendations are made within 48 hours of a complaint. If the diocese finds allegations to be credible, the cleric "will be removed from his assignment and will receive no further priestly assignments," according to the statement.

In 2000, the diocese investigated allegations against a priest that had occurred 14 years earlier, Kerr said. The allegations were deemed credible and the priest was removed from his assignment, he said.

Following similar investigations and scandals in Boston and Philadelphia, the diocese met Feb. 7 and decided to review all active priests. The review showed four active priests had "engaged in sexual misconduct with minors" about 20 years ago. Under the policy adopted in 1998, the diocese removed the priests, Kerr said.

When asked why they had been allowed to return to service, Kerr said the four priests had undergone psychological evaluations and were deemed "suitable to return to min-

STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN

This statement is in response to media inquiries into whether the Diocese of Allentown has taken any action regarding sexual misconduct by priests with minors in light of the recent developments in the Archdiocese of Boston. Unfortunately and tragically, in the Diocese of Allentown there have been priests who violated the trust of their priestly office by sexually abusing minors. The reality of such sexual misconduct by priests constitutes the darkest hours in the history of the diocese. Hopefully this response will clarify the current state of priests on active assignments as well as the policy and operative principles, which led to this status.

In 1998 when the Most Reverend Edward P. Cullen was installed as the Bishop of Allentown, he established a comprehensive policy that addresses sexual misconduct by clerics with minors. The policy calls for a review of the allegations and further recommendations within 48 hours. If it is determined that the allegations are credible, the cleric will be removed from his assignment and will receive no further priestly assignments. The policy calls for the diocese to work with civil authorities and to inform them, as the law requires in accord with the provisions set forth in the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Act. The Diocese of Allentown is committed to providing ongoing pastoral care and assistance with professional care for victims of sexual abuse.

No incidents of sexual misconduct by diocesan priests with minors have occurred since 1998. However in the year 2000, an allegation was brought against one active priest dealing with misconduct, which occurred 14 years earlier. Under terms of the diocesan policy, upon determination that the allegation was credible, the priest was removed from assignment.

The recent events that have transpired in the Archdiocese of Boston prompted a review of all active priests. This review revealed that four active priests had engaged in sexual misconduct with minors. The incidents involving each of the four priests date back at least 20 years. These priests underwent psychological evaluations and therapy. At that time, they were judged by those in various behavioral professions as suitable to return to priestly ministry. There is no evidence of any allegations of recidivism in any of these cases.

After consultation with and upon the unanimous recommendation of the Priest Personnel Board, Bishop Cullen determined that once a priest has been involved in the sexual abuse of a minor, he renders himself immediately ineligible for active ministry in the Diocese of Allentown. In order to maximize protection for children, it was further determined that this principle of ineligibility is to be upheld even if professional therapists judge a priest to be suitable for reassignment. It was in the light of this principle that the four priests in question are no longer in assignments.

There are currently no diocesan priests or deacons on assignment in parishes, high schools, or other institutions and offices whose history indicates sexual misconduct with a minor.

The Diocese of Allentown is comprised of the counties of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill. There are 268,681 Catholics in the five-county area and 210 active diocesan priests.

address the issue of sexual abuse, according to the statement.

"We understand that your children are your most precious gift," Gregory wrote. "They are our children as well, and we continue to apologize to the victims, and to their parents and their loved ones for this failure in our pastoral responsibilities."

As for investigating reports of sexual abuse, Morganelli said a case comes to the district attorney's office if it is referred there by the

pain, they abuse others, Bacon said.

As for allowing the priests to continue ministering, Bacon said molestation was thought to be rare 20 years ago. But a "startling statistic" shows that one in four women and one in five men have been molested before they were 18 years old, she said.

"Everyone knows child molesters," Bacon said. "We just don't know. Too many times, pillars of society are accused of molestation."

Joanne Ward, spokeswoman for the Diocese of Metuchen, could not

CHURCH

Continued from A-1

apologies for clergy abuse from Pope John Paul II down to some local bishops. However, it may take more than that to help boost the public's image of priests.

"Right now the church needs to stand up like a big boy and take its lumps," Chapp said. "The only way is for the church to address the issue head on."

One group pushing for serious change is the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests — a self-help group comprised of victims of clergy abuse. It says the church can improve its image by making some major policy changes.

One solution is to defrock priests who allow abuse to occur, said David Clohessy, national director of SNAP.

"We have seen over and over again that in almost every civil or criminal case filed against a perpetrator, the evidence shows that one or more so-called good priests knew about or suspected abuse but did nothing about it," Clohessy said.

Another problem is some states permit dioceses to handle allegations of abuse internally sometimes instead of through law enforcement, Clohessy said. In some cases, priests accused of abuse who are investigated and deemed not to be a threat can be delegated to other positions where they are closely supervised or don't work with minors. In the Boston diocese, priests with a history of abuse were reassigned to unsuspecting parishes, according to a Boston Globe report.

However, continuing to handle abuse matters privately could sully the image of priests even more, Chapp said.

However, observers caution against targeting the Catholic Church exclusively. The Catholic Church may make an easier target than some other institutions.

"People who don't like the idea of celibacy find the church easy to attack because they see celibacy as a problem, and the Catholic Church has more money than a small local independent church if someone wants to sue," Chapp said. "We have to remember abuse goes on with Protestants, in schools, on swim teams. It's not

BRIGHT

Continued from A-1

ing them to seek an education and for opening doors for employment through his persistence and protests.

"For me, he was 'Big Daddy.' I grew up with his daughters," said Christine Swint of Easton. "We respected everything he had to say. There was always love."

"He sort of adopted me as a son," said Preston McMillian, a pallbearer. McMillian said he drove Bright to church each Sunday until Bright's declining health prohibited him from going.

Speakers reminisced about Bright's kind heart and unbending will.

"He always told the truth, even though it hurt," Waltar Bright said.

Waltar Bright learned just how strong his father's willpower was when he decided to go to bed one night without washing the dishes. When the 13-year-old Bright woke up, the young football player was told by his father in a calm but stern voice, "Turn in your uniform."

"That was my first lesson in obedience," Waltar Bright said.

Thomas "Brother" Bright applied the same sense of righteousness to the Easton community as the NAACP's branch president. He organized a demonstration against a store that wouldn't hire blacks. Four months before his death he publicly criticized Northampton County Executive Glenn Reibman for not hiring minorities during his term.

Many local officials paid their respects Wednesday, including Reibman, Northampton County President Judge Robert A. Freedberg, Easton Mayor Thomas Goldsmith, Express-Times Publisher Martin Till and Editor in Chief

Joseph P. Owens. Several members of county and city councils and state government also made appearances.

"I called Brother Bright the Martin Luther King Jr. of Easton," said Easton Area School Board member Pat Vulcano.

Vulcano recalled Bright proudly wearing a Martin Luther King souvenir button Vulcano brought him back from King's grave in Georgia.

Proclamations from the national, state and local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were read at the funeral. Bright was past president of the Easton branch of the NAACP for 15 years. At Bright's request, an NAACP banner was draped over his casket during the funeral.

Burial was in Hays Cemetery. Bright held various jobs

throughout his life, including shopkeeper, cook, salesman and railroad worker.

"He was the type of person, he didn't have much but he gave everything. What he gave, he gave from the depths of his heart."

"He was the type of person, he didn't have much but he gave everything. What he gave, he gave from the depths of his heart."

The Rev. George B. Martinez

of Mt. Calvary Church in Newton N.J. "What he gave, he gave from the depths of his heart."

Along with family and race issues, Bright valued his faith. Bright was a trustee, superintendent of the Sunday school, and a 49-year member of Union A.M.E. Church. When he felt the spirit sagging in church, Bright would bellow, "Let the church say, 'Amen.'" Multiple speakers Wednesday invoked this phrase as a tribute.

"No matter what we did, whatever we were doing, he would never let me leave without praying," said the Rev. Al Jones, associate pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Phillipsburg.

"He's happy now. He's rejoicing now. One day we will be able to rejoice, too," Jones said.

Clarification

Easton police said Michael Hogan aimed a rifle at police in a standoff at his home earlier this week. Police said he fired a shotgun in the basement. The type of

in a story Wednesday.

Correction

About 80 former Laneco workers have not received their severance package from Supervalu Inc. An incorrect figure was published Wednesday.

The life of Thomas "Brother" Bright is celebrated Wednesday afternoon at Union A.M.E. Church on West Berwick Street in Easton, before he is laid to rest in nearby Hays Cemetery. Through song, prayer and recollection, the late civil rights leader is given a grand send-off by family, friends and admirers.



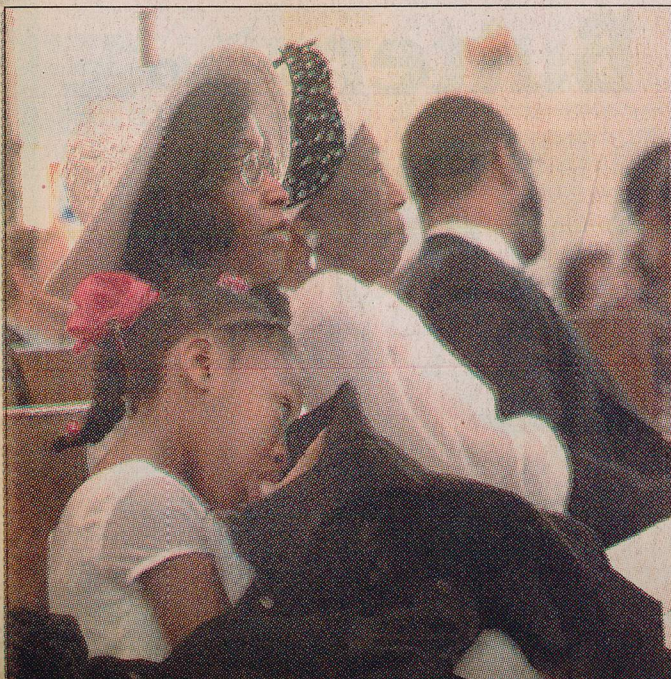
Express-Times photo / BILL ADAMS

Walter Bright and his sister, Samantha Bright-Burney, comfort their mother, Marian, during graveside services.



Express-Times photo / BRUCE WINTER

Flowers are carried from the church to the cemetery.



Express-Times photo / BRUCE WINTER

Angelina, 7, snuggles with her mom, Samantha.



Express-Times photo / BRUCE WINTER

Marian Bright prays along with the clergy in the Union A.M.E. Church.



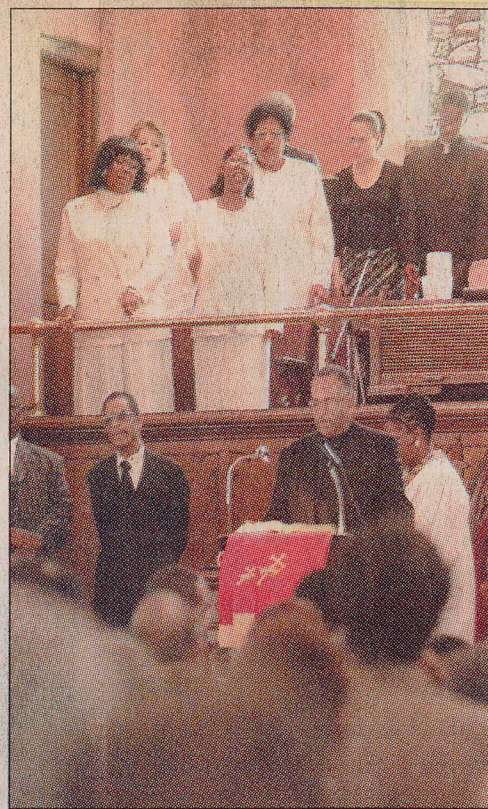
Express-Times photo / BRUCE WINTER

Bobra McAdams sings spectacularly during the service.



Express-Times photo / **BRUCE WINTER**

As happened often during the service, congregants applaud Bobra McAdams' singing.



Express-Times photo / **BRUCE WINTER**

Choir members lift their voices to heaven.



Express-Times photo / **BRUCE WINTER**

Waltar Bright lends his mother a hand.



Express-Times photo / **BILL ADAMS**

A short trip to Hays Cemetery and then a short walk to where "Brother" Bright would be buried. His coffin is draped in an NAACP flag.



Express-Times photo / **BILL ADAMS**

After the graveside services, congregants returned to the church to continue the celebration of "Brother" Bright's life. See more on Page A-1.