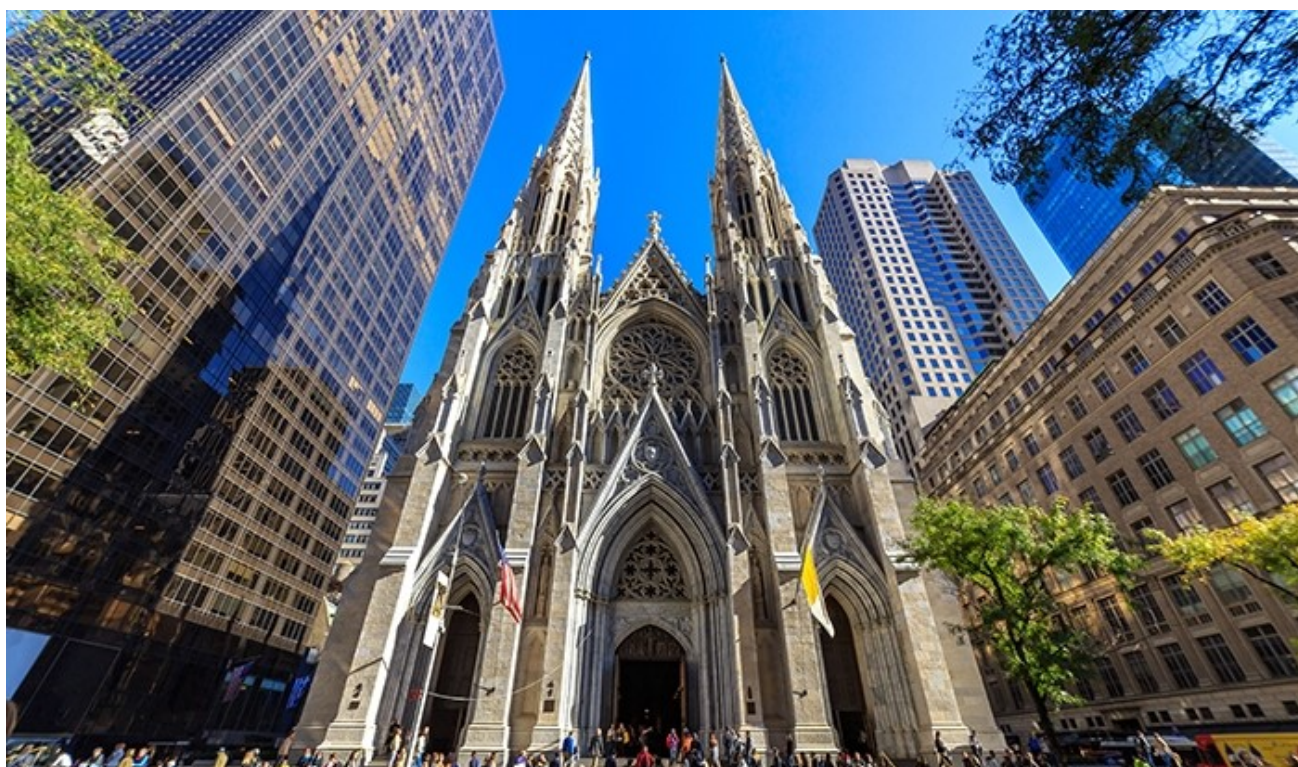


## New York Archdiocese sues insurers for sex abuse claim cover

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**The Catholic Archdiocese of New York has filed a suit against more than 30 insurers to compel them to provide coverage for sex abuse claims stretching back decades.**

In a complaint filed on 28 June in Manhattan state Supreme Court, the archdiocese said it is seeking three declaratory judgment rulings that could force the carriers to pay out for liability coverage periods dating back to 1954 for claims relating to alleged abuse by priests.

The lawsuit follows the passage of New York's Child Victims Act, a law which significantly enlarged the window during which child victims can seek civil damages for abuse. Previously, they could sue until they reached the age of 23, but under the new law they can seek damages until the age of 55. The time period for bringing criminal actions was also extended.

Litigation documents show that liability policies for the period in question for the archdiocese were underwritten by subsidiaries of insurers including Allianz, Markel and Chubb. Several policies were brokered by AJ Gallagher (AJG).

Along with a declaratory judgment that it is owed coverage, the church is seeking costs and damages. It is also specifically seeking coverage for claims associated with a lawsuit brought against the institution in April, alleging willful sexual abuse and negligence in the 1970s.

Across the period in question, the archdiocese was covered by liability policies provided by Chubb subsidiary INA Insurance.

Chubb has stated that it would not provide coverage for that lawsuit, which is described as the Norman suit in legal filings. The insurance company told the archdiocese in a letter that the allegations in question did not constitute an “occurrence”.

“[The] Plaintiff alleges to have sustained injury that was expected and/or intended from the standpoint of the archdiocese.

“Therefore, Chubb has no defence and no indemnification obligations in connection with the Norman Action and denies coverage accordingly,” the insurer said in its letter, filed with the Manhattan court.

The archdiocese’s lawsuit against its insurers comes after Travelers [in April reported](#) net adverse development of \$21mn, stemming in large part from the extension of statutory limits from bringing child sex abuse lawsuits in New York. The total adverse development resulting from the change was roughly \$50mn to \$100mn, Travelers executives said during a Q1 conference call. Other states in the US have also considered extending statutory limitations.

As victims increasingly come forward with sex abuse claims, other institutions are fighting with insurers over coverage.

In March a number of London market insurers [filed a motion](#) to have a case relating to 121 allegations of sexual abuse at a Catholic diocese withdrawn from a Minnesota bankruptcy court.

The diocese filed for bankruptcy in November last year after it was hit by 121 claims of historic abuse by clergy, according to a statement by Bishop John Quinn on the diocesan website.

Allianz, Markel, Chubb and the Archdiocese of New York did not respond when contacted for comment about the lawsuit filed on 28 June.

AJG declined to comment.

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