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Attorney for Plaintiffs

B.A., et al.

Plaintiffs,

vs.

BISHOP FRANK J. RODIMER,
et al.,

Defendants.

}
} SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
} LAW DIVISION – MORRIS COUNTY

}
} DOCKET NO. MRS-L-000106-04

}
} Civil Action

}
} **CERTIFICATION OF**
} **PATRICIA SERRANO**

Patricia Serrano, of full age, hereby certifies as follows:

1. I am the mother of Mark Serrano, who was abused by Father James Hanley when he was just a child.
2. My son first became involved with the Church through my family's participation, as well as that of my husband's, in St. Joseph's Parish. Our religion and faith were very important to us, and as a result, my husband and I each agreed that all of our children would be raised in the Catholic faith and attend Catholic schools within St. Joseph's Parish.
3. When Mark reached school age, my husband and I enrolled him in St. Joseph's Catholic School. At the time Mark was abused, Father Hanley was the Pastor at St. Joseph's Parish, as well as the principal figure at St. Joseph's Catholic School. My son became involved with Father Hanley through his enrollment at the school, which was where the abuse began.
4. The abuse that my son endured has caused my entire family much shame and guilt, especially to my husband and me. It has also caused great pain to my husband and I to the extent that we sometimes feel that our family has been profoundly hurt and that the sadness may never go away.

5. What is most upsetting to us is the fact that the abuse began because of Father Hanley's association with my son's school, which was a private Catholic school. Due to our strong religious beliefs, we believed that it would be in all of our children's best interests for them to attend Catholic school to receive a "religious education." We paid the tuition required for our son, Mark, to attend a private Catholic school.

6. When my husband and I sent each of our children off to school, we held firm to the fact that all of the teachers and priests, as well as all of the other administrators, would watch over them in the same manner that we watched over them at home, as parents caring for their children. My husband and I now realize that no one was in good hands.

7. Given our sons' involvement with St. Joseph's School, as well as their involvement with the Parish, all of our children, especially Mark, came to regard the school, as well as the rectory, as another home.

8. Perhaps what may be even more upsetting, than the fact that my son was abused, was what happened after he began to speak out about it.

9. At first, in March of 1985, before my husband and I ever became aware of the abuse, our son Mark went to Bishop Frank Rodimer. We later discovered that the Bishop, upon learning of Mark's abuse, took various steps to make sure we were never advised of it.

10. When we finally did become aware of Mark's abuse, we personally approached the Bishop and were assured by him personally that Father Hanley was receiving counseling. We later found out that that was not the case.

11. After Father Hanley continued to serve as a priest in the Diocese, our son, Mark, decided to see a lawyer.

12. After some period of time, Mark was advised that the Diocese was offering him Three Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$350,000.00) Dollars. Unfortunately, as a condition of settlement, we were told that not only would Mark have to sign a Confidentiality Agreement preventing him from ever being able to discuss his abuse in the future, but *we*, as Mark's parents, were *also* obligated to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, which would even prevent us from ever speaking about our son's abuse ever again.

13. We were all uncomfortable signing the Confidentiality Agreement, but we were all led to believe that our confidentiality was a condition which the Bishop insisted upon, and that if Mark, my husband and I executed the settlement agreement, then changes in the Diocese would be made.

14. Needless to say, we were uncomfortable with having to be silenced because that only seemed to add to our frustration and anger over what had happened to our son. We wanted very much to speak out about what had happened to Mark in order to insure that childhood sexual abuse by priests would never occur in the future.

15. We also wanted to speak out in order to warn others to assure that Father Hanley would never abuse anyone again. Unfortunately, in order to do what we thought would help our son, we begrudgingly agreed to the Bishop's request and signed the Agreement, and kept silent.

16. As a parent you always want to do what is best for your child and you want to always do what you think will help your child, even though sometimes you know in your heart that it is wrong. Insisting that my husband and I sign an agreement that would prevent us from ever discussing our son's abuse was *wrong*. It allowed Father Hanley the opportunity to abuse again and again and prevented others from being warned in the future. Mark, my husband and I, have since broken the agreement to remain silent. We are encouraged by what has occurred

within our society in the last couple of years and believe that it will only get better in the future. We are also overwhelmed by the courage it has taken for our son, Mark, as well as all of the survivors of childhood sexual abuse, to speak out and fight for justice.

17. I hereby certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

8/21/24

Dated:


Patricia Serrano