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Status Report on Clerics Accused of Child Abuse

Church law for the United States is very clear in regards to clerics who have abused children:

“When even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accordance with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.”

“If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He is to be instructed not to wear clerical garb, or to present himself publicly as a priest.”

“When an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.”

This is the status of the following priests of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

1. Administrative Leave

Administrative leave is the strongest action a diocesan bishop can take against a priest on his own. Priests on administrative leave may not celebrate the sacraments publicly, engage in priestly ministry, or present themselves as priests in any way. The Archdiocese will announce any change in the status of these priests.

- There are no priests currently in this category.

2. Permanently Removed from the Clerical State

Permanent removal from the clerical state means that in accord with canon law these priests are no longer incardinated in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and are unable to function as a priest anywhere.

- Keith Albrecht – was dismissed from the clerical state in 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI.
- Thomas Brunner – voluntarily requested that he be permanently removed from the clerical state. His request was granted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.
- George Cooley- was removed from the clerical state in 1998 as the result of an ecclesiastical trial.
- Lawrence Strittmatter – voluntarily requested that he be permanently removed from the clerical state. His request was granted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.
- Ellis Harsham – voluntarily requested that he be permanently removed from the clerical state. His request was granted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.
- Kenneth Schoettmer – petitioned the Holy Father to be permanently removed from the clerical state. His request was granted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007. He died in 2014.
- Richard Unwin – voluntarily requested that he be permanently removed from the clerical state. His request was granted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007. He died in 2016.
- Thomas Kuhn – removed from the clerical state in 2014 as the result of an ecclesiastical trial.
- Ronald Cooper – removed from the clerical state in 2014 as the result of an ecclesiastical trial.
- Thomas Feldhaus – removed from the clerical state in 2014 as the result of an ecclesiastical trial.

3. Permanently Removed from Priestly Ministry

After initially being put on administrative leave, the following have been permanently removed from priestly ministry at the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican. They are prohibited from wearing clerical clothing and publicly presenting themselves as priests. Expected to lead a life of prayer and penance, they are still under the authority of the archbishop and subject to certain priestly responsibilities including celibacy.

- Francis Massarella; died in 2014
- Thomas Hopp; died in 2014
- John Berning; died in 2004
- Daniel Pater

4. Other

The case of David Kelley was in process at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith when he died on June 6, 2009.

These are the reports from the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

1. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), USA Midwest Province

There are the priests with an established allegation of sexual abuse of a minor while ministering in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The year listed denotes the year(s) of the incident(s) in the reports.

- Mark A. Finan, S.J. – St. Xavier High School, Cincinnati, OH, 1964-1965. Additional allegation St. Ignatius College Prep, Chicago, IL, 1944. Dismissed in 1973.
- James A. Condon, S.J. – St. Xavier High School, Cincinnati, OH, 1965. Victim was not a student of St. Xavier High School. Additional allegation in St. Louis, MO, 1960s. Died in 1993.

- Robert J. Erpenbeck, S.J. – Jesuit Novitiate, Milford, OH, 1961 and Milford Retreat Center, Milford, OH, 1964. Died in 1986.
- Edward J. O’Brien, S.J. – Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH, 1958, 1971-1982. More than one allegation. Died in 1983.
- Donald O. Nastold, S.J. – St. Francis Xavier Church, Cincinnati, OH, 1999-2000. A single established allegation was received after his death in 2007.

Link to list: [Click Here](#)

2. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), Maryland Province

These are the priests who served in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati who had an established allegation of sexual abuse of a minor while serving elsewhere.

- Louis A. Bonacci, S.J. – Xavier, University, Cincinnati, OH 1994-1999 after multiple accusations dating to the 1970s-1980s. Removed from ministry in 2011. Left the Jesuits in 2014.

Link to list: [Click Here](#)

3. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), U.S. Central + Southern Province

This province lists no priests who served in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and have a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult

Link to list: [Click Here](#)

4. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), West Province

This province lists no priests who served in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and have a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult.

Link to List: [Click Here](#)

5. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), USA Northeast Province

This province plans to release a list of priests with a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult on January 15, 2019.

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