

April, 2002

Statement from the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland

The announcements by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland placing several of its priests on Administrative Leave reflect the Diocese's ongoing examination of prior instances of alleged sexual abuse of children. We remain committed to addressing this issue directly and openly. In this way, Bishop Pilla recently stated, all of us can become more alert to the dangers, more protective of potential victims, more pastorally responsive to those who have been victims of abuse, and more effective in dealing with those responsible for the abuse of minors.

We cannot undo the past. We cannot undo the physical and emotional harm suffered by those affected by past incidents. But what we can do is focus on the future. We will look at each circumstance as it comes to our attention and respond with appropriate and prompt action. In accordance with our policy, we will place any priest alleged to have abused a child on immediate leave pending a thorough review of the matter. Today we renew the pledge Bishop Pilla has made on any number of occasions: The Diocese of Cleveland remains fully and unequivocally committed to protecting all of our children.

Recent media reports have suggested that we are producing some, but not all, information requested by the prosecutor's office. Those reports are incorrect. We are cooperating fully with the prosecutor in his investigation of these matters, and we will be producing records responsive to the subpoena. The prosecutor has requested that we maintain the confidentiality of the grand jury inquiry. We intend to honor that request and therefore will make no further comment regarding the pending grand jury investigation.

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND

This announcement by Bishop Anthony M. Pilla is pursuant to his letter which was directed to the people of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland during services yesterday (Sunday, April 7, 2002) in which the Bishop stated, "The issue of sexual abuse is a matter of open and public discussion. While this is often painful, it allows us to address the issue more directly. In this way, all of us can become more alert to the dangers, more protective of potential victims, more pastorally responsive to those who have been victims of abuse, and more effective in dealing with those responsible for the abuse of minors."

At the time that the Diocese became aware of allegations of sexual abuse brought against nine of the following priests, in accord with our Diocesan policy and the understanding of the issue at the time, each received evaluation and treatment and was subsequently returned to ministry, where, to our knowledge, they have been successfully performing their ministries without incident.

These nine priests, along with Raymond Bartnikowski, against whom allegations were reported just two weeks ago, are being placed on administrative leave pending further review of their cases.

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| Russell Banner | Joseph Labbe |
| Raymond Bartnikowski | Joseph Lang |
| Gary Berthiaume | Joseph Lieberth |
| Donald Brickman | Anthony Rebol |
| Joseph Brodnick | Joseph Romansky |

Also, it should be noted that the following priests are no longer in active ministry because of allegations in the past of abuse of minors:

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| George Bailey | Thomas Luckay |
| Allen Bruening | William McCool |
| Thomas Burg | James Mulica |
| Neil Conway | Edward Rupp |
| Leonard Ferrante | Ronald Tomicky |
| Martin Louis | Dennis Wirks |