

Q&A on the disclosure of names

Q. Will the names be posted online? If so, where?

A. Yes. Information about clergy members who have credible claims of sexual abuse of a minor that have been substantiated will be posted on our website at www.dioceseduluth.org.

Q. The diocese was reluctant to release this list. Why are you choosing to disclose the names of offending priests now?

A. Appropriate disclosure is important if we are to do all that we can to keep children safe, help victims of abuse heal and maintain the trust and confidence of our communities. Most importantly, we believe these actions will further serve our primary goal of protecting minors. As the diocese reported a few weeks ago, the list many have sought was provided by the diocese to the John Jay Study in 2004 and used, for research purposes, to compile a nationwide summary of credible claims of clergy abuse of minors covering the time period of 1950 to 2002. It was not meant to be a definitive list and is an imperfect means for identifying those credibly accused. We have worked to try to name those credibly accused without harming those who may have been wrongly accused. In one case, the name of a former priest was included in the list provided to the John Jay Study solely on the basis of a single vague and ambiguous allegation that did not identify the priest by name. A subsequent investigation did not produce any further information or corroboration. This individual voluntarily left the priesthood prior to and not related to the allegation. As a result, the diocese is re-investigating this matter but is not releasing the former priest's name at this time.

Q. Media reporting has suggested there were 17 names on the list, and the diocese has released 17 names but said one is not included. Where did the extra name come from?

A. For reasons that are not entirely clear, the figure of 17 names on the list came into widespread use, but it was not correct. The list provided to the John Jay Commission had 18 priests.

Q. Is this the extent of the disclosure of names? Is it possible more names could be added?

A. The list is complete to the best of our knowledge, but we will amend and update it as necessary.

Q. Are these priests being supported financially or in other ways by the diocese?

A. All priests are legally entitled to receive pension benefits that have been accrued. Financial support varies depending on the individual circumstance. The diocese has an obligation in church law to ensure that no priest is left destitute. All of the living priests who have not been laicized are receiving their pension and retirement healthcare.

Q. Have any of these men been permanently removed from the priesthood (laicized)?

A. None of these men is in active ministry. Most of them are dead, and some have been laicized.

Q. What is the threshold for removing a priest from active ministry?

A. If the diocese receives a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor, a priest is removed from active ministry. These restrictions stay in place until an investigation determines whether or not the claim is substantiated. If a claim is determined to be substantiated, he will remain restricted until any criminal or canonical proceedings are concluded.

Q. What should a person do if he or she recognizes a name on the list and has concerns about further risks the man may pose?

A. Any concerns or information should be directed to the proper civil authorities, such as the local police. In addition, we encourage anyone with such information to notify the diocese at (218) 724-9111 or to contact one of the assistance coordinators listed in the diocesan newspaper or on the diocesan website.

Q. How much has the diocese paid to victims to settle civil claims related to clergy sexual abuse of minors? How have those settlements been funded?

A. Relating to the allegations covered by the John Jay Study, the diocese has paid out approximately \$780,000 to victims, about \$738,000 in settlements and about \$42,000 in counseling. A significant amount of that was covered by our insurance carriers.

Q. How many individuals have civil suits pending against the diocese regarding sexual abuse of a minor?

A. Currently, there are two lawsuits involving two people alleging that they were sexually abused as a minor by a member of the clergy who, at one time, had an assignment within our diocese.

Questions and answers were provided by the Diocese of Duluth.