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10 priests added to Bridgeport diocese's 'credibly accused' list

By Daniel Tepfer Updated 7:07 pm EDT, Monday, March 25, 2019

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An exterior view of Diocese of Bridgeport's Catholic Center.

BRIDGEPORT — The **Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport**, which earlier this week agreed to pay \$3.55 million to five people who claimed they had been sexually abused by priests when they were children, on Friday updated its list of priests who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse.

The updated list adds 10 names, eight of whom are deceased diocesan priests; one visiting priest from a Venezuelan diocese who spent the summer of 1991 in the Diocese of Bridgeport, and one living diocesan priest who has not served in the diocese since 1984.

The update brings the total to 38 credibly accused priests. The diocese also listed nine other priests who it has paid out settlements for abuse claims without determining whether the priests were credibly accused.

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"I am committed to remaining transparent and instituting whatever change is needed to better respond to those affected by abuse," said **Bishop Frank J. Caggiano** in a letter to parishioners released Friday. "I recognize that any restoration of trust will require a continued diligent effort on my part, as well as on the part of all of us who love the church."

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Added to the diocesan list of credibly accused are: the Rev. James A Gay, a retired priest who served in the diocese from 1959 to 1984; the Rev. John Draper, ordained in 1953, died 1966; the Rev. William Fletcher, ordained 1944, died 1988; the Rev. Martin Hitchcock, ordained 1951, retired 1991, died 2014; the Rev. James McCormick, ordained 1916, died 1965; the Rev. Bartholomew Laurello, ordained in 1946, died 2004; the Rev William R. Nagle, ordained 1927, died 1979; the Rev. Boleslaus "Bill" Rarus, ordained 1940, died 2005; the Rev. Paul Spodnick, ordained 1927, died 1976; the Rev. Jose Daniel Alberran a priest from the Diocese of Barcelona in Venezuela spent one summer at St Peter Parish in Bridgeport in 1991.

The diocese notes that the accused priest William R. Nagle, who served at St. Clement in Stamford and St. Vincent Hospital in Bridgeport, among other places, is not the same man as Monsignor William Aloysius Nagle, a priest at The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford from 1973 to 1998.

The bishop stated that the list will continue to be updated as ongoing investigations continue into past allegations relating to deceased priests or as other matters come forward.

In a report last October, the bishop said the diocese has paid \$52.5 million to settle 156 allegations of sexual abuse by priests since 1953. He also appointed a retired judge, **Robert Holzberg**, to look into claims that the diocese covered up priests' sexual abuse of children for decades.

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