

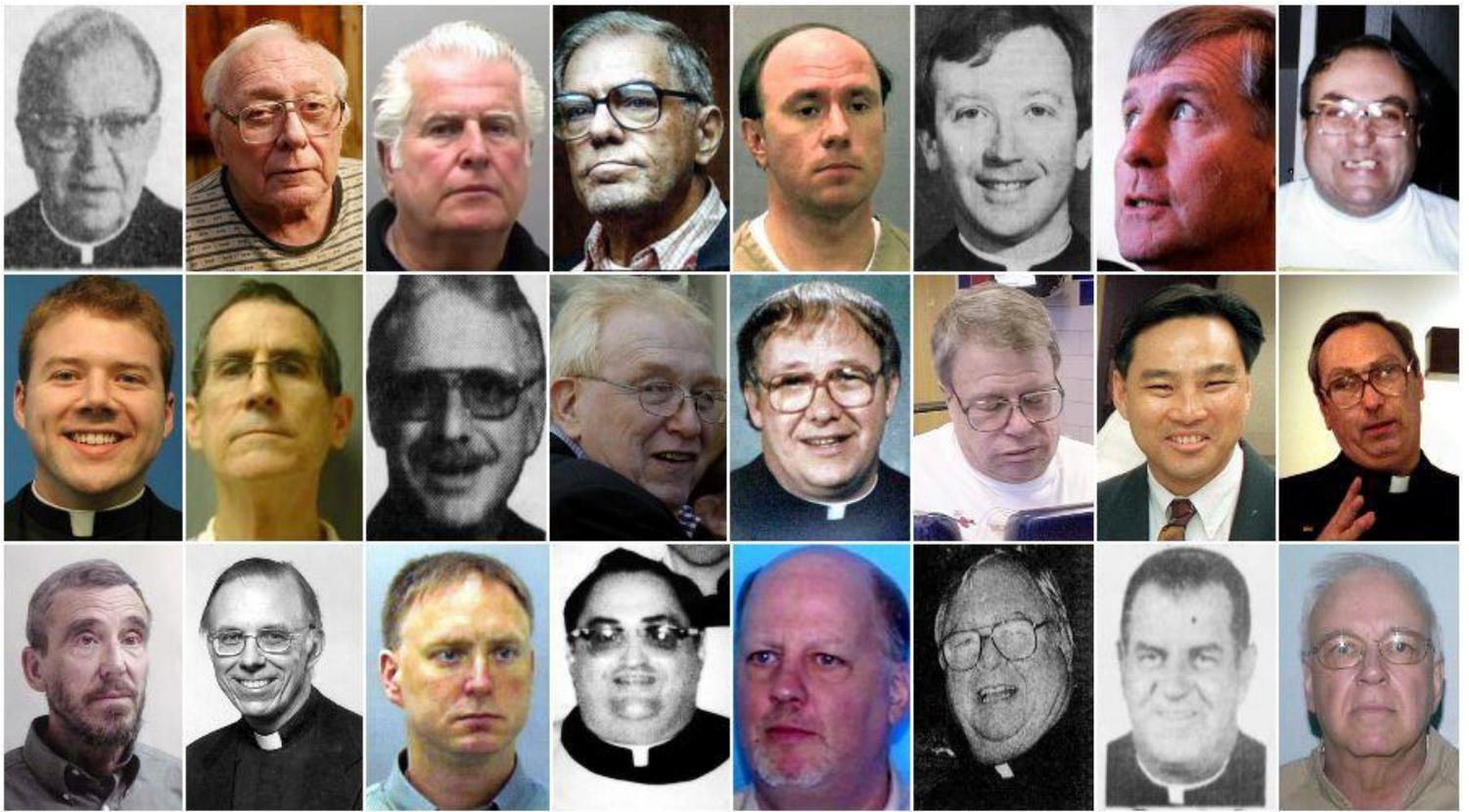
METRO

https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/list-of-clergy-accused-of-child-abuse-includes-never-before/article_5651ccc0-8bd8-5030-95b9-6c00260b76e2.html

List of clergy accused of child abuse includes 26 never before publicized in STL, church won't give details

By Erin Heffernan, Nassim Benchaabane and Jesse Bogan St. Louis Post-Dispatch Aug 5, 2019

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The priests on the St. Louis Archdiocese's list of priests accused of sexual abuse include: top row, from left, Aloysius J. Marschner, Joseph P. Lessard, Robert Johnston, Romano Ferraro, Bryan Kuchar, Dennis J. McClintock, John Hess, Victor Frobas; middle row, from left, William Vatterott, James P. Grady, Robert H. Babka, Thomas Graham, Hubert Creason, Leroy Valentine, Robert Yim, Vincent Heier; bottom row, from left, James A. Beine, James Gummersbach, Gary P. Wolken, Victor Frobas, James A. Funke, Joseph M. O'Brien, Glennon Goellner and Frederick Lenczycki. Handouts, screenshots of archive newspaper pages and file photos

ST. LOUIS — At the end of a long gravel driveway, in a remote swath of eastern Franklin County, a community of disgraced Roman Catholic priests sang in a chapel last week during a feast day Mass.

Vincent A. Heier, 68, who lives there, briefly stepped away from officiating. He told the Post-Dispatch that he didn't want to comment about being on a [list of 64](https://www.archstl.org/promise-to-protect/list-release) (<https://www.archstl.org/promise-to-protect/list-release>) clergy facing sexual abuse and child pornography allegations that the Archdiocese of St. Louis [recently made public](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-archdiocese-names-priests-credibly-accused-of-sexually-abusing/article_448215a2-c284-5395-b695-a5bbb64e5bef.html) (https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-archdiocese-names-priests-credibly-accused-of-sexually-abusing/article_448215a2-c284-5395-b695-a5bbb64e5bef.html). He started to walk away.

Told that Ed Fowler, an alleged victim, had accused Heier of abusing him as an altar boy in the 1980s, the priest turned around.

8/9/2019 List of clergy accused of child abuse includes 26 never before publicized in STL church won't give details | Metro | stltoday.com
"It's not true, but I am not going to talk about it," he said, before disappearing into the chapel.

At the July 26 release of the list, a spokesman for the archdiocese said "very few" of the names were being released for the first time. But according to an analysis by the Post-Dispatch, Heier is among 26 names previously unpublicized in connection with reports of sexual abuse in St. Louis.

Those who may recognize the new names as former counselors, school teachers, or officiants at weddings and funerals will find little other information. Heier's entry, for example: He was ordained in 1977. He is retired and has been removed from ministry. He is still alive.

Spokesman Peter Frangie told the Post-Dispatch that the archdiocese would not provide the names of parishes where the disgraced clergy members had served, would not say when the accused priests and deacons were removed from ministry, and would not disclose numbers of victims.

"The Archdiocese of St. Louis has been as transparent as possible with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch about the details surrounding the list release, while still being respectful of the victims-survivors," Frangie wrote in an email.

That makes St. Louis' list among the least informative of its kind in the country, said Terry McKiernan who runs the advocacy group Bishop Accountability. The group compiles a national database of disgraced priests and has tracked more than 100 lists of clergy accused of sexual abuse, released by Catholic organizations in the past year.

The lists were released after an explosive grand jury report by the Pennsylvania attorney general's office in August 2018, detailing abuse of more than 1,000 people by hundreds of priests in the state and reigniting tensions over cover-ups of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. After the Pennsylvania report, the Missouri attorney general's office promised a statewide investigation into clergy sex abuse; those results have yet to be released.

At the same time, Archbishop Robert Carlson announced the archdiocese would release its own list, a process that has taken nearly a year.

In light of the limited information released by the archdiocese, the Post-Dispatch compiled a database of the 64 names, adding details from past media reports, archdiocesan statements and court records.

[An analysis of the data showed \(https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/\)](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/):

- Only 14 of the 64 clergy faced criminal charges related to sexual offenses or child pornography. In total, 13 were convicted, though two of those convictions were overturned on appeal because of the statute of limitations.
- Seven of the men were listed on sex-offender registries.
- At least 22 of the accused have been sued by alleged victims; one priest alone faced at least 30 suits. The archdiocese has paid millions in settlements.

Fowler, now 48, who said he was 11 and 12 when Heier abused him, was bothered by the lack of transparency in the archdiocesan list. He contacted the Post-Dispatch last week after seeing Heier's name released for the first time.

Fowler said he first reported abuse by Heier in 2008, but it's only now that the retired priest is being publicly accused.

“For my own experience, openness and transparency have been more healing than hiding,” Fowler said. “The archdiocese as a whole would benefit from much more openness than just a list of names in the newspaper.”

‘Wouldn’t be believed’

Fowler grew up in a large Catholic family in Creve Coeur, attending St. Monica Church. He was an altar server there for Heier. Fowler said Heier first sexually abused him in 1983 at a servers’ picnic, held at what is today Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Shrewsbury.

“He had access because he was a priest who was responsible for organizing the servers,” Fowler said. “He was given a lot of leeway to have time alone with us.”

Fowler said the abuse continued for more than a year in Heier's residence at St. Monica's and inside the church.

"I don't remember specific threats, but I knew very clearly that I wasn't supposed to talk about it," he said. "And I also knew that priests were so revered that I probably wouldn't be believed, which is why it took so long for me to come forward."

Heier ran the archdiocese Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for 25 years



The Rev. Vincent Heier, director of the St. Louis Archdiocese Office for Ecumenical and Religious Affairs, speaks at a monthly luncheon meeting of the St. Charles County Clergy Association in October 1999. Post-Dispatch file photo by Larry Williams

([https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1cbda922c27acbf710d?](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1cbda922c27acbf710d?ref=view_161_search%3Dheier%26view_161_page%3D1)

[ref=view_161_search%3Dheier%26view_161_page%3D1](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1cbda922c27acbf710d?ref=view_161_search%3Dheier%26view_161_page%3D1)) and served at several churches, making stops at St. Hedwig, St. Ambrose before St. Monica's, and then Our Lady of Mount Carmel, according to a national Catholic directory.

He served most of the 1990s at Holy Innocents Catholic Church and school near Tower Grove Park, often alongside two other clergy who also landed on the list — Joseph P. Lessard and Deacon Fred Hummel. A priest who served at the parish at

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the time referred a reporter to the archdiocese. The archdiocese did not respond to questions about whether parish families had ever been informed.

In 2001, Heier's name disappeared from the national directory of clergy, only to return the following year at All Saints Catholic Church in University City, where he stayed until 2007.

Heier resigned as pastor of All Saints that year and was "relieved of his duties" at the archdiocese interfaith office, the archdiocese said at the time. The Post-Dispatch reported that Heier had condemned a rabbi who allowed two Catholic women to be ordained in a synagogue as priests.

The archdiocese said then that Heier had resigned "in order to devote his complete attention to personal matters." An archdiocese statement in the Post-Dispatch said Heier's departure from the interfaith office was unrelated to the ordinations, and that there had been no accusations of sexual abuse against him.

Fowler read that detail and decided to come forward in 2008. Heier was listed on medical leave in Catholic directories from 2008 to 2010.

Fowler said the archdiocese would not tell him if there were other allegations against Heier. He still does not know if the "substantiated claim" that put Heier on the list is his own.

'Bare-bones list'

The day the Archdiocese of St. Louis published its list, hundreds of clergy abuse survivors and their advocates were gathered in Alexandria, Virginia, for the first day of the Survivors Network of Clergy Abuse, or SNAP, national conference.

McKiernan, of Bishop Accountability, scrambled to place the St. Louis list on the screen for a panel in front of a full ballroom of about 300 people.

"There are lots of things you can say about it, but what I focused on is that it's a very, very, bare-bones list," he told the Post-Dispatch this week.

McKiernan said such lists are important. Every publicized name of an accused abuser helps support the victims and the people close to them. But more details, like parish assignments, are necessary, he said.

“Imagine aging parents in a parish, who have always wondered why their boy went off the rails and always led a troubled life and never really understood why things changed for him when he was 14,” he said. “If an assignment history is provided, they can look and see, my goodness, there was a priest in our parish who was abusing kids and the dates line up.”

The first similar diocesan list of alleged abusers was published voluntarily by a diocese in Tuscon, Arizona, after the sex-abuse scandal exploded in Boston in 2002.

Since then, Catholic institutions have published more than 130 lists. More than 1,600 names have become public since the Pennsylvania grand jury report last year.

“It’s really a remarkable change,” McKiernan said.

In a letter that accompanied the St. Louis list, Archbishop Carlson called it “an important step in the long process of healing.”

McKiernan argues the lists are also an effort to ward off law enforcement investigations, allow Catholic officials to claim transparency and may also be attempts to deter close scrutiny of each case by releasing a large number of names at once.

Elsewhere in Missouri, the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau published a list (<http://dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019FinalEMRAAllegations040319a.pdf>) in April that included the parish where the abuse allegedly occurred, the time frame of the abuse and when it was first reported. The diocese also gave an account of the total costs of legal settlements to abuse victims. That list included clergy in Catholic orders who work in parishes, Catholic facilities and schools in the diocese, unlike the list in St. Louis.

For example, the Marianists, who have faced several lawsuits alleging abuse at Chaminade College Preparatory School (<https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/chaminade-grad-sued-the-marianists-for-sexual-abuse-they->

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[moved/article_a2f0c33d-3979-54d5-a124-8acc98104d93.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/list-of-clergy-accused-of-child-abuse-includes-never-before-publicized-in-stl-church-wont-give-details/metro/104d93.html)) in St. Louis County, are not represented in the St. Louis list.

St. Louis-based Jesuits U.S. Central and Southern Province, which includes Missouri and southern Illinois (https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/illinois/jesuit-priests-with-ties-to-st-louis-named-on-sexual/article_209f6ba7-1033-5e66-a53f-1d965f807343.html), published a list in December that included work histories and the years allegations were made against each priest.

An archdiocese spokesman said this week that the religious orders will publish their own lists and “have more accurate information regarding those non-archdiocesan clergy.”

The St. Louis list also excludes priests accused of abuse elsewhere in the country who worked or lived in the archdiocese. Nine such priests, for example, were named in the Pennsylvania grand jury findings and had been sent to Roman Catholic facilities in the St. Louis area over the last 20 years, according to that report (<https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/report>). Many lived at Catholic facilities — like the one that houses Heier — that treat sexually abusive priests.

The St. Louis list omits the whereabouts of living priests, which concerned Barbara Dorris, a former director of the advocacy group SNAP.

“If you’re going to put out this list and it’s going to be useful, we also need to know where are these guys now and what are they doing?” she said. “Are they working near schools?”

‘Substantiated’



Anne Harter (left) and Lena Woltering of Belleville attend a press conference by SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) in front of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019. SNAP was calling for Archbishop Robert Carlson to post the names of clergy accused of sexual abuse on the Archdiocese of St. Louis website. The two women are members of FOSIL (Fellowship of Southern Illinois Laity). Photo by Robert Cohen, rcohen@post-dispatch.com (<mailto:rcohen@post-dispatch.com>)

The list also leaves advocates wondering: How did the archdiocese decide which allegations of abuse were “substantiated?”

According to archdiocese spokesman Frangie, substantiated means that “sufficient evidence exists to establish the belief that the allegation is more likely true than not true.”

To decide which claims were substantiated, the archbishop said he hired a consulting firm of former law enforcement officials led by former FBI agent Kathleen McChesney to review complaints and archdiocesan records back to the 1950s. Their conclusions were turned over to an archdiocesan review board before the names were given to Carlson.

Church officials have refused to identify review board members, saying they were mostly lay people not employed by the archdiocese, with expertise in child sexual abuse cases. Members “are promised anonymity to protect the integrity of the process,” Frangie said.

The archdiocesan review board does include clergy and archdiocesan staff, said Nicole Gorovsky, an attorney who has accompanied alleged abuse victims to hearings before the board. Every hearing included Deacon Phil Hengen, a psychologist and former director of the archdiocesan child and youth protection office, and Tom Buckley, an archdiocesan attorney (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tom-buckley-320b768>), Gorovsky said.

Gorovsky stopped taking clients to the review board about two years ago after finding the board’s questions “inappropriate” or accusatory, she said.

“After someone would go in and spill their guts, and it would be a raw, powerful experience, the results would be insulting,” she said. “They would come back and say, ‘We don’t believe you. Or they would say: ‘You’re the first person to accuse this priest, and since you’re the first person, we can’t say that this is credible.’”

Gorovsky and other advocates worry that the archdiocese is leaving names off the list, pointing out that the archdiocese was required in a 2014 lawsuit to turn over 240 complaints that had been made against 115 priests. When asked about the discrepancy between that number and the list of 64 released last week, Frangie said the 2014 court documents included all complaints regardless of credibility and also some made against St. Louis priests in religious orders.

But Gorovsky noted that archdiocesan priests who have been sued for abuse, like Bruce Forman, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in St. Louis, are not on the list. Forman was accused in a 1995 lawsuit of molesting a boy who was a member of a choir Forman directed in the 1980s. A court later dismissed the case because of the statute of limitations. The archdiocese said at the time that it did not have enough information to substantiate the allegations.

For Heier’s alleged victim, Fowler, the review board process was arduous and intimidating: He faced three priests on a panel along with lawyers and other board members. It took about two years in all, he said.

Ultimately, Fowler said, he was paid a five-figure settlement in 2010, described as a reimbursement for past and future therapy. In turn, he agreed not to sue the archdiocese.

“I mainly just wanted this to be over so I could move on with my life,” he said.

Fowler got an in-person apology from Archbishop Carlson. He said the archdiocese assured him that Heier would not have access to children.

Father Vincent



RECON, also known as the Wounded Brothers Project, is a long-term residential facility in rural Franklin County that helps "clergy in need," according to public records. Many of them are disgraced Roman Catholic priests. Photo by Jesse Bogan, jbogan@post-dispatch.com (<mailto:jbogan@post-dispatch.com>).

Today Heier lives at RECON, also known as the Wounded Brother's Project, a 173-acre property in rural Franklin County that is home to "clergy in need," including several priests who have been accused of sexual abuse.

Heier is able to leave the property. He owns a 2018 Ford Escape, according to property records. A resident at RECON told the Post-Dispatch last week that Heier was going to drive him to a medical appointment after he officiated Mass.

Heier also continues to be involved in history groups: “Fr. Vincent Heier” is listed as chaplain of U.S. Grant Camp #68, which honors Union Civil War veterans.

Walter Busch, of Fenton, secretary and treasurer of the group, said he wasn’t aware Heier was on the list before he was contacted by a Post-Dispatch reporter.

“I have always thought very highly of him,” said Busch, a former police officer. “He’s one of my favorite people to argue religion with.”

Heier is also active in the Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association, which meets annually at the Little Bighorn site in Montana and publishes articles about the battle.

Ted Heath, president of the group, described Heier as a Custer expert who once had a library of 4,000 books at All Saints and unique items related to Custer, including strands of hair, autographs and files of postcards. Heath said Heier told the group that he’d lost the church in University City, but that it wasn’t due to sex or money.

“He was very vague about it, and we didn’t push him on it,” Heath said. “We are up there to enjoy history.”

When approached this week at RECON, Heier denied Fowler’s claim of sexual abuse. He said he had an attorney, though he didn’t have his contact information or name on hand.

Fowler sees Heier’s denial as an obstacle for more victims. He remembered how hard it was to gather the courage to report abuse.

“The feelings of an 11-year-old boy versus the church is what I had to contend with,” he said. “I had lots of good support to do that, which not everybody has.”

Fowler attended St. Louis University High School. He then graduated with a degree in political science from St. Louis University and joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in New York.

After confronting the archdiocese in 2008, Fowler earned a master's degree in social work from Hunter College. He works today with victims of trauma in San Francisco. He is no longer Catholic.

“A lot of people are going to be surprised to see me come forward,” he said. “I am willing because I am not ashamed anymore, and I really hope that me coming forward to put a face to this will help other people who have survived sexual abuse by clergy.”

Fowler said the St. Louis list triggered one good memory: the relief he felt as a boy, working as an altar server at St. Monica's, when Heier finally moved to another parish. He was replaced by the Rev. Dennis McClintock.

Fowler spotted McClintock's name on the list, right below Heier.

[Allegations against McClintock have never been publicized](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1ccda922c27acbf7125?ref=view_161_search%3Dmcclintock%26view_161_page%3D1)

[\(https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1ccda922c27acbf7125?](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1ccda922c27acbf7125?ref=view_161_search%3Dmcclintock%26view_161_page%3D1)

[ref=view_161_search%3Dmcclintock%26view_161_page%3D1](https://www.stltoday.com/online/database-archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/html_4ed4ad20-3896-5f27-9a3d-58fb491bf259.html#archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy/archdiocese-of-st-louis-accused-clergy-details/5d44c1ccda922c27acbf7125?ref=view_161_search%3Dmcclintock%26view_161_page%3D1)). From the list, Fowler only knows this: He was ordained in 1973. He has been removed from the priesthood. He is still alive.

Clergymen never before publicly accused

A Post-Dispatch analysis found that 26 names included on an Archdiocese of St. Louis list of 64 priests and deacons facing child abuse allegations had never been publicized in connection to abuse accusations. The newly released names are:

- [Robert H. Babka](#)
- [Deacon Carl Beckman](#)
- [Don G. Brinkman](#)
- [Glennon J. Goellner](#)
- [Vincent A. Heier](#)

- [Bernard Huhn](#)
- [Deacon Fred Hummel](#)
- [John J. Kaske](#)
- [William A. Kelley](#)
- [Marvin C. Kopff](#)
- [Aloysius J. Marschner](#)
- [Dennis J. McClintock](#)
- [Russell Obmann](#)
- [Joseph M. O'Brien](#)
- [Albert A. Rehme](#)
- [Lawrence C. Schierhoff](#)
- [Michael W. Toohey](#)
- [Keith M. Westrich](#)
- [Francis Blasé](#)
- [Albert Bockelmann](#)
- [Maurice Byrne](#)
- [George W. Galovich](#)
- [James McLain](#)
- [Bernard O'Flynn](#)
- [Ralph Zimmer](#)
- [James F. Stauber](#)

If anyone would like to share more information about these clergy, please contact reporters Erin Heffernan, eheffernan@post-dispatch.com (<mailto:eheffernan@post-dispatch.com>); Nassim Benchaabane, nbenchaabane@post-dispatch.com (<mailto:nbenchaabane@post-dispatch.com>); or Jesse Bogan, jbogan@post-dispatch.com (<mailto:jbogan@post-dispatch.com>); or by calling the newsroom at (314) 340-8145.

Archdiocese of St. Louis accused clergy

The Post-Dispatch compiled this database of the 64 clergymen listed by the Archdiocese of St. Louis on July 26, 2019 as having faced substantiated accusations of sexual abuse. The fields for name, ordination, status and death were all provided

to the Post-Dispatch by the Archdiocese of St. Louis. All other fields were created from what information could be found in past media reports, public archdiocese statements and court records.

Name	Allegation
(John) Roger McDonough	Sexual abuse of minor(s), first allegation made after clergy death
Albert A. Rehme	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Albert Bockelmann	Sexual abuse of minor(s), first allegation made after clergy death
Alexander W. Lippert	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Alfred J. Fitzgerald	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Aloysius J. Marschner	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Bernard Huhn	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Bernard O'Flynn	Sexual abuse of minor(s), first allegation made after clergy death
Bryan M. Kuchar	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Dcn. Carl Beckman	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Dcn. Fred Hummel	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Dennis B. Zacheis	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Dennis J. McClintock	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Don G. Brinkman	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Donald H. Heck	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Donald J. Straub	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Francis Blasé	Sexual abuse of minor(s), first allegation made after clergy death
Frederick Lenczycki	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Gary P. Wolken	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
George W(illis) Galovich	Sexual abuse of minor(s), first allegation made after clergy death
Glennon J. Goellner	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
Hubert E. Creason	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
James A. Beine	Sexual abuse of minor(s)

Name	Allegation
James A. Funke	Sexual abuse of minor(s)
James F. Stauber	Sexual abuse of minor(s)

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