

STATE OF NEW YORK
SUPREME COURT: COUNTY OF QUEENS

<p>CHARLES PELLEGRINO,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plaintiff,</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH and ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defendants.</p>

SUMMONS

Index No.:

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANTS :

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to answer the complaint in this action and to serve a copy of your answer, or, if the complaint is not served with this summons, to serve a notice of appearance, on the plaintiffs' attorney within 20 days after the service of this summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York); and in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the complaint.

DATED: New York, New York
 February 19, 2020

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Attorneys for Plaintiffs



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TO:

THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN
45 Main St., Suite 1020
Brooklyn, NY 11201

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
13676 41ST Ave.
Flushing, NY 11255

ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY
136-58 41ST Ave.
Flushing, NY 11255

STATE OF NEW YORK
SUPREME COURT: COUNTY OF QUEENS

<p>CHARLES PELLEGRINO,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plaintiff,</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH and ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defendants.</p>

COMPLAINT

Index No.:

Plaintiff Charles Pellegrino by and through his undersigned attorneys, as and for his Complaint, alleges as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This action is brought pursuant to the Child Victims Act, codified at CPLR 214-g.
2. Plaintiff Charles Pellegrino was repeatedly sexually and physically abused by a nun who was hired, retained, supervised, placed, directed and otherwise authorized to act by Defendants, Diocese of Brooklyn, St. Michael's Church and St. Michael's Catholic Academy (collectively "Defendants").
3. Plaintiff was approximately six to seven years old at the time of his abuse.
4. Despite years of refusal to publically address rampant child abuse by priests and nuns, Diocese of Brooklyn recently published a long list clergy in their employ who were credibly accused of abusing children.
5. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church and Defendants have long known that substantial numbers of priests and nuns throughout history, and up to and including the present

day, violate their vows or promises of celibacy and otherwise misbehave by soliciting sexual contact with parishioners and others, in particular with children like Plaintiff, who are entrusted to their spiritual care and guidance. Official Church documents dealing with this unspeakable misconduct span the centuries, many of which were and are well known to Defendants.

6. Notwithstanding this knowledge, and the fiduciary duty and relationship of trust owed to parishioners and their children, Defendants negligently, recklessly, and willfully failed to protect Plaintiff from sexual and physical abuse by Sister Mary Jeremy, permitted the abuse to occur, failed to supervise Sister Mary Jeremy, failed to timely investigate her misconduct, failed to train minor students, parents, and/or adult staff about the risk of sexual and physical abuse in their organization, to identify signs of abuse, and to report any suspicion that a minor may be getting abused, maltreated, or otherwise sexually abused, failed to warn minor students and parents of prior sexual and physical abuse by clergy members of minor students, acted to protect their own self-interest to the detriment of innocent children, and are otherwise responsible for Sister Mary Jeremy's sexual abuse of Plaintiff, and Plaintiff's consequential injuries and damages.

PARTIES

7. Plaintiff is an individual residing in New York County, New York.
8. Plaintiff was born in 1953.
9. Defendant Diocese of Brooklyn (herein "the Diocese") is a New York not-for-profit corporation, organized pursuant to the laws of the State of New York, and which operated at all relevant times in Kings County, New York, with its principal place of business at 45 Main St., Suite 1020, Brooklyn, NY11201.

10. At all relevant times, the Diocese oversaw, managed, controlled, directed and operated parishes, churches and schools within the Diocese.

11. At all relevant times, Defendant St. Michael's Church (herein "St. Michael's Church") is a Roman Catholic Church, organized pursuant to the laws of the State of New York, and which operates at all relevant times in Queens County, New York, with its principal place of business at 13676 41st Ave, Flushing, NY 11355.

12. At all relevant times, Defendant St. Michael's Church was and still is under the direct authority, control and province of the Diocese.

13. At all relevant times, Defendant St. Michael's Catholic Academy was a Roman Catholic School, organized pursuant to the laws of the State of New York and located at 136-58 41st Ave, Flushing, NY 11355.

14. At all relevant times, Defendant St. Michael's Catholic Academy was and still is under the direct authority, control and province of the Diocese and St. Michael's Church.

15. At all relevant times, the Diocese and St. Michael's Church owned the premises where Defendant St. Michael's Catholic Academy was located.

16. At all relevant times, the Diocese and St. Michael's Church oversaw, managed controlled, directed and operated Defendant Saint Michael's Catholic Academy.

17. At all relevant times, the Diocese and St. Michael's Church oversaw, managed, controlled, directed and assigned priests and other clergy to work in parishes, churches and schools of the Diocese, including Defendant Saint Michael's Catholic Academy.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

18. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.

19. Plaintiff attended Saint Michael's Catholic Academy during the first and second grade, approximately 1959-1960.

20. At all relevant times, Plaintiff's teacher, Sister Mary Jeremy, who was also a Roman Catholic nun, was employed by the Defendants.

21. At all relevant times, Sister Mary Jeremy was under the direct supervision, employ, and control of the Defendants.

22. During the time that Plaintiff was a student attending Defendant Saint Michael's Catholic Academy, Defendants assigned Sister Mary Jeremy to be a teacher at Saint Michael's Catholic Academy.

23. By assigning Sister Mary Jeremy to the role of nun and teacher, Defendants gave Sister Mary Jeremy complete access to minors, including Plaintiff, and empowered her to discipline, punish, reprimand, chastise, expel and otherwise exercise complete authority over minors.

24. Sister Mary Jeremy's duties and responsibilities included supervising, interacting with, mentoring and counseling minors.

25. In the performance of their duties, Defendants authorized Sister Mary Jeremy to be alone with minors, including Plaintiff, and to have unfettered and unsupervised access to them on Defendants' property.

26. Defendants also authorized Sister Mary Jeremy to have physical contact with minors, in a manner consistent with providing discipline, counseling, educational and spiritual guidance, and leadership.

27. Defendants required students, like Plaintiff, to accept discipline and instruction from nuns and other clergy and teachers, and to obey their instruction.

28. Plaintiff was raised as a Catholic, and at all relevant times had developed a reverence, respect and/or fear for the Catholic Church and its clergy, including Sister Mary Jeremy.

29. From approximately September to October of Plaintiff's second grade year at Defendant Saint Michael's Catholic Academy (approximately 1960), Sister Mary Jeremy, acting in her capacity as nun and teacher, and in furtherance of the business of Defendants, engaged in unlawful, unpermitted, forcible and harmful physical and sexual contact with an intimate part of Plaintiff's body.

30. The acts forced upon Plaintiff by Sister Mary Jeremy were aggressive and violent and were done for the purpose of degrading or abusing Plaintiff, and/or gratifying her own sexual desire.

31. Sister Mary Jeremy's conduct was in violation of Article 130 of New York's Penal Code.

32. Plaintiff was threatened verbally and physically not to come forward about the aggressive and violent abuse he suffered by Sister Mary Jeremy.

33. Further, in addition to these direct threats, Plaintiff's relationship to Defendants as a vulnerable child and student, and the culture of the Catholic Church which Defendants endorsed, put pressure on Plaintiff not to report Sister Mary Jeremy's abuse.

34. Defendants knew or should have known that Sister Mary Jeremy was a danger to minors like Plaintiff before she sexually abused Plaintiff.

35. The Vatican and other church authorities addressed the problem of clergy sex abuse on countless occasions prior to Sister Mary Jeremy's abuse of Plaintiff, and communicated as much with all levels of Church hierarchy including bishops and other Diocesan leaders. As

such, at all relevant times, Defendants were well aware that errant sexual behavior by some priests, nuns, and other clergy members was not only widespread but predictable.

36. Upon information and belief, not only was the Diocese aware of sexual abuse of children, but it participated in covering up such heinous acts by moving errant priests, nuns, and clergy members from assignment to assignment, thereby putting children in harm's way.

37. Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care because they had superior knowledge about the risks their facilities posed to minor children, the risk of abuse in general, and the risks that Sister Mary Jeremy posed to Plaintiff.

38. Prior to the time of Plaintiff's abuse by Sister Mary Jeremy, Defendants knew or should have known of numerous acts of sexual assault committed by clergy members within the Diocese and elsewhere in the Roman Catholic Church, and knew that there was a specific danger of child sex abuse for children in their institutions and programs.

39. The sexual and physical abuse of Plaintiff by Sister Mary Jeremy was foreseeable.

40. Prior to the time of Plaintiff's abuse by Sister Mary Jeremy, Defendants knew or should have known of Sister Mary Jeremy's acts of violence and child sexual abuse on other minors.

41. Defendants owed Plaintiff a reasonable duty of care because they affirmatively solicited children and parents to send their children to Saint Michael's Catholic Academy; they undertook custody of minor children, including Plaintiff; they promoted their facilities and programs as being safe for children, they held out their agents, including Sister Mary Jeremy, as safe to work with and around minors, they encouraged parents and children to spend time with their agents; and/or authorized their agents, including Sister Mary Jeremy, to spend time with, interact with, and recruit children.

42. Defendants owed Plaintiff a heightened, fiduciary duty of care because they held themselves out as being able to provide a safe and secure environment for children, including Plaintiff; Plaintiff's parents entrusted Plaintiff to Defendants' care, and expected that Plaintiff would be safe and properly supervised in an environment free from harm and abuse; Plaintiff was a vulnerable minor, and unable to protect himself; and Defendants affirmatively assumed a position of empowerment over Plaintiff.

43. Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty to protect him from harm because Defendants' acts and omissions created a foreseeable risk of harm to Plaintiff.

44. As a result of the foregoing, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer great physical and mental pain and anguish, severe and permanent emotional distress, psychological injuries, fear and anxiety; physical injury; was prevented and will continue to be prevented from performing his normal daily activities; was and will continue to be deprived of the enjoyment of life's pleasures; has suffered and continues to suffer loss of spirituality; has suffered and will continue to suffer loss of earnings and earning capacity; has incurred and will in the future incur expenses for medical and psychological treatment, and was otherwise damaged in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

45. To the extent that any Defendants plead, or otherwise seek to rely upon Article 16 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules (CPLR) to have fault apportioned to another allegedly culpable party, Plaintiff expressly states that Defendants' conduct falls within one or more of the subdivisions of CPLR 1602.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

NEGLIGENT HIRING, RETENTION, SUPERVISION, AND DIRECTION

46. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

47. At all relevant times Defendants had a duty to exercise due care in hiring, appointing, assigning, retention, supervision and direction of Sister Mary Jeremy, so as to protect minor children, including Plaintiff, who were likely to come into contact with her, and/or under her influence or supervision, and to ensure that Sister Mary Jeremy did not use this assigned position to injure minors by sexual assault, contact, or abuse.

48. Defendants were negligent and failed to use reasonable care in hiring, appointing, assigning, and retention, of Sister Mary Jeremy, failed to properly investigate his background and employment history, and/or hired, appointed and/or assigned him to Defendant Saint Michael's Catholic Academy, when Defendants knew or should have known of facts that would make her a danger to children; and Defendants were otherwise negligent.

49. Defendants were negligent and did not use reasonable care in their supervision and direction of Sister Mary Jeremy, failed to monitor her activities, failed to oversee the manner in which she carried out the duties to which Defendants assigned her, even though they knew or should have known that she posed a threat of sexual abuse to minors; allowed the misconduct describe above to occur and continue; failed to investigate her dangerous activities and remove her from their premises; and Defendants were otherwise negligent.

50. Sister Mary Jeremy would not have been in a position to sexually abuse Plaintiff had Defendants not been negligent in the hiring, retention, supervision, and direction of Sister Mary Jeremy.

51. At all relevant times, Sister Mary Jeremy acted in the course and scope of her employment with Defendants.

52. Defendants' aforesaid actions were willful, wanton, malicious, reckless, and/or outrageous in their disregard for the rights and safety of Plaintiff.

53. Plaintiff suffered grave injury as a result of Sister Mary Jeremy's sexual abuse and misconduct, including physical, psychological and emotional injury as described above.

54. By the reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages, in an amount to be determined at trial, together with interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

NEGLIGENT, RECKLESS, AND WILLFUL MISCONDUCT

55. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

56. Defendants were negligent and did not use reasonable care in their training, if any, of minor students and/or their parents about the risk of sexual abuse in their institution and facilities, to identify signs of abuse, and to report any suspicion that a minor may be getting abused, maltreated, groomed, or otherwise sexually abused.

57. Defendants were negligent and did not use reasonable care in their training, if any, of clergy members and/or adult staff about the risk of sexual abuse in their institution and facilities, to identify signs of abuse, and their duty to report any suspicion that a minor may be getting abused, maltreated, groomed, or otherwise sexually abused.

58. At all relevant times, Defendants affirmatively and/or impliedly represented to minor children, their families and the general public that clergy working in the Diocese,

including Sister Mary Jeremy, did not pose a risk and/or that they did not have a history of sexually abusing children, and that children, including Plaintiff, would be safe in their care.

59. Defendants knew or should have known this representation was false and that employing Sister Mary Jeremy and giving her unfettered access to children, including Plaintiff, posed an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

60. Defendants maintained a policy and practice of covering up criminal activity committed by clergy members within the Diocese.

61. Over the decades, this “cover-up” policy and practice of the Defendants resulted in the sexual assault of untold numbers of children, and put numerous other children at risk of sexual assault.

62. Defendants failed to report multiple allegations of sexual abuse by its employees, agents and representatives, to the proper authorities, thereby putting children at risk of sexual assault.

63. Upon information and belief, Defendants covered up acts of abuse by Sister Mary Jeremy, and concealed facts concerning Sister Mary Jeremy’s misconduct from Plaintiff and his family.

64. By failing to disclose the identities, histories and information about sexually abusive clergy in their employ, including Sister Mary Jeremy, Defendants unreasonably deprived the families of children entrusted to their care, including Plaintiff, of the ability to protect their children.

65. Defendants failed to warn Plaintiff and his parents that Sister Mary Jeremy posed a risk of child sexual assault.

66. The conduct of Defendants as described herein was done with utter disregard as to the potential profound injuries which would ensue, and with depraved indifference to the health and well-being of children, and to the fact that Defendants were knowingly subjecting children in their charge, including Plaintiff, to sexual crimes.

67. Defendants' aforesaid actions were negligent, reckless, willful and wonton in their disregard for the rights and safety of children, including Plaintiff.

68. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' misconduct, Plaintiff suffered grave injury, including the physical, psychological and emotional injury and damages as described above.

69. By the reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages, in an amount to be determined at trial, together with interest and cost in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

NEGLIGENT AND RECKLESS INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

70. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

71. The sexual abuse of Plaintiff was extreme and outrageous conduct, beyond all possible bounds of decency, atrocious and intolerable in a civilized world.

72. Defendants' aforesaid negligent, grossly negligent and reckless misconduct, endangered Plaintiff's safety and caused him to fear for his own safety.

73. Defendants knew or disregarded the substantial probability that Sister Mary Jeremy would cause severe emotional distress to Plaintiff.

74. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' foregoing misconduct, Plaintiff suffered severe emotional distress including psychological and emotional injury as described above.

75. By the reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial, plus interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

PREMISES LIABILITY

76. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

77. At all relevant times, Defendants owned, operated, and /or controlled the premises known as Saint Michael's Catholic Academy, including the areas where the sexual abuse of Plaintiff occurred.

78. At all relevant times, Plaintiff was rightfully present at the aforementioned premises.

79. Defendants had a duty to see that the premises at which Plaintiff was rightfully present were in a reasonably safe condition for the intended use by students, like Plaintiff, whose presence was reasonably anticipated.

80. Defendants willfully, recklessly, and negligently failed to provide a reasonably safe premise that was free from the presence of sexual predators and/or the assault by the occupants of the premises, including Sister Mary Jeremy. Defendants thereby breached their duty of care of Plaintiff.

81. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' misconduct, Plaintiff suffered grave injury, including the physical, psychological, and emotional injury and damages as described above.

82. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial, plus interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY

83. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

84. At all relevant times, there existed a fiduciary relationship of trust, confidence and reliance between Plaintiff and each Defendant. The entrustment of Plaintiff to the care and supervision of the Defendants while Plaintiff was a vulnerable child, imposed upon Defendants fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of Plaintiff.

85. Defendants were entrusted with the well-being, care, and safety of Plaintiff, which Defendants had a fiduciary duty to protect.

86. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants breached their fiduciary duties to Plaintiff.

87. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' foregoing breach, Plaintiff suffered grave injury, including the physical, psychological and emotional injury and damages as described above.

88. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial, plus interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

BREACH OF DUTY IN LOCO PARENTIS

89. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

90. At all relevant times, Plaintiff was a vulnerable child entrusted to Defendants care, and was under the supervision and control of Defendants, such that Defendants owed him a duty to act *in loco parentis* and to prevent foreseeable injuries.

91. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants breached their duties to act *in loco parentis*.

92. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' foregoing breach, Plaintiff suffered grave injury, including the physical, psychological and emotional injury and damages as described above.

93. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial, plus interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

BREACH OF STATUTORY DUTIES TO REPORT

94. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

95. Pursuant to N.Y. Soc. Serv. Law §§ 413 and 420 and New York Education Law Art. 23-B, Defendants had a statutory duty to report reasonable suspicion of abuse of children in their care.

96. Defendants breached their statutory duty by failing to report reasonable suspicion of abuse by Sister Mary Jeremy of children in their care.

97. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' foregoing breaches, Plaintiff suffered grave injury, including the physical, psychological and emotional injury and damages as described above.

98. By reason of the foregoing, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial, plus interest and costs in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the lower court of this State.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- a. Awarding Plaintiff compensatory damages for his injuries, in an amount to be determined at trial;
- b. Awarding Plaintiff punitive damages for his injuries, in an amount to be determined at trial;
- c. Awarding Plaintiff prejudgment interest, to the extent available by law;
- d. Awarding Plaintiffs costs and disbursements and attorneys' fees to the extent available by law; and
- e. Awarding such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

99. Plaintiff demands a trial by jury of all issues triable by jury in this action.

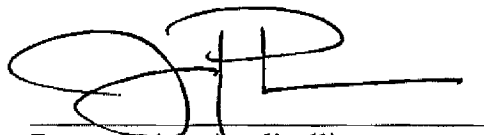
Dated: February 19, 2020

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Yours, etc.

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