



Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

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Bishop's Weekly message

Toward openness and healing

BY BISHOP EDWARD B. SCHARFENBERGER

The recently-released movie "Spotlight" documents the acclaimed work of a team of Boston Globe investigative reporters who broke the shocking story of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy in January 2002. Although "Spotlight" serves as a painful reminder for all Catholics, it is my sincere hope that this film will be a vehicle to communicate the truth and advance the dialogue regarding the protection of children. As I said in my statement on this subject last week, anything that raises awareness of the crime of sexual abuse of minors and encourages transparency is a good thing.

Although we, in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, are focused on vigilance and prevention in an effort to protect children, we can never forget the victims and survivors of sexual abuse, whose human dignity has been violated and who continue to suffer from the actions perpetrated by their abusers, living and deceased.

Having served nearly a decade on the Diocese of Brooklyn's review board for sexual abuse of minors, I heard many stories of suffering firsthand and came to recognize and appreciate the intense pain of victims and survivors. As your Bishop for the past 18 months, I've also had occasion to meet with local victims and survivors, who have shared their heart-rending stories with me.

In light of their continued pain and need for healing and in the interest of transparency and openness, I have reviewed the criteria we use for releasing names to the public and have decided to make available on our diocesan website the most up-to-date information possible.

A complete list of all diocesan clergy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany -- both living and deceased -- who were the subject of a finding of reasonable grounds to support a complaint of sexual abuse of a minor through our own diocesan review process and/or action by civil authorities can be found at this link: www.rcda.org/offenders.

All of those still living were either permanently removed from ministry following the finding or had previously resigned from ministry before receipt of a complaint. We will continue to update this list if and when additional information becomes available in the future.

Also available on the diocesan website is our most recent [annual report](#), which details our Diocese's compliance with the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops'](#) Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and reports any accusations made against diocesan clergy on a year-by-year basis.

The Diocese of Albany continues to urge all victims and survivors to report any instance of sexual abuse against a minor to the appropriate civil authorities. You may also contact our diocesan assistance coordinator at assistance.coordinator@rcda.org. It has long been our diocesan policy that parishes make this information available in their bulletins on a regular basis.

As we embark on the Holy Year of Mercy, beginning Dec. 8, and as Christian brothers and sisters, we continue to remember the victims and survivors of sexual abuse of minors in both public and personal prayer. We also commit to God's mercy those seeking forgiveness for perpetrating these crimes.

In my own name, I ask forgiveness if I may have fallen short in my pastoral care for the alleviation of anyone's pain or suffering. As Bishop of Albany, I also apologize for any way in which our local Church may have brought harm or suffering to any person through the actions of our clergy.

We have pledged and continue to pledge that no clergy member who has been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor is currently in ministry in our Diocese. I take that pledge very seriously and you have my word as a spiritual father that I will remain vigilant in protecting children and fostering an atmosphere of transparency and trust.

(Follow the Bishop at www.facebook.com/AlbanyBishopEd and on Twitter [@AlbBishopEd](https://twitter.com/AlbBishopEd).)

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