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### Update On Efforts To Address Sexual Abuse Crisis

March 22, 2019



BRIDGEPORT—The Diocese of Bridgeport has released an update to the list of

credibly accused clergy and its ongoing response to the clerical sexual abuse crisis.

In a letter published today

(https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bishops-march-2019-update-letter/), March 22, 2019, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano provides information on the reorganization and addition of new names to the diocesan list of credibly accused clergy and a complete list of clergy on whose behalf settlements have been paid.

The Diocese has published information on its website regarding credibly accused clergy dating back to 2002. In October 2013, the Diocese organized this information into a single list of credibly accused priests on its website, which it has continued to update as new information becomes available.

The bishop's letter includes a report by retired Connecticut Superior Court Justice Robert Holzberg, summarizing his work process to date on the investigation he is leading into clergy sexual abuse of minors in the diocese and the response of diocesan officials since its founding in 1953. The Judge's letter is available online. His final report will be published no sooner than June 30 of this year.

Additionally, the bishop's letter introduces a hotline for reporting information to Judge Holzberg and announces three upcoming listening sessions throughout the diocese, which will give people an opportunity express questions and concerns related to the crisis.

The main hotline number for English speakers is 833-990-0004, and for Spanish speaking: 800-216-1288.

Employees of the Diocese of Bridgeport: March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month. Learn how to get the most from your Diocesan health benefits. Schedule a free, confidential call with one of our Health Navigators. Call 203-275-0201 or email SVHP.Clinical.Integration@StVincentHealthPartners.org

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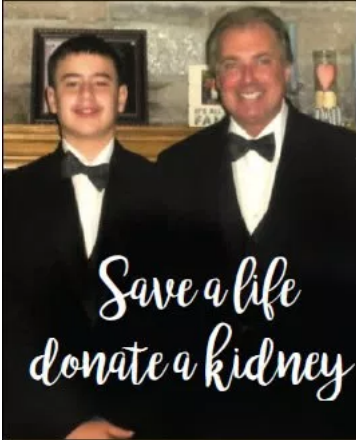
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The toll-free lines have been set up by the Judge's investigative team for any person who wishes to provide information related to past incidents of abuse or their experience with the diocese in regards to such abuse. Survivors and witness are encouraged to call or report online: [www.lighthouse-services.com/diobpt](http://www.lighthouse-services.com/diobpt) (<http://www.lighthouse-services.com/diobpt>).

The updated list of credibly accused adds the names of ten additional priests, 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.

"It is with much regret and concern for all those who are survivors of sexual abuse that I must announce that the following ten clergy who served in the Diocese of Bridgeport have been added to our list of Credibly Accused Clergy as of today."

Added to the diocesan list of credibly accused are: Rev. James A Gay, a retired priest who served in the Diocese from 1959 to 1984; Rev. John Draper, ordained in 1953, died 1966; Rev. William Fletcher, ordained 1944, died 1988; Rev. Martin Hitchcock, ordained 1951, retired 1991, died 2014; Rev. James McCormick, ordained 1916, died 1965; Rev. Bartholomew Laurello, ordained in 1946, died 2004; Rev William R. Nagle, ordained 1927, died 1979 (**It is important to note that this is not the priest of a similar name, Monsignor William Aloysius Nagle, a priest of the Diocese ordained in 1949 with a long-distinguished career at many parishes, who died in 2014 after serving as pastor of St. John in Stamford from 1973 to 1998.**); Rev. Boleslaus "Bill" Rarus, ordained 1940, died 2005; Rev. Paul Spodnick, ordained 1927, died 1976; 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 Bishop notes 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 his letter to the faithful the bishop reports that addition of names of priests to the List of Credibly accused is a result of three factors including 1. the expansion of Sexual Misconduct Review Board policy to consider allegations of abuse against deceased clergy; 2. the receiving of new allegations of sexual abuse of minors against clergy in the diocese dating back many years; and 3. the decision to re-review certain cases where new information has become available, or where further review was deemed necessary. These reviews included allegations against both living and deceased clergy.

In September 2018, in response to the revelations concerning Cardinal McCarrick and the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report, Bishop Caggiano issued a letter on the pastoral and administrative steps the diocese would take to provide full transparency and a comprehensive report.

"I am committed to remaining transparent and instituting whatever change is needed to better respond to those affected by abuse. 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," he wrote in his initial letter to the faithful.

The Diocesan Listening Sessions are set April 3, 7:30 pm at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield; April 9, 7:30 pm at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull; and May 1, 6:30 pm at Immaculate High School in Danbury. The bishop personally will answer questions and listen to concerns. All are welcome.

"I remain determined to move forward with whatever tangible steps are possible to address this grave matter here in the Diocese of Bridgeport. I encourage you to attend one of these listening sessions," said bishop in his March letter.

To learn more or read the Bishop's letter, please visit the Diocese of Bridgeport's Pledge to Protect (<http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/pledge/welcome/>) website.

Click to read the Bishop's letter. (<https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bishops-march-2019-update-letter/>)



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