

# Diocese prays transparency will promote healing for a wounded Church

---

January 2, 2020; saved January 6, 2020

<https://fargodiocese.org/releaseofnames>



## A time for healing

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Several months ago I stated my intention to release the names of those clergy and religious in the Diocese of Fargo who have substantiated allegations of abuse of minors. After a thorough review of our files going back to 1950, I have released those names. This includes our own diocesan clergy, as well as clergy from other dioceses and members of religious communities who have ministered in the Diocese of Fargo. Even one instance of abuse would be too many, and I know this list of clergy and religious is a cause of deep sadness to us all.

I first ask forgiveness for the shameful acts of those clergy who caused harm to young people and abused the trust placed in them by God and by the faithful. No excuse can be made for these actions, nor does this release of names fully address the pain of victims of abuse. I pray for the healing of those who have suffered such abuse, and I ask all the faithful of our diocese to join me in this prayer. Some have asked why it is necessary to publish this list of names when nearly all of these cases are from years long past. I believe it is necessary to acknowledge these sins in the history of the diocese, especially since they were committed by those who represented the Church to the faithful. I also want all victims of abuse to know that their stories are heard and taken seriously. As a family of faith, we

must stand with our brothers and sisters who have been hurt and support them in their healing.

It is also my hope that this release of names will open the way to a purification of our Church, especially in our own diocese. We all know the experience of grace that comes with the confession of sins, and I pray that our diocese will experience a similar outpouring of grace through acknowledgement of these sinful acts by those in positions of authority. It has been said that we must understand our past in order to move forward into the future, and the Church likewise must acknowledge this dark stain in its past so that it can be purified and move ahead with God's grace.

Another purpose of this release is to assure the faithful that no member of the clergy with a substantiated allegation of abuse of a minor is currently in ministry in the Diocese of Fargo. Sexual abuse of any kind, especially of a minor, is intolerable and incompatible with ministry in the Church. As the bishop of this diocese, I am committed to the protection and safety of all who come into contact with our Church, especially children and young people. To that end, we follow all civil laws regarding the reporting of suspected abuse of a minor.

Since 2002 the Diocese of Fargo has also adhered to the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, sometimes called the Dallas Charter. This commitment requires the permanent removal from ministry of any Church worker who sexually abuses a minor. It also entails safe environment training and background checks for all clergy, employees, and volunteers in the diocese. We remain committed to offering assistance to all victims of abuse by clergy, and I am willing to meet with them personally if they wish. We will continue to take seriously every allegation of abuse that is brought to our attention, and I encourage victims to come forward so that we might offer assistance and the assurance of our support in their suffering.

It has become clear that the abuse of minors is a plague in our entire society. It is not only a Catholic issue, nor is it only a clergy issue. But we as a Church must acknowledge and address this tragedy in our own house and do all we can to eradicate it. The Church and her shepherds must never become complacent and assume that the problem of abuse has been solved. We will remain vigilant for the sake of our young people, always striving to assure the safety of all God's children.

I want to acknowledge the important role of our Diocesan Review Board in this difficult process. These lay experts in child services, counseling, medicine, psychiatry, and law have been immensely helpful in the review and evaluation of these allegations. None of them are employed by the diocese, and so they are able to bring an objective external view to these cases. They have assisted me not only with this file review, but also with every similar case that has come to my attention. I am very grateful to them for the generous gift of their expertise, their time, and their honesty.

While this list of clergy and religious is considered complete for now, it is not a closed list. If additional

information comes to my attention, and other names must be added to the list, we will do so. I am encouraged that there have been very few substantiated cases of abuse in recent decades, but once again, we cannot be complacent or lower our guard. Those serving in the Church have worked hard in recent years to give training and provide a safe environment for all who come to us, and I am grateful for these efforts. I must also give credit to the vast majority of our clergy and religious who have served the faithful of this diocese with integrity, zeal, and holiness. Despite the sins of some, we are blessed by the selfless service of so many others who have dedicated themselves to God and his Church. And even when facing the darkness of sin, we can always depend on the redeeming power of God's grace.

Once again, I ask forgiveness of those who have been harmed by abuse in the Church. You are our brothers and sisters, and your suffering brings sorrow to us all. I thank you for courageously coming forward, and I pray that the healing mercy of God will be with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+John T. Folda  
Bishop of Fargo



### Clergy of the Diocese of Fargo with substantiated allegations(s) of sexual abuse of a minor

Last name	First name	Year of ordination	Year of death	Status
Amiott	William	1960		Removed from ministry; laicized
Belleau	Jules	1925	1973	Deceased
Binder	Julius	1939	1991	Deceased

Burque	Lucien	1926	1976	Deceased
Cullen	Martin	1957		Removed from ministry
Fish	Eugene	1997		Removed from ministry
Gallagher	Kenneth	1966	2010	Removed from ministry; laicized; deceased
Jeffrey	C. James	1959	2017	Deceased
Jene	Alex	1942	1971	Deceased
Patejko	Zbigniew (Gregory)	1953	1996	Deceased
Rausch*	Cletus	1993		Removed from ministry
Roth	John	1941	1992	Deceased
Sayasaya	Fernando	1995		Removed from ministry; laicized, imprisoned
Sinner	Richard	1952	2004	Removed from ministry; deceased
Storey*	Allan	1988		Removed from ministry; laicized
Tuohy	John	1927	1960	Deceased
Vasques	George	1983	1989	Removed from ministry; deceased
Wanzek	John	1950	1991	Deceased
Wild	David	1953	2008	Removed from ministry; deceased

\*indicates a deacon, not a priest

### **Non-Fargo clergy (religious order or extern) with substantiated allegation(s) of sexual abuse of a minor while serving within the Diocese of Fargo**

<b>Last name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Year of ordination</b>	<b>Year of death</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Diocese/Religious Order</b>
Anthony	Abraham	1986	2010	Deceased	Diocese Simla-Chandigarh, India
Gonnely	Theophane	1947	2005	Deceased	Benedictine (OSB)
Hagarty	Patrick	1941	Unknown	Deceased	Archdiocese of Omaha
Odor	Luke	1980		Unknown	Diocese Aba, Nigeria
Picard	Laurent	1969	1989	Deceased	Archdiocese Grouard-McLennan, Canada

Last name	First name	Year of ordination	Year of death	Status	Diocese/Religious Order
Reilly	James	1944	1990	Deceased	Benedictine (OSB)
Schwartz	Peter	1962	2003	Deceased	Benedictine (OSB)
Smyth	John (Brendan)	1951	1997	Imprisoned; deceased	Norbertines (O. Praem)

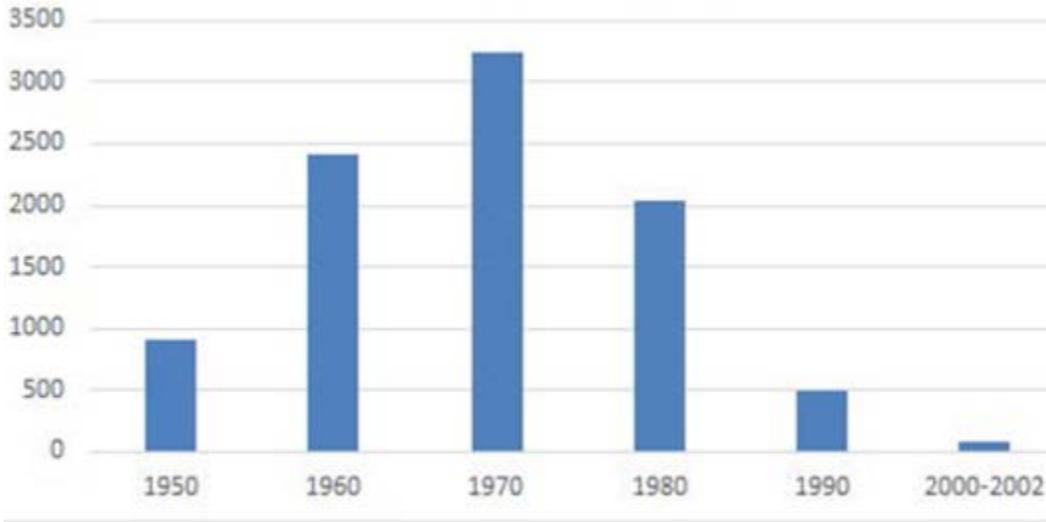
**Religious brother or sister with substantiated allegation(s) of sexual abuse of a minor while serving within the Diocese of Fargo**

Last name	First name	Year of ordination	Year of death	Status	Religious Order
Rose	Brother Raimond	N/A	2015	Deceased	Christian Brothers of the Midwest

**Clergy who served or ever lived within the Diocese of Fargo who are on a list of another diocese/religious order. No known allegations while serving as cleric within the Diocese of Fargo**

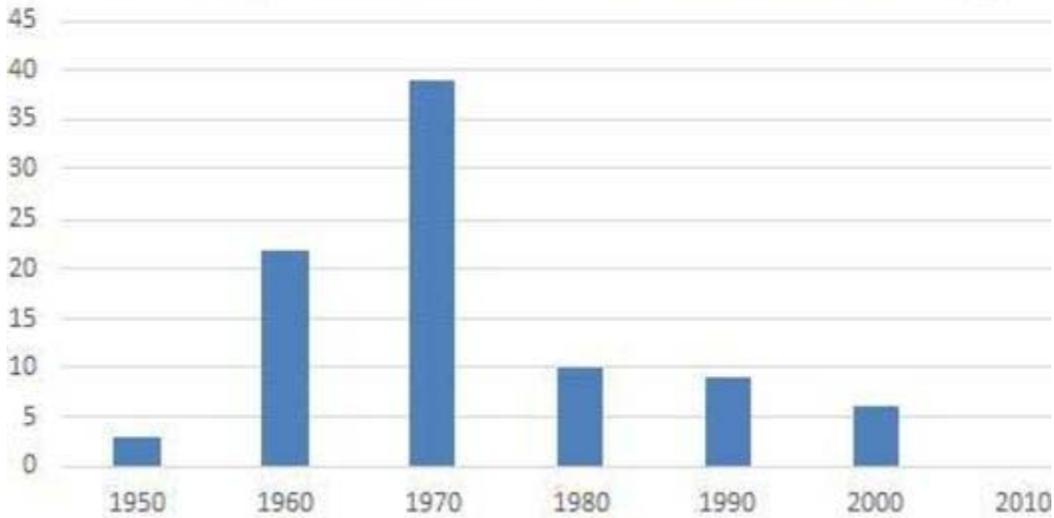
Last name	First name	Year of ordination	Year of death	Status	Diocese/Religious Order
Bouche	Dennis	1945	1995	Deceased	Diocese of Green Bay
Conlon	Timothy	1979		Removed from ministry, dismissed from the Croisiers	Croisiers
Dougherty	Steven	2003		Removed from ministry; criminal conviction	Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT)

Nationwide alleged incidents of sexual abuse of a minor, by decade (John Jay study)



o

Substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by decade of occurrence - Diocese of Fargo



## **Frequently asked questions about the release of names and diocesan response to allegations of abuse**

### **1. What information are you releasing on this list?**

We are releasing the names of clergy and religious who served in the Fargo Diocese since 1950 who have an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor that, in consultation with the Diocesan Review Board, was considered substantiated.

### **2. What is a substantiated allegation?**

A substantiated allegation is one for which sufficient corroborating evidence establishes reasonable grounds to believe that the alleged abuse in fact occurred. Substantiated is not equivalent to conviction in a court of law. Several factors can lead to substantiation, including, but not limited to: the accused having admitted to the conduct in whole or in part; first-hand and consistent testimony from the claimant which included knowledge about the alleged offender and relevant circumstances that he or she would have been unlikely to know if the allegation had not occurred; evidence such as witnesses, documents, emails, photos, etc.; multiple independent allegations which manifest similar patterns; prior grooming behaviors with sexual content; and/or the results of a comprehensive civil, criminal, or canonical (Church law) trial.

### **3. What is the definition of sexual abuse of a minor?**

Sexual abuse of a minor means sexual molestation, sexual exploitation, or any other behavior, by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification; and the infliction upon a child of physical or mental injury or the commission of a sexual offense against a child as defined by law. This includes solicitation to sexual acts and the intentional possession of child pornography.

### **4. Why did the Diocese of Fargo decide to disclose the names of clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor?**

Our first goal is safety of our young people, and so we continue our commitment to providing a safe environment through the Charter for the Protection of Youth and Young People and our own Code of Conduct. We are also committed to appropriate transparency in order to be accountable, and to assure the People of God that immoral and abusive behavior will not be tolerated, and has no place in the Church. It is hoped that this will help victims/survivors of abuse to heal, and that the Church will regain trust and confidence from our communities.

**5. Who conducted the review?**

Staff of the Diocese of Fargo, in collaboration with the Diocesan Review Board, completed the review. The Review Board is a volunteer body of lay persons who are experts in psychology, social service, law enforcement, and medicine. No member of the Review Board is an employee of the Diocese.

**6. What was the scope of the review of clergy files?**

We reviewed the existing file of every cleric who served in the Diocese of Fargo within the period of 1950 until the present. In total, we reviewed approximately 1,000 files. The Diocesan Review Board then was presented with each and every allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

**7. What process does the Diocese of Fargo follow upon receipt of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy?**

When an accusation of sexual abuse of a minor is received, the Diocese of Fargo follows its established protocol. We immediately notify civil authorities, and we cooperate with their investigation.

When an accusation is received, the accused cleric is put on administrative leave in order to ensure the safety of the public. An internal investigation is then conducted, always ensuring that the investigation of the civil authority is not interfered with. At the conclusion of the internal investigation, canonical (Church law) sanctions are applied, if appropriate.

**8. Can a cleric who has sexually abused a minor ever be put back into public ministry?**

No.

**9. Will the Diocese of Fargo continue to disclose names of clergy against whom allegations of sexual abuse of a minor are substantiated going forward?**

Yes.

**10. Why not make ALL accusations of sexual abuse of a minor against clergy public?**

All accusations of sexual abuse of a minor are reported to the appropriate civil authority. Just as the

state does not publicize the names of every person accused of sexual abuse of a child until an investigation has determined that criminal charges are appropriate, it would be unjust and counter to the presumption of innocence enjoyed by all to make every allegation public without sufficient cause.

### **11. What is being done to prevent sexual abuse of children by church personnel?**

The law of God, including the 10 commandments, are obligatory for all people and part of an ageless stand against harming another human being by any sin or abuse. In addition, all Church workers and volunteers who work with minors are bound by our Code of Conduct and the Charter provisions. We use background screenings and provide training in providing a safe environment to all church workers. We also provide training in safe environment and reporting to our children, their families, and anyone who seeks this from us.

We have had clear written policies concerning sexual abuse by clergy in place going back at least to 1989.

### **12. What should a person do if they were a victim of abuse and their abuser is not on the list?**

If a person has any unreported incidents or suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, please notify civil authorities.

If the situation involves a member of the clergy or a religious order, a seminarian, or an employee of a Catholic school, parish, the diocesan offices or other Catholic entity within the diocese, we ask that you also report the incident or suspected incident to Msgr. Joseph Goering, Vicar General, at (701) 356-7945 or Larry Bernhardt, Victim Assistance Coordinator, at (701) 356-7965 or by email at [victimassistance@fargodiocese.org](mailto:victimassistance@fargodiocese.org).

The Victim Assistance Coordinator is also available if the abuse has already been reported and questions remain.

### **13. What does the Diocese of Fargo do for victims of abuse?**

The Diocese of Fargo has a Victim Assistance Coordinator who listens to victims and helps them to report their abuse. The VAC also helps to coordinate diocesan assistance, arrangement of counseling/therapy, or arrangement of spiritual direction. More information can be found at [www.fargodiocese.org/victimassistance](http://www.fargodiocese.org/victimassistance), or by calling (701) 356-7965.

## Reporting abuse

If you have a report of sexual abuse, please see the [victim assistance page](#).

## **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of procedures originally established by the USCCB in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. It was revised in 2005, 2011, 2018, and 2019.

The Charter directs action in all the following matters:

- ☐ Creating a safe environment for children and young people
- ☐ Healing and reconciliation of victims and survivors
- ☐ Making prompt and effective response to allegations
- ☐ Cooperating with civil authorities
- ☐ Disciplining offenders
- ☐ Providing for means of accountability for the future to ensure the problem continues to be effectively dealt with through the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and the National Review Board.