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Diocese Releases List of Accused Clergy

05:04

September 6, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace.

The dreadful scourge of sexual abuse of minors has wounded our entire family of faith. As shepherd of our local church, I must do all in my power to eradicate this sin, heal those who have been harmed, and bring to justice those who have offended. As a step in this process, I am publicizing a list of clerics, that is, priests and deacons, who have substantiated allegations of abuse of minors.



In releasing this list my first hope is that it will acknowledge the survivors of clergy sexual abuse and their wounds. Not long ago, one abuse survivor told me, "Bishop, we cannot heal until these wounds are brought into the light. If no one knows about them, they are still there, festering and poisoning the Church."

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The release of these names cannot change the past. It is merely a step forward in hope, but a necessary step. All sin is terrible, but the sins of clerics who betray the sacred trust to care for little ones is especially egregious. Jesus himself singled out this betrayal as particularly wicked in the eyes of God. The anger at these sins is fully justified.

A listing of those clerics of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph who have been found to have substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor is available **here** (<http://kcsj catholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Substantiated-list-September-2019-FINAL2.pdf>). A hard copy may be obtained upon request from your parish. In addition to clergy of this diocese, I am also listing clergy of other dioceses and religious orders who have substantiated allegations against them when they served in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. This comes after a painstaking, thorough review of the files of the diocese by an independent firm with expertise in forensic research, Fidelity Consultants, LLC, whose team is comprised of three former agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Fidelity team was provided complete, unsupervised access to the files of the diocese. Their review specifically covered the years from the beginning of the diocese in 1956 to the present. Their findings confirmed there are no clerics in active ministry in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph with substantiated allegations of abusing minors. Fidelity Consultants, LLC provided an explanation of the scope of their review to the Independent Review Board, which is primarily comprised of lay people with expertise in a wide variety of child protection professions. The Independent Review Board, Office of Child and Youth Protection, and diocesan leadership reached consensus on this list of clerics with substantiated allegations and Fidelity personnel concurred that the list produced was consistent with their review. Moreover, to help state authorities in better protecting minors, the list has been shared with the Office of the Missouri Attorney General.

In addition, I have listed clergy who I have deemed unsuitable for ministry out of concern for the safety of children. Moreover, clergy who have been named in legal settlements but whose cases have not to date been substantiated by a civil or church process have been listed as well. An allegation is considered substantiated by any number of factors such as: admission by the accused,



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corroboration by witness statements, multiple similar allegations, documents, emails, photos, or through another source, such as an investigation by law enforcement or the Independent Review Board of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Making a determination is particularly difficult when the allegations were received by the diocese many years after the abuse and sometimes after the death of the accused. This list is based on information that is currently available. Any new information regarding allegations of clergy sexual abuse of minors will be carefully reviewed and evaluated, and if substantiated, the list will be updated accordingly.

While it is impossible to undo the past, it is possible to act in the present. I renew my apology to any person who has been afflicted by acts of clergy sexual abuse, including family members. A priority identified within our Diocesan Mutually Shared Vision (our new diocesan pastoral plan) is *Restoration in Christ*, beginning with those who have been wounded by clergy sexual abuse. Along with the services and assistance already provided through our Office of Child and Youth Protection and Victim Assistance Coordinator, we will further be establishing more paths for healing. Ultimately, it is Christ who will heal and bring restoration. We can play a part in helping Him.

With the one significant exception of former Father Shawn Ratigan, the substantiated allegations were found to have occurred prior to 1990. Since 2002 and the U.S. Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and *Essential Norms*, our diocese has dedicated an abundance of financial and personnel resources toward child safety, transparency, healing and reporting. Our diocese is exceptional in that it engages an independent Ombudsman who receives all reports involving child sexual abuse, automatically informs civil authorities, investigates and reports to the diocesan Independent Review Board. Our diocese regularly carries out Mandated Reporter Training for all personnel who are legally required to report suspected child abuse; VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children Workshops are required for all our clergy, employees and volunteers. All candidates for priestly and diaconal ministry undergo rigorous psychological screening and receive thorough human formation to live as healthy and holy priests and deacons. We can all be grateful to the thousands of good people, lay ministers, deacons and priests who humbly serve and work to make our parishes and schools safe and wholesome places for children and youth, their families and the community at-large.



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While our diocese has made great strides in maintaining a safe environment, we must not become complacent. We live in a fallen world and a fallen culture. Christ warned that within the Church there would be “weeds among the wheat” until the end. I strongly encourage anyone who has yet to share their story of abuse to report it to civil authorities at the local and state level. I also ask anyone who suspects misconduct with or abuse of minors by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph to report it to Mr. Joseph Crayon, the Ombudsman, at 816-812-2500.

When Jesus died on the cross, “darkness covered the whole land.” Clergy child sexual abuse has brought a spiritual darkness that has covered not only those personally afflicted, but also all our parishioners and clergy. In this darkness, I urge us to look to the Gospel Passion accounts for hope. Christ illumines all darkness, including the present one which overshadows our Church. Through His Passion, Death and Resurrection, He frees us from the gloom of sin, and bestows the new life of grace upon us. Each year at the Easter Vigil we are reminded in the Easter Proclamation, the *Exsultet*, that the sanctifying power of Christ the Light of the world drives out hatred, dispels wickedness, and fosters concord. May we all embrace our duty as members of Christ’s Body, to be instruments of justice and peace for victims and their families. With the help of God’s grace, I pray we will never waver from our duty to protect our children, to heal the wounded, and restore trust in the Church and its mission to fulfill God’s plan of salvation. In this hope, we do well to turn to our Blessed Mother Mary, the Mother of the Church, seeking her powerful help and intercession for all her children.

May Christ, the true Light of the world, dispel our darkness.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads “+ James V. Johnston, Jr.”

(<http://kcsj catholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Bishops-signature.png>)

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.

Bishop of Kansas City – St. Joseph



LIST OF CLERGY WITH SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

(<http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Substantiated-list-September-2019-FINAL2.pdf>)

RESOURCES

(<https://kcsjatholic.org>)

FAQ (http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/FAQs-short-version-for-website_final.pdf)

Glossary of Terms (<http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Glossary-Of-Terms.pdf>)

Pastoral Care Resources (<http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Pastoral-Care-Resources-and-Support-Opportunities-KCSJ.pdf>)

Tips for Talking to Children about Difficult Topics (<http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/Tips-for-talking.pdf>)

Resources for Victims/Survivors and those who Support Them
(<http://kcsjatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/VAC-Resource-Document.pdf>)

Office of Child and Youth Protection (<https://kcsjatholic.org/office/child-youth-protection/>)



(<https://kcsjatholic.org/office/child-youth-protection/>)

keyword



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(<https://kcsjcatholic.org>)

CONTACT

Phone: 816-756-1850

Contact (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/start/contact/>)

OFFICES

Child and Youth Protection (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/child-youth-protection/>)

Young Adults (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/young-adults/>)

Sacred Worship (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/divine-worship/>)

QUICK LINKS

Parishes (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/connect/parishes/>)

Schools (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/connect/schools/>)

Employment Opportunities (<https://careers.hireology.com/thecatholicdioceseofkansascitystjoseph>)

USCCB Prevention & Accountability Site (<https://preventionusccb.org/>)

SHARE YOUR GIFTS

Annual Appeal (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/stewardship-and-development/annual-catholic-appeal/>)

Bright Futures Fund (<http://www.brightfuturesfund.org/>)

Catholic Charities (<https://www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org/>)

Stewardship & Development (<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/stewardship-and-development/>)

Located at The Catholic Center, 20 West Ninth Street, Kansas City, MO 64105

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