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February 7, 2019

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I shared with you in January what the Diocese of Norwich is doing to address the scourge of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and our commitment to restore trust and faith and ensure a safe environment in our churches, schools, and other institutions. The Diocese of Norwich is committed to protecting children and young people so that the tragedy of sexual abuse does not occur.

The Diocese of Norwich, since the enactment of its first *Sexual Misconduct Policy* in 1990 and the implementation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in 2002, continues to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy (bishops, priests, and deacons) and has experienced a significant reduction of reported allegations of abuse. But, one act of abuse is too many and we must always remain vigilant in protecting children and young people.

In the spirit of accountability and transparency and on the recommendations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Review Board, the Diocese of Norwich is providing a list of clergy who have had allegations of substance made against them alleging sexual abuse of a minor. An "Allegation of substance" means:

- An allegation in which the accused has pled guilty or *nolo contendere* or been prosecuted and found guilty in a civil criminal court of any incident of sexual misconduct of a minor; and/or
- An allegation has been investigated and has been determined to be reasonable, plausible, probable, and bearing the semblance of truth; and/or
- An allegation that is corroborated with other evidence or another source; and/or
- An allegation that has been acknowledged or admitted to by the accused.

The names presented of the accused clergy with allegations of substance is based on the review of all clergy records by a team of volunteer lay people with law enforcement and canonical experience. The publication of names will be updated as any new information becomes available.

The names of those clergy in the Diocese of Norwich who have been accused over the past 65 years, since the establishment of the diocese on August 6, 1953, will be posted on the diocesan website, [www.norwichdiocese.org](http://www.norwichdiocese.org) at 2 p.m. on Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, and published in this month's *Four County Catholic*, our diocesan newspaper.

The list includes the names of priests who are deceased, have been dismissed from the clerical state, and those who have been removed from all ministry. All allegations found to have substance have been addressed when reported. There is currently no priest or deacon in active ministry with an allegation of substance of sexual abuse of a minor. The list of clergy includes 22

diocesan priests incardinated in the Diocese of Norwich, 7 priests who were members of religious orders, 2 priests who were from another diocese but working in the Diocese of Norwich, and 12 priests who served or resided in the Diocese of Norwich but who had allegations brought forward elsewhere from outside the diocese, in total 43 priests, roughly 2.8 percent of all clergy affiliated with the Diocese of Norwich since 1953. Since 1953, the clergy who served in the Diocese of Norwich or were present in the diocese for a temporary ministry assignment include, 5 bishops, 1,422 priests (351 diocesan priests incardinated in the Diocese of Norwich, 914 religious order priests, 134 priests from another diocese working in the Diocese of Norwich, and 23 priests who had residence or a temporary ministry in the diocese), and 114 deacons.

The records of the financial expenditures made as a result of the abuse of minors by clergy was compiled from data available as of January 31, 2019 and contains known data beginning July 1, 1977. To date, the Diocese of Norwich settled nine cases totaling \$7,681,646.00:

- \$4,894,146.00 – insurance reimbursement;
- \$1,000,000.00 – diocesan general fund;
- \$1,787,500.00 – payments made by others (i.e. religious orders, individuals accused, other dioceses, etc.).

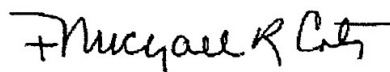
All claims were paid through insurance reimbursement, the diocesan general fund, and payments by others. No donor restricted funds, bequests, or contributions designated for a special purpose, such as the Annual Catholic Appeal, were used for the payment of settlements.

The Diocese of Norwich reports all allegations of abuse of minors it receives to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (1-800-842-2288) and the New York Child Protective Services (1-800-635-1522) and law enforcement, as required by law, and encourages all victims of sexual abuse to come forward and contact law enforcement and civil authorities and the diocesan reporting line (1-800-624-7407).

I am grievously sorry for the horrific sins and crimes made against the most vulnerable among us who have suffered sexual abuse and misconduct. I offer again my deepest and heartfelt apology on behalf of the Church to the victims of child abuse and their families suffering painful life-long consequences. I know that the release of these names will cause pain for some victims, families of the accused, friends and parishioners. It is my hope and prayer that this effort to let the light shine on this dark chapter in the life of the Church will bring some measure of peace, healing, and acknowledgement to those who have been directly harmed and to all members of our faith community.

I renew and continue my pledge to do everything within my power to protect our children and young people from harm and to follow an absolute zero tolerance policy toward those who committed crimes against God's children.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Cooney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "C".

Bishop of Norwich