



# DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | Office of the Bishop

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April 12, 2019

*Friday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent*

My dear sisters and brothers,

In the Roman Catholic Mass for Reconciliation we pray, *“When we ourselves had turned away from you on account of our sins, you brought us back to be reconciled, O Lord.”*

In the spirit of this prayer, the Diocese of Owensboro today is releasing a list of priests who have served in our diocese against whom one or more allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor have been substantiated.

Today as a Church we seek to again acknowledge the sins of sexual abuse of children by people they should have been able to trust without reserve. I apologize to all who have suffered at the hands of a priest. For all the times when Church leaders failed to live out Christ’s call to holiness and did not do what was needed to keep you and all children safe, I am sorry.

I apologize as well to all of you in the Diocese of Owensboro. The sexual abuse of a child is abhorrent, and the fact that this kind of evil has been perpetrated by priests rocks our Church to its core. For the anger, the sadness, the embarrassment and doubts this may have brought you, I apologize and I share in your pain and frustration.

I apologize to the dedicated and holy priests of our Church who have never in any way harmed a child. You have suffered from the stain rendered upon the priesthood by the misconduct of others.

Thankfully, since 2002 there has been significant reform in how the Church in the United States handles allegations of sexual abuse. We operate under a zero-tolerance policy. When a substantiated allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest in the Diocese of Owensboro is determined, that priest is permanently removed from ministry. Additionally, robust measures have been put into place to prevent abuse, including background checks for those who work with children and training for both children and adults. There has been a dramatic decline in the number of abuse cases over recent decades. However, I do recognize that even one person harmed is too many and we must remain committed in our efforts to keep every child safe.

The development of this list has been a thorough and painstaking process. Three former chairs of the Diocesan Review Board worked over several months with access to all diocesan files to recommend to me the names presented here. William Craig is an attorney, Dr. Mike Farina is a psychologist, and Mary Beth Hurley is a retired nurse. They have served generously because they love the Church and want it to be the best it can be, and especially to be a safe place for children.

Inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate that an accused priest has been found guilty of a crime or liable for any civil claim. While every allegation of abuse received today by the diocese is reported to

authorities, it does not mean that the authorities will pursue charges. Often, allegations are not received until years and even decades after an incident. In some cases, the accused priests have been deceased before an allegation has been made.

We hold anyone who works for the Church to a higher standard than civil or criminal courts may require. Therefore, while inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate guilt, it does indicate a finding on the part of the Diocese of Owensboro that there is adequate reason to believe the alleged abuse did occur.

Over the years, the Diocese of Owensboro has investigated some allegations against priests that had a semblance of credibility, but could not be substantiated. The definition of a substantiated allegation which guided the work of the reviewing committee is:

An allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest is substantiated when there is probable cause for believing the claim is true. The following may be considered as evidence of probable cause: **1)** admission of guilt by the accused; **2)** accused does not contest the allegation; **3)** guilty finding rendered by a court; **4)** finding rendered by an investigative process shows cause for believing the allegation is true on an objective basis.

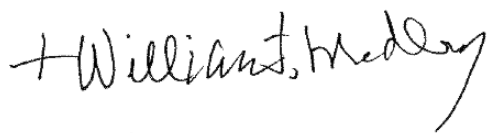
The publication of this list does not indicate a closure of the matter of sexual abuse in the Church. We know that survivors of abuse present themselves and tell their stories in their own time. This often was complicated by the Church's reluctance to hear and believe those who came forth. To any who have not come forward, have not been heard, we invite you to do that which is best for you. If that includes coming to the Church, we stand ready to listen and heal, to learn and act.

These are dark days in our Church, but as Christians we are never without hope, even at Calvary. Jesus is always our hope and our light. Throughout our history, in times of darkness and confusion, God has raised up great saints to show us the way. Our time is no different. God is most certainly raising up holy men and women in our day who are calling us back to the Gospel and reminding us once more of Christ's call to each of us to live lives of holiness. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and we will find the way.

As we approach the holiest week of the year for us as Christians, I end my letter to you with these words from then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger given on Good Friday in 2005. Just a few short weeks later Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI.

*"Through your passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection, Jesus, you have brought us the gift of forgiveness of sins. Cleanse and purify the Church you love of the sins of abuse and misconduct which have seriously wounded the Church. Bring healing and love to victims. Help us all to rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of true holiness. Amen."*

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William F. Medley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and 'M'.

Most Reverend William F. Medley  
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro