

Accused: Rochester-area priests and others named in child sex abuse complaints

Steve Orr, Democrat and Chronicle Published 5:00 a.m. ET Aug. 15, 2019 | Updated 3:22 p.m. ET Jan. 29, 2020

Here are some key details about priests and others who served in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester and have been [named in lawsuits filed under New York's Child Victims Act \(/story/news/2019/08/15/child-sex-abuse-detailed-flurry-lawsuits-filed-rochester/2010268001/\)](#).

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Rev. Robert F. O'Neill

- Ordained 1962
- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brockport, assistant pastor, 1962-67
- Holy Cross, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1967-73
- Diocesan Tribunal, 1973-87
- St. Boniface, Rochester, residence, 1975-79
- St. John the Evangelist, Greece, residence, 1980-87
- Church of the Annunciation, Rochester, pastor, 1987-98
- St. Christopher, Chili, administrator, 1998-99
- St. Christopher, pastor, 1999-2001
- Diocesan Tribunal, 2001-02
- Died 2005

Robert Francis O'Neill, a local boy who attended Rochester Catholic schools, was ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral on June 2, 1962.

Years later, O'Neill would be named as one of the worst serial abusers ever uncovered in the Rochester diocese — and numerous accusations arose that diocesan officials knew all about it.

Letters were written, a lawsuit was filed, two different bishops reportedly were informed of O'Neill's misconduct, yet he was allowed to continue the ministry until his retirement.

The first dozen years of O'Neill's time as a priest were spent at churches in Brockport and Rochester. It emerged years later that a group of parishioners at the second of those churches, Holy Cross in Charlotte, approached the diocese over O'Neill's conduct there.

The largest concern was with heavy drinking, the *Democrat and Chronicle* reported in 2002, but there also were questions raised about his interactions with boys.

"The molesting issue didn't come up. At that time you didn't talk about it, if you know what I mean," a former member of the parish told D&C reporter Jay Tokasz in 2002.

O'Neill was pulled from Holy Cross and transferred to the [diocesan tribunal \(https://www.dor.org/about/office-ministry-directory/tribunal/\)](https://www.dor.org/about/office-ministry-directory/tribunal/), which examines requests for annulments of marriages and other applications of canon law.

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From the outside, O'Neill seemed to flourish. He made frequent public appearances and gave media interviews on the changing perceptions of marriage and divorce. He sat for a striking photographic portrait in which he posed, handsome, bearded and dressed in black, like the author of a self-help bestseller.

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ntinued to arise, the D&C's 2002 investigation found.



Rev. Robert O'Neill, 1979 (Photo: File photo)

O'Neill lived and occasionally celebrated mass at St. Boniface Church on Gregory Street in the city. He befriended parish boys and took them on overnight outings to his summer cottage on the Chaumont River in Jefferson County.

This behavior prompted two St. Boniface members to write a letter of protest in the late 1970's to the auxiliary bishop, the Rev. Dennis W. Hickey. The Right Rev. Joseph Hogan was bishop at the time.

Diocesan officials acknowledged in 2002 that they had received a complaint about O'Neill during this time, but said the reported misconduct fell short of sexual abuse. No public disclosure of the allegation was made, though diocesan officials said O'Neill was sent for counselling and treatment.

The latter years of his time at the diocesan tribunal, O'Neill lived and assisted the pastor at St. John the Evangelist Church in Greece.

Again, accusations arose. This time, a teenager who said he'd been molested by O'Neill went directly to the Right Rev. Matthew Clark, who had become Rochester's Roman Catholic bishop in 1979.

The sexual abuse occurred on an overnight outing in the fall of 1980 or 1981, and the meeting with Clark occurred a few months later, the victim told the D&C in 2002.

Clark declined to comment to the newspaper in 2002. The victim said he and his parents had been satisfied by a promise from the bishop that he would deal with the situation properly.

O'Neill remained in the priesthood, and in 1987 was given his own church; he was named pastor at Church of the Annunciation on Norton Street in northeast Rochester.

Claims arose later that O'Neill continued to take boys to his Chaumont River camp during this time. But it was from another quarter that complaints emerged about his conduct at Annunciation. In 1996, he was accused of sexual harassment by a woman hired to be his pastoral assistant.

In a lawsuit, the woman complained of "degrading comments regarding women, being subjected to scenes of a sexual nature, inappropriate and offensive behaviors of a physical nature and the imposition of burdensome conditions." She lasted only four months in the job.

The woman's case lingered for years, its final outcome not made clear in court records. It has not been reported publicly until now.

O'Neill was transferred to St. Christopher Church in Chili in 1998, serving first as administrator and then as pastor. There he remained until June 2001, when he resigned for what were later described as health reasons.

He returned to the tribunal in the diocesan offices on Buffalo Road in Gates until May 1, 2002, when he officially retired.

The very next day, in Bishop Clark's initial response to a nationwide controversy over abuse priests, he announced that three priests had just been removed from their churches due to allegations of child sexual abuse.

In what seemed a footnote, Clark said that the just-retired O'Neill would no longer be allowed to function as a priest or appear in public in his clerical collar.

Clark offered an apology that day for the fact that he had not checked diocesan files for information about past abuse by priests when he became bishop in 1978.

"I didn't think of it. Perhaps I should have, but I didn't," Clark was quoted as saying.

He was not quoted saying anything specifically about O'Neill. The bishop did not mention his face-to-face meeting about O'Neill's alleged abuse and, in fact, offered no explanation for the priest's banishment from the ministry.

But the explanation arrived soon enough.

On May 8, 2002, the *Democrat and Chronicle* published a story airing accusations from a number of men who said they'd been sexually abused as teens by O'Neill. A longer story a month later added details of his offensive behavior — fondling and groping boys, forcing them to share his bed, skinny-dipping with

O'Neill told reporter Tokasz then, in June 2002, that his camp outings had been innocent and it had been many years since he'd taken boys there. But Tokasz found a Chili parent whose son had been invited to the cabin just a few years earlier.

Like others, that parent said she had complained to the diocese only to have then deny any such outings took place. But they did. Even O'Neill's neighbor in Jefferson County had observed the odd parade of unaccompanied boys at the priest's place.

Three of the men who said they'd been victimized by O'Neill filed suit in June 2002 against the priest and the diocese, which they accused of enabling the abuse and shielding O'Neill from scrutiny. Five more men joined the suit in August, and two more still in December.

The plaintiffs all said they had encountered O'Neill at St. Boniface or St. John during the period he worked for the diocesan tribunal.

The litigation swiftly ran afoul of New York's ultra-strict statute of limitations for child sexual abuse.

The case against O'Neill was thrown out by state Supreme Court Justice William Lunn in December 2002 and the case against the diocese was tossed six months later.

None of the evidence — the victims' accounts, the witness observations, records of the repeated written and verbal complaints to diocesan officials about O'Neill's conduct — was aired in court.

That may change now. More than 10 O'Neill victims, including many of those who brought suit in 2002, have engaged the same firm that brought the original case.

They intend to sue under the Child Victims Act, said Mike Reck, an attorney with Jeff Anderson & Associates, one of the country's leading abuse law firms.

"It's very safe to say he (O'Neill) was a serial abuser. There was some information available about him (to reporters) because there were a relatively high number of survivors. That said, because the doors of the courthouse have been locked, the information about what the diocese knew and when they knew it, remains under lock and key," Reck said. "The new law, frankly, is going to blow that door open."

O'Neill will not be present. He died in December 2005 at age 68.

Accused: [O'Neill accused of sexual abuse in 2002 \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178708-O-Neill-Accused-5-8-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178708-O-Neill-Accused-5-8-2002.html)

More accusations: [Additional claims about O'Neill's conduct \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178729-O-Neill-Additional-Accusations-6-17-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178729-O-Neill-Additional-Accusations-6-17-2002.html)

Cover-up?: [People say O'Neill complaints ignored \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178761-O-Neill-Complaints-Ignored-8-9-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178761-O-Neill-Complaints-Ignored-8-9-2002.html)

Dismissed: [Lawsuit against O'Neill thrown out \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178787-O-Neill-Suit-Dismissed-12-13-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178787-O-Neill-Suit-Dismissed-12-13-2002.html)

Lawsuit: [2002 civil complaint against O'Neill \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/5674641-Mars-Et-Al-v-DOR-Rev-Robert-O-Neill-Amended.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/5674641-Mars-Et-Al-v-DOR-Rev-Robert-O-Neill-Amended.html)

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Rev. John Joseph Steger

- Ordained 1951
- St. Joseph, Wayland, assistant pastor, 1951-53
- St. Alphonsus, Auburn, assistant pastor, 1953-54
- St. Theodore, Gates, assistant pastor, 1954-68
- St. Jude the Apostle, Gates, pastor, 1968-2006
- Died 2008

The Rev. John Steger spent the first three years after his ordination in 1951 at churches in Livingston and Cayuga counties.

Then, in 1954, he was transferred to a church in Gates. His ministry in that west-side town would extend for more than a half-century, ending abruptly with his arrest for sexual abuse.

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or 15 years, and then became pastor at St. Jude the Apostle, just 2 miles west of St.

He was a fixture in Gates. In 1958 he orchestrated the construction of a school for religious education, and in 1968 celebrated the very first mass at St. Jude's, in a church fashioned from an old dairy barn.

Twenty-five years later he engineered a new, larger church building for St. Jude's to replace the first. He said the first Mass there as well.

A year later, in 1994, he overcame community concerns to preside over the construction of a senior-citizen apartment building in the town, and an expansion 10 years later.

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Rev. John Stegar, 1968 (approximate) (Photo: File photo)

He was a firefighter and the chaplain at the Gates-Chili Fire Department for many years, and became a fire commissioner. Happening on a fire at a downtown Rochester church in 1971, Steger donned an air pack and rushed inside to help rescue the Eucharist.

An avid bowler, Steger was chaplain of the Rochester Bowling Association and on May 12, 2006, he was inducted into the group's hall of fame.

Five days later he was in handcuffs, charged by Gates police with inappropriately touching a 12-year-old girl on two occasions in the preceding weeks.

Steger, who was 80 years old at the time, was placed on leave from St. Jude. He pleaded not guilty to the charges of sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child.

The criminal proceedings were delayed several times, and the charges were still unresolved when, in March 2008, Steger [died in a local hospital](https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-john-j-steger-founder-of-gates-st-jude-the-apostle-church) (<https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-john-j-steger-founder-of-gates-st-jude-the-apostle-church>).

His friends and former parishioners mourned his loss, and published an ad in the *Democrat and Chronicle* pledging never to forget his good works.

Steger in Gates: [A 1993 profile](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200169-Steger-Profile-1-19-1993.html) (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200169-Steger-Profile-1-19-1993.html>)

Arrested: [Steger charged with sexual abuse](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200421-Steger-Arrest-5-18-2006.html) (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200421-Steger-Arrest-5-18-2006.html>)

Rev. Eugene G. Emo

- Ordained 1961
- St. Patrick, Owego, Tioga County, assistant pastor, 1961-63
- St. Cecilia, Irondequoit, assistant pastor, 1963-68
- St. Mary, Dansville, assistant and associate pastor, 1968-73
- St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, Tioga County, 1973-74
- St. Michael, Newark, Wayne County, 1974-75
- St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell, Steuben County, chaplain, 1976-82

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- St. Januarius Church, Naples, Ontario County, 1987-1993
- Administrative leave, 1993-94
- Holy Trinity, Webster, assistant and resident, 1994-96
- Mercy Health and Rehabilitation Center, Auburn, chaplain, 1994
- Canandaigua VA Medical Center, chaplain, 1995-96
- Blessed Sacrament, Rochester, resident, 1996



Rev. Eugene Emo, 1961 (Photo: File photo)

Eugene Emo grew up in what's now known as the South Wedge, and was ordained in 1961.

He wound up a convicted criminal and registered sex offender for his abuse of a single victim. An unknown number of other alleged victims came forward though it does not appear that their accusations were pursued.

After rotating through a large number of churches and other postings, Emo settled at St. Januarius, a parish in small-town Naples, Ontario County, with a distinctive modernist church.

In April 1993, Emo and Bishop Matthew Clark dedicated a new community center at St. Januarius.

But almost immediately thereafter, Emo disappeared from St. Januarius, sent off on leave for what the diocese said were "health reasons." Though Emo remained a priest and had several subsequent assignments, he never returned to St. Januarius, leaving some Naples parishioners confused and unhappy.

Two years later, in February 1996, Emo was arrested by New York State Police and charged with misdemeanor sexual abuse for having sexual contact with a 33-year-old man described as mentally disabled and legally incapable of giving informed consent to such contact.

The charges were later elevated to felony sodomy and sexual abuse crimes.

The incidents had occurred in the previous year at Emo's cabin in Cohocton, Steuben County. The victim was a parishioner at nearby St. Januarius who had met Emo a decade earlier.

In many previous cases, parishioners had leaped to the defense of local priests accused of child sexual abuse, saying they had never seen any signs of misconduct.

That didn't happen with Emo. Members of St. Januarius and St. Cecilia in Irondequoit told the *Democrat and Chronicle* they'd long been suspicious of Emo and his attraction to teenage boys.

"We've known for some time that Father Emo is a man who has a very serious problem," a member of St. Januarius's parish council told the newspaper.

Emo's mysterious removal from the church two years earlier had never been fully explained, the parishioners said, but it had to do with both sexual improprieties and missing church funds.

Things had come to a head when a cleaning lady found suggestive photos of young men and a pair of handcuffs in Emo's living quarters.

Parish leaders were open in their denunciation of the diocese for allowing Emo to remain a priest for so long. "It's just too bad this thing wasn't headed off years ago," the parish council leader said. "This is a scandal in the church and society today that's just beyond my comprehension. It's Satan at work."

The diocese placed Emo on leave after his arrest and later removed him from the priesthood. Asked after Emo's arrest if the priest had been removed from other posts for similar reasons, a diocesan official said she didn't know.

In the days after his arrest, State Police said they had received numerous additional complaints about Emo, some from former altar boys who said he would "wrestle violently" with them.

The incidents dated back 10 to 32 years, which would have placed some of them early in Emo's service as a priest. But police said they wouldn't pursue any additional criminal charges because the statute of limitations had run.

In February 1997, Emo pleaded guilty to a single count of sexual abuse involving the 33-year-old. The original charges carried a prison sentence of up to 25 years but under his plea deal, Emo was given just six months in jail.

Late in 1997, Emo's victim filed suit against the former priest, the Rochester diocese and several parties in whose care the man had lived. The papers suggested Emo had molested the man multiple times over a period of years.

The suit sought \$4.25 million from the defendants. A settlement of \$31,287 was transferred into a trust set up for the victim in 1999, state Supreme Court records show. It was not clear if that was the entire settlement.

There is no record of any other legal actions being filed against Emo, likely because of the state's then-draconian statute of limitations.

Settlement of the one lawsuit was not the end of it for Emo, however. Later in 1999, he was arrested again after he was found in the company of a 16-year-old boy in violation of his probation.

The earlier sentence was rescinded and Emo was sent to state prison, where he served an additional 21 months.

Emo, now 84, has lived for years in Florida. A requirement of his criminal sentencing that he register as a Level 1 sex offender has now expired.

Arrest: [Emo charged in 1996 \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200420-Emo-Arrest-2-27-1996.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200420-Emo-Arrest-2-27-1996.html)

Allegations: [More accusers come forward \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200433-Emo-Follow-2-20-1996.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200433-Emo-Follow-2-20-1996.html)

Sentencing: [Court goes easy on Emo \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6204871-Emo-Sentenced-5-6-1997.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6204871-Emo-Sentenced-5-6-1997.html)

Lawsuit: [1996 civil complaint against Emo \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200442-Cotton-v-Rev-Eugene-Emo-NYSARC-RC-DOR-Amended.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6200442-Cotton-v-Rev-Eugene-Emo-NYSARC-RC-DOR-Amended.html)

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Rev. Joseph E. Larrabee

- Ordained 1980
- St. Mary, Dansville, 1981-82
- St. Agnes, Avon, 1982-84
- St. John Evangelist, Greece, parochial vicar, 1984-86
- Church of the Good Shepherd, Henrietta, parochial vicar, 1986-1989
- St. Louis, Pittsford, 1990-93
- Leave of absence, 1993

Virtually nothing had been made public about abuse allegations against the Rev. Joseph E. Larrabee -- until August 2019, when three separate civil suits were filed against him alleging sexual abuse of minors over a three-decade span.

Larrabee, who became a priest in the Rochester diocese in 1980, was assigned to churches in Monroe and Livingston counties.

He reportedly was serving at St. Louis Church in Pittsford in some capacity when he took a leave of absence in 1993.



St. Louis Church, 1980 (Photo: File photo/Joe Watson)

Larrabee later resigned the priesthood after one or more people came forward to accuse him of child sexual abuse, according to news reports. Nothing was made known publicly about these accusations, but Larrabee was included on the Rochester diocese's list of clergy who have been credibly accused since 2002.

He has lived outside the Rochester diocese since the mid-2000's, according to available public records.

In August, Larrabee was named in three civil suits for having "unpermitted sexual contact" with minors.

In one case, the alleged victim was a 13-year-old who Larrabee, then in St. Bernard's Seminary, met at Christ the King Church in Irondequoit in 1977.

In another case, the alleged victim was a minor age 15 to 16 who Larrabee encountered at St. John the Evangelist in Greece in 1984-85.

In the third case, the alleged victim was 15 to 17 years old and encountered Larrabee at Good Shepherd in Henrietta in 1989-91.

The cases are pending.

The list: [Diocese of Rochester list of accused priests \(https://www.dor.org/protecting-our-children/dispositions-2002-present/\)](https://www.dor.org/protecting-our-children/dispositions-2002-present/)

Rev. Foster P. Rogers

- Ordained 1966
- Christ the King, Irondequoit, assistant pastor, 1967-69
- St. Patrick, Elmira, 1969-73
- St. John the Evangelist, Greece, 1973-1975
- Assumption, Fairport, assistant pastor, 1975-78
- St. Alphonsus, Auburn, assistant pastor and pastor, 1978-98
- St. Pius X, 1998-2002

Beginning in the late 1960's, the Rev. Foster Rogers cycled through churches in Irondequoit, Elmira, Greece and Fairport before arriving at the parish where he would spend two decades. St. Alphonsus in Auburn.

He had left St. Alphonsus and was at his sixth church, St. Pius X in Chili, when the bad news hit.

On 11/10/2022, in the wake of a worldwide controversy over priest abuse, Rogers was one of three local Catholic clerics to be removed from his position due to the sexual abuse of minors. Two others were removed from their jobs in the diocesan offices, and a third was removed from his position in the diocese.

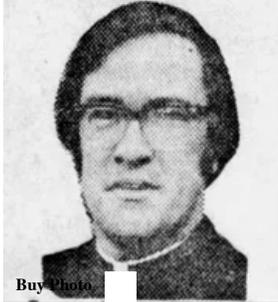
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"I'm very surprised and disappointed that it did hit so close to home. It's tougher to take," the head of St. Pius X's parish council told the *Democrat and Chronicle*, referring to Rogers' removal.

Clark's actions were based at least in part on records of past misconduct that he discovered in diocesan files.

Clark apologized profusely that day for not reviewing those files earlier.

The diocese gave information to the Monroe County District Attorney about alleged abusive acts by Rogers and the other two priests who resigned their parishes, though no action was taken because the statute of limitations had run out.



Rev. Foster Rogers, 1975 (Photo: File photo)

The publicly available information about the accusations against the other two priests who were removed that day, the Rev. David Simon and the Rev. Thomas Burr, was vague.

Not so those against Rogers. The *Democrat and Chronicle* quoted a woman who said her son had been sexually abused by Rogers in 1975. The alleged victim was a 16-year-old parishioner at the Church of the Assumption, where Rogers was assistant pastor at the time.

That man had recently gone to the diocese with his allegation, the newspaper reported. But the paper quoted a second man who said he had complained to the diocese in 1993 about sexual abuse at the hands of Rogers years earlier, but nothing had been done.

"Were it not for public scrutiny, I think this would not have happened," the man said, referring to Clark's actions that day.

Rogers later resigned from the priesthood. He is 79 years old.

Clark acts: [Bishop names Rogers a suspected abuser \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178543-Rogers-Simon-Burr-5-3-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178543-Rogers-Simon-Burr-5-3-2002.html)

Brother John Laurence Heathwood

- Final vows taken, 1954*
- Holy Cross School, Newfoundland, Canada
- St. Bonaventure College, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada
- All Hallows High School, Bronx
- Cardinal Hayes High School, Bronx
- Bishop Kearney High School, Irondequoit, 1964-74
- Iona College, New Rochelle, Westchester County
- Bishop Hendricken High School, Warwick, R.I.
- Guadalupe Regional Middle School, Brownsville, Texas
- Los Hermanos Community and St. Leo the Great parish, Bonita Springs, Florida
- Christian Brothers Central Harlem Community, New York City
- St. Joseph Residence, New Rochelle
- Died December 2016

**Chronology incomplete*

The allegations against Brother John Lawrence Heathwood were the most horrific ever aired in public against a Catholic minister in the Rochester diocese.

But the high-profile lawsuit that made those allegations was summarily dismissed before the facts could be heard in court.

Heathwood was later named a serial child sex abuser, but all information about those cases remain secret.

Heathwood, a member of the Congregation of Christian Brothers, joined the faculty of Bishop Kearney High School in Irondequoit in 1964, two years after the school's birth.

The Christian Brothers, a religious order based in Ireland, co-founded the school.

He was a hit. As a student described him in an online homage written years later, Heathwood was "a gifted classroom teacher, expert craftsman, talented musician, fair disciplinarian, exceptionally popular but painfully shy."

Heathwood originated and directed extravagant musicals at Kearney and directed a summer theater program. He phoned in reports from Ireland, where he went with the high school marching band as it performed in Dublin's St. Patrick's Day parade in 1969.

He remained at Bishop Kearney until the end of the 1974 school year, when he left for what became a lengthy stint at Iona College, an institution in Westchester County that was founded by the Christian Brothers.

After roughly a decade there, Heathwood moved to a high school in Warwick, Rhode Island.

Heathwood was about to retire from that school when, on July 1, 1993, a lawsuit filed in Rochester accused him of having repeatedly raped, sexually abused, beaten and threatened a young female student at Bishop Kearney.

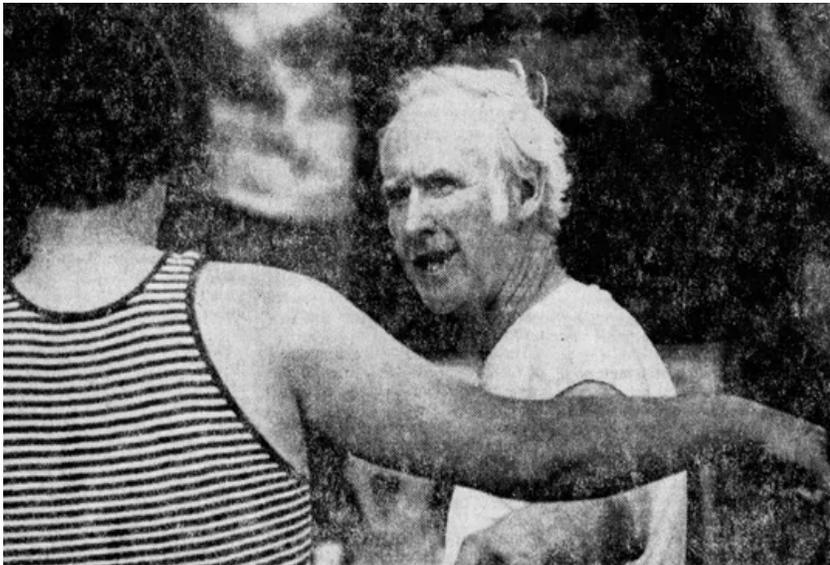
The victim, a former student at Kearney whose parents had become "very good friends" with Heathwood, said she was first attacked when she was 12 years old.

The assaults were so violent that the victim, who was 41 years old when the suit was filed, said she was unable to conceive children. She suffered many other medical and emotional symptoms from the predation, which she said continued through her high school years at Kearney and sporadically after that.

The lawsuit, filed in state Supreme Court, named Heathwood, the Christian Brothers, the high school and the diocese of Rochester as defendants.

The *Democrat and Chronicle* broke the news of the lawsuit in late July with a front-page story. It recounted the victim's tale and included disbelieving reactions from people who knew Heathwood.

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Brother John Heathwood, 1975 (Photo: File photo/John Metzger)

"I'm very shocked. He was a model brother," said a former Kearney math teacher. Added a woman who had been his student there: "I could not think of Brother Heathwood as someone involved in sexual abuse. He was such a nice person."

In a follow-up story the next day, Heathwood declined comment to the D&C other than to deny that he had made an admission of guilt to his Christian Brothers superiors. The coverage also included claims by a second former Kearney student that Heathwood had tickled and spanked her lightly in his office.

Like most other lawsuits filed against allegedly abusive Roman Catholic leaders, this one went nowhere.

Though the woman's lawyer argued the victim had only come to terms with Heathwood's abusive and remembered details in recent months, state Supreme Court Justice Harold Callaway ruled in December 1993 that the statute of limitations had run out years earlier.

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The victim pledged to fight to change New York's draconian statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases, something that did not happen until early this year.

This was the end of the public accusations against Heathwood, who apparently continued work as a Christian Brother in Texas, Florida and New York City.

In private, however, more child sexual abuse allegations against Heathwood came to light after the Christian Brothers' North American organization, beset by hundreds of complaints that brothers had violated children, filed bankruptcy in 2011.

The case, brought in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Westchester County, eventually incorporated all legal claims against brothers for sexual abuse. When a settlement was reached two years later, the religious order [agreed to pay \\$16.5 million \(/story/news/nation/2013/05/23/catholic-abuse-christian-brothers-settlement/2356003/\)](#) to satisfy about 420 abuse allegations.

The Kearney building on Kings Highway South was put up for sale to help fund the order's abuse settlement. Billionaire philanthropist B. Thomas Golisano [purchased the building in 2014 \(/story/news/2014/02/19/bishop-kearney-thomas-golisano/5617315/\)](#) for \$3.4 million and gave it to the nonprofit that was then running the school.

The names of those who filed abuse claims, the nature of their allegations and the distribution of settlement money were kept confidential in court. For this reason, it is not known if the woman who unsuccessfully sued Heathwood in 1993 was among the claimants. The *Democrat and Chronicle* has been unable to reach her or her former lawyers.

The settlement required the order to make public the names of brothers against whom multiple claims had been brought. The list, released in May 2017, consisted of 49 names.

At least five former Bishop Kearney teachers were on the list. One of them was Brother Heathwood.

By the time the bankruptcy concluded, Heathwood was beyond the reach of bad publicity. He had died at a Christian Brothers residence in Ulster County in December 2016 at the age of 87.

Accused: [Heathwood accused of sexual abuse \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6186204-Heathwood-Lawsuit-Story-7-30-1993.html\)](#)

Accused again: [New accusation, Heathwood mum \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6186203-Heathwood-Lawsuit-Follow-7-31-1993.html\)](#)

Reaction: [Stunned reaction to Heathwood claim \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6186216-Heathwood-Reaction-8-1-1993.html\)](#)

Dismissed: [Heathwood case thrown out \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6186224-Heathwood-Lawsuit-Dismissed-12-4-1993.html\)](#)

Legal papers: [Civil complaint against Heathwood \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/5674640-Maher-v-Bro-John-Heathwood-Christian-Brothers.html\)](#)

Rev. Conrad J. Sundholm

- Ordained June 1955
- Blessed Sacrament, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1955-60
- Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1960-65
- St. Mary's, Auburn 1965-71
- St. Cecelia's, associate pastor, Irondequoit, 1971-74
- St. Salome, pastor, Irondequoit, 1974-82
- Holy Family/St. Aloysius, Auburn, 1982-99
- Died 2017

The Rev. Conrad J. Sundholm had been a priest for more than a half-century and was living in retirement in Florida when an allegation surfaced of child sexual abuse in his past.

The allegation was aired by the Rochester diocese in 2009, which said that Sundholm had sexually abused a child 30 years or more earlier.



Rev. Conrad Sundholm and pet parrots, 1988 (Photo: File photo/Burr Lewis)

No details were provided beyond the fact the incident had occurred in the 1970s at St. Salome Church in Irondequoit, where Sundholm was pastor at the time.

Diocesan officials, apparently acting on a complaint from a parishioner, investigated and deemed the allegation to be credible.

No other information about that allegation, and no additional allegations, have emerged since.

Sundholm was stripped of his faculties, though he remained a priest until his death in 2017.

Accused: Sundholm named in 2009 (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175808-Sundholm-Accused-11-18-2009.html>)

Rev. Bernard A.L. Carges

- Ordained 1960
- St Stephen, Geneva, 1960-65
- Bishop Kearney High School, Irondequoit, chaplain, 1965-68
- St. Alphonsus, Auburn, assistant pastor, 1968-72
- Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester, 1972-74
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton, 1974-75
- Immaculate Conception, Ithaca, pastor, 1975-97
- St. Anthony, Groton, Tompkins County, administrator and pastor, 1997-2002
- Retired 2002
- Died 2003

The Rev. Bernard A.L. Carges, a native of Rochester, entered the priesthood in 1960 and divided the next 42 years between assignments in his home town and parishes in Tompkins and Cayuga counties.

His longest assignment was as pastor of Immaculate Conception, a position he held for 23 years. In an interview given in 1985, on the 25th anniversary of his ordination, he said he enjoyed the stability of his assignment and of the politics of the mid-1980s.

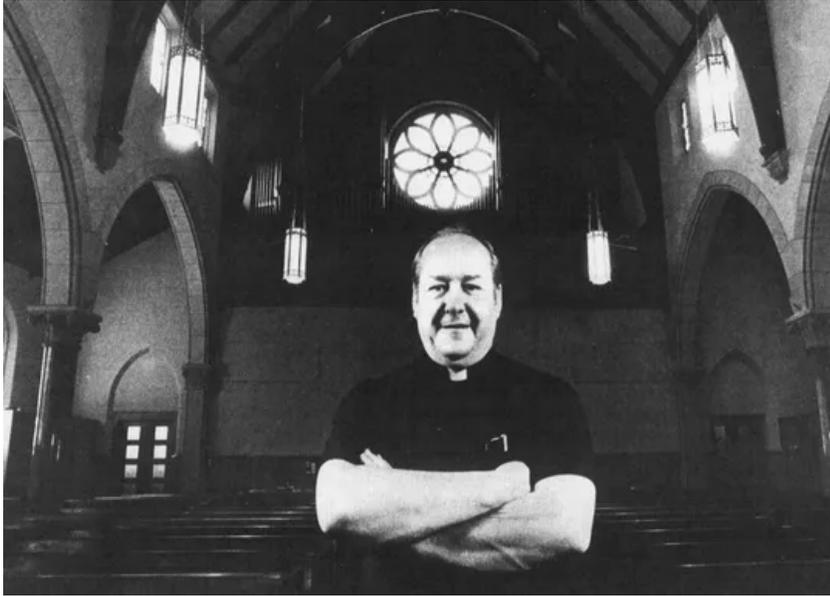
"My priority has been to keep things at peace for a while so people could settle down, start re-thinking and feel comfortable with their faith once more," he told the *Ithaca Journal*.

Carges left Ithaca in 1997 for a smaller parish in the village of Groton, Tompkins County, and, after a few years there, he retired.

His conduct as a priest was above reproach, the diocese's chancellor, the Rev. Daniel J. Condon said in early 2019.

"I have never had a complaint against him. He enjoyed a really good reputation. He was well respected and a good pastor," Condon said.

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Rev. Bernard Carges, 1985 (Photo: File photo/Ithaca Journal)

But Carges' image had been tarred by an accusation brought to the diocese and adjudicated through its voluntary reconciliation program in 2019.

The accusation came from a man who said that as a 12-year-old boy, he had been sexually abused by Carges in the summer of 1974 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, where Carges was then assigned.

The man's claim was deemed credible by Robert Lunn, the former state Supreme Court justice who ran the reconciliation program, and \$125,000 in compensation was paid.

No other information about the accusation has been made public, and no other accusers have come forward.

Silver anniversary: [Carges celebrates 25 years a priest \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6192781-Carges-25th-Anniversary-Ithaca-Journal-Wed-Jul.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6192781-Carges-25th-Anniversary-Ithaca-Journal-Wed-Jul.html)

Accusation: [Carges named as suspected abuser \(/story/news/2019/03/01/catholic-priest-abuse-scandal-includes-rochester-ny-nun-priests/3017304002/\)](/story/news/2019/03/01/catholic-priest-abuse-scandal-includes-rochester-ny-nun-priests/3017304002/)

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Rev. Francis H. Vogt

- Ordained in 1938
- St. Anthony, Elmira, assistant pastor, 1938 to 1942
- Holy Family, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1942
- US Army, chaplain, 1942-46
- St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1946-50
- St. Salome, Irondequoit, assistant pastor, 1950-53
- St. Bridget, Rochester, assistant pastor 1953-61; pastor, 1961-77
- St. Anne, Palmyra, 1977-82
- Retired 1983
- Died 2006

In 2002, The Rev. Francis Vogt was one of the first Catholic priests in the Rochester diocese to be publicly accused of being a serial pedophile.

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ned in multiple lawsuits alleging pedophilic activity.

Vogt, one of nine children, was born in 1912 and grew up in northeast Rochester attending services and school in the Holy Redeemer parish near Hudson and Clifford avenues. His uncle, the Rev. Jacob Staub, was Holy Redeemer's pastor when Francis was young.

Francis Vogt was ordained a Catholic priest in 1938, joining his older brothers George and Joseph in the Rochester diocese clergy.

Vogt spent time at churches in Elmira, Rochester and Irondequoit, interrupted by a stint as an Army chaplain during World War II.

In 1953, he arrived at one of the city's oldest parishes, St. Bridget's, centered near St. Paul Street in northeast Rochester.

Most of the allegations of sexual abuse that have been laid so far date to his time at St. Bridget's.



Rev. Francis Vogt at St. Bridget, 1964 (Photo: File photo)

But at the time, there was no public talk of misconduct. Vogt would stay there for a quarter-century, drawing praise for his administration of a church and parish school that were overflowing with immigrants.

He helped start a center to aid the city's burgeoning Puerto Rican population, boasted in a 1964 news story of "a real melting pot in the finest sense of the word," and gave talks to suburbanites on "inner city children."

In February 1968, however, his church became enmeshed in controversy when Bishop Fulton Sheen announced the diocese would donate the parish property for use as low-income housing.

Parishioners howled in protest and priests mounted a rare open challenge to their bishop. Vogt was quoted saying Sheen was making "a mistake" because St. Bridget's "was the most important thing in the neighborhood."

The bishop backed down later that year and St. Bridget's remained open until 1997.

Vogt left the church in 1977 and ended his career at St. Anne's in Palmyra, Wayne County. He retired in 1982.

In 1993, when Vogt had reached the age of 81, at least one man approached the Rochester diocese to accuse the priest of having abused him during the priest's time at St. Bridget.

This accusation was not publicly announced at the time, and it is not known what action, if any, the diocese took in 1993.

In 2002, accusations that Vogt had sexually abused children went public.

In May of that year, during a period of nationwide publicity about sexually abusive priests, another man approached the diocese about Vogt's conduct. He, too, said Vogt had abused him some 30 years earlier when at St. Bridget.

Finally, in August of that year, diocesan officials acknowledged to a *Democrat and Chronicle* reporter that the 1993 and May 2002 allegations against Vogt were credible.

D&C reporter Jay Tokasz wrote that he'd found four more men who claimed to have been sexually abused by Vogt at St. Bridget. One of them said many other boys — perhaps as many as 100 — had fallen victim to Vogt at the northeast Rochester church and school.

Vogt was then 90 years old, in poor health and with faulty memory, and diocesan officials said he could neither confirm the accusations nor debunk them. Friends and former parishioners had no such problem; several wrote letters to the editor defending Vogt as a virtuous man. One called the accusations "ghastly" and "an outrage."

Vogt died at the Sisters of St. Joseph infirmary in Pittsford in 2006.

Now, more allegations are swirling.

In June 2019, a Rochester-area man filed a lawsuit asserting that in the late 1960' his family had lived in Holy Redeemer parish, where Francis Vogt's elder brother, Msgr. Joseph Vogt, was then pastor.

The man's family got to know the Vogt brothers through the church. In fact, they rented a home from the brothers, and later purchased it.

In 1969, the court papers allege, the plaintiff was five years old when Francis Vogt, who was pastor at St. Bridget's, began to sexually assault and abuse him. This occurred repeatedly at the family home and at a downtown Rochester pool and recreation facility then owned by Catholic Charities' CYO.

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There would be more.

On Aug. 14, the the first day that New York's Child Victims Act allowed people to bring suit for old claims of child sexual abuse, four additional legal actions were filed against Vogt.

Three of the suits related to Vogt's time at St. Bridget's. They accused the late priest of engaging sexual misconduct with a 10-year-old altar boy in 1955, at times during outings to a swimming pool; with another 10-year-old boy in 1965, and with a third boy over a four-year period beginning in 1962. That boy was eight years old when Vogt first abused him, his lawsuit said.

Another lawsuit filed on Aug. 14 accused Vogt of sexually abusing a child of 10 and 11 years in 1979 and 1980 while Vogt was pastor at St. Anne in Palmyra.

Lawsuits say they expect more legal actions to be filed against Vogt.

St. Bridget: [Vogt on his parish \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6188793-Vogt-on-His-Parish-5-20-1964.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6188793-Vogt-on-His-Parish-5-20-1964.html)

Accused: [Vogt named as suspected abuser \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6188794-Vogt-8-24-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6188794-Vogt-8-24-2002.html)

Sued: [Civil complaint against Vogt, June 2019 \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6189210-Vogt-Joseph-DOR-Complaint-2019-06-10.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6189210-Vogt-Joseph-DOR-Complaint-2019-06-10.html)

Rev. Ronald P. Frederick

- Ordained 1969
- Good Shepherd, Henrietta, assistant pastor, 1969-73
- Church of the Assumption, Fairport, assistant pastor, 1973-75
- St. Pius X, Chili, associate pastor, 1975-79
- St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit, associate pastor, 1979-82
- St. Philip Neri, Rochester, associate pastor, 1982-83
- St. Ambrose, Rochester, associate pastor, 1983-85
- St. Mary, Canandaigua, parochial vicar, 1985-90
- St. Francis de Sales, Geneva, temporary administrator, 1991
- Northern Cayuga Cluster, parochial vicar, 1991-93
- Medical leave, 1993-99
- Died 1999

The Rev. Ronald Frederick, a Rochester native who was ordained in 1969, was assigned over a period of 25 years to nine churches or parishes in the Rochester diocese.

In 1993, during his assignment in Cayuga County, Frederick fell ill and went on medical leave. He died in 1999 without returning to active service.

There was no public mention of misconduct on his part.

But in 1997, a young man had filed a lawsuit in state Supreme Court that accused Frederick of sexually abusing him. It also accused the diocese of negligently hiring Frederick without investigating whether he had "a propensity to engage in unlawful sexual contact with young boys or possessed other similar proclivities."

The lawsuit alleged that the plaintiff and his grandmother traveled with Frederick to Niagara Falls in February 1990. The legal complaint did not say how the family knew Frederick, who was assigned to St. Mary Church in Canandaigua at the time.

Frederick allegedly "induced plaintiff to sleep in the same bed with him, during the course of which Frederick sexually abused plaintiff." The abuse caused severe emotional trauma, the complaint said.

The young man and his family said they complained to the diocese about Frederick's behavior while the victim was still a minor. It is not known how the diocese reacted.

The young man filed suit shortly after he reached adulthood, which allowed him to avoid being cut off by New York's then-draconian statute of limitations for child sexual abuse.

Frederick and the diocese settled the lawsuit and agreed to pay compensation to the victim, according to the man's lawyer. Frederick died not long after the lawsuit was resolved.

No other complainants have come forward publicly.

Accused: [Frederick accusation cited \(/story/news/2019/02/28/catholic-priest-abuse-rochester-ny-child-victims-act/29491970\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178636-Simon-Leaves-St-Mgt-Mary-Press-and-Sun-Bulletin.html)

Rev David P. Simon

- Ordained 1967
- St. Patrick's, Victor, assistant pastor, assigned in June 1967-71
- St. Stephen, Geneva, 1971-75
- St. Francis de Sales High School, Geneva, chaplain, 1971-75
- St. Augustine's, Chili Avenue, Rochester, co-pastor, 1975-77
- St. Mary, Dansville, 1978
- Holy Name of Jesus, Greece, 1979-83
- St Margaret Mary, Apalachin, Tioga County, pastor, 1983-99
- St Paul, Webster 1999-02

In May 2002, the *Democrat and Chronicle* pressed Bishop Matthew Clark to explain why several priests who had been accused of sexually abusing minors were still wearing clerical collars.

It was a time of controversy, just months after the *Boston Globe* had scandalized the nation by exposing a church cover-up of pedophile priests.

Clark, noting the "swirl of publicity," responded by placing three priests from their parish churches and placing them on leave.

The 61-year-old pastor of St. Paul's in Webster, the Rev. David P. Simon, was one of them.

But exactly what he was believed to have done, and where, has never been disclosed.

All that has been reported publicly is that he was accused of abusing one or more teenage boys between 1973 and 1982. Simon was assigned to four churches in three counties during that time period.

One or more minors had complained about Simon's abuse around the time it happened, but he was not removed from the ministry. Some reports said those complainants came forward again in 2002.

The diocese made a show of turning over its records of abuse by Simon and the other two priests, though no action was taken because the statute of limitations had run out.



Rev. David Simon in church, 1977 (Photo: File photo)

Clark also apologized profusely in May 2002, saying it had never occurred to him to review the files that would have disclosed accusations against Simon and the other two priests. The accusations had arisen before Clark replaced Joseph L. Hogan, who was Rochester's bishop from October 1969 to November 1978.

Clark also said it would have been "offensive, in my mind, to review the work of my predecessor without cause."

Simon's name re-emerged in 2018, when Boston lawyer Mitchell Garabedian said he had one or more clients who had been abused by Simon and were prepared to file suit.

Garabedian also released no information about when and where the acts allegedly occurred.

Simon was removed from the ministry in 2002 but remains an ordained priest. He was instructed to lead a life of prayer and penance.

Moving on: [Simon leaves St. Margaret Mary, 1999 \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178636-Simon-Leaves-St-Mgt-Mary-Press-and-Sun-Bulletin.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178636-Simon-Leaves-St-Mgt-Mary-Press-and-Sun-Bulletin.html)

Ousted: [Simon removed over abuse allegations \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178543-Rogers-Simon-Burr-5-3-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178543-Rogers-Simon-Burr-5-3-2002.html)

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[records \(/story/news/2018/06/06/priests-rochester-diocese-accused-sexually-](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178543-Rogers-Simon-Burr-5-3-2002.html)

Rev. G. Stuart Hogan

- Ordained, Syracuse, 1924
- Sacred Heart Church, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1924-1931
- University of Rochester women's college, chaplain, 1931-1935
- Sacred Heart Academy, Rochester, chaplain 1931-1935
- St. James the Apostle, Trumansburg, Tompkins County, pastor, 1935-45
- St. Francis Solanus, Interlaken, Seneca County, pastor, 1935-45
- St. Mary, Geneseo, pastor, 1945-50
- St James, Waverly, Tioga County, pastor, 1951-61
- St. Gregory, Marion, Wayne County, pastor, 1961-65
- Retired, 1965
- Died, 1985

G. Stuart Hogan, a native of Rochester, was ordained a priest in 1924, when Model T's bumped along Main Street and flappers drank bootleg champagne in hotel bars.

Hogan retired in 1965, having spent most of his career in small-town churches like those in Interlaken, Waverly and Marion.

He lived 20 more years, dying at the age of 87.

But it wasn't until 2018, 120 years after Hogan's birth, that he was publicly accused of sexual misconduct.

The accusation came when a local woman and her lawyer stood on the steps of Sacred Heart Cathedral, the same church where Hogan had begun his pastoral career so many decades earlier.

The woman said that Hogan had sexually assaulted and abused her in 1962 and 1963, when he was pastor of St. Gregory Church in Marion, Wayne County. She was 15 to 16 years old at the time.

The accuser said that Hogan's actions had been reported to the Rochester diocese but that nothing had been done.

In September of this year the woman filed suit against the diocese. The suit is pending.

Obituary: [Rev. G. Stuart Hogan dies in 1985 \(http://lib.catholiccourier.com/1985-courier-journal/courier-journal-1985%20-%200317.pdf\)](http://lib.catholiccourier.com/1985-courier-journal/courier-journal-1985%20-%200317.pdf)

2018: [Hogan accuser, others call for Bishop Matano to release sex abuse files \(/story/news/2018/12/11/rochester-priest-sex-abuse-bishop-matano-release-files-diocese-robert-hoatson-carol-dupre/2275627002/\)](https://www.247radio.com/story/news/2018/12/11/rochester-priest-sex-abuse-bishop-matano-release-files-diocese-robert-hoatson-carol-dupre/2275627002/)

Rev. William D. Lum

- Ordained June 1969*
- St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit, 1970s
- University of Rochester Catholic chaplain, 1980s
- Our Lady of Mercy, Greece, 1990s

**Chronology incomplete*

William D. Lum, who grew up in Rochester, was ordained in 1969. He was an activist for peace in the early 1970s and was engaged in the community on many topics over the years.

But in April 1997 he was led in handcuffs into a courtroom, charged with sexually abusing a 16-year-old boy while the priest served at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Greece.

The boy said Lum had forced him to engage in sexual acts. His parishioners in Greece said they were shocked, and they defended him as a good priest. Many said people were judging him prematurely.

But Lum admitted to the sexual misconduct and pleaded guilty in August 1997 to a misdemeanor count of sexual abuse. He was given a conditional discharge and got in no further legal trouble.

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The victim, later identified as Paul Hearty, filed suit against Lum and the diocese. Because Hearty filed relatively quickly after the criminal charge was brought, his claim was not blocked by the New York's then-draconian statute of limitations.

Because the case was filed in state Supreme Court in Onondaga County, it proceeded without being noticed in Rochester.

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Rev. William Lum under arrest, 1997 (Photo: File photo/Burr Lewis)

For that reason, Lum disappeared from the public eye. It later emerged he had gone to Canada for a time, and then served as a judge on a diocesan tribunal that makes decisions regarding marriages, annulments and remarriages.

Suddenly, in early 2002, Lum was back in the public eye. First, an appeals court ruling on the civil case drew attention to the allegations against him. Then came the focus on sexual abuse by priests that was created by the *Boston Globe's* exposure of a church cover-up in that city.

Amid that climate, diocesan officials decided to dismiss Lum from his post on the tribunal. It was later reported that the diocese had agreed to pay "a modest sum of money" to resolve Hearty's lawsuit, including funds to pay for five years of therapeutic counselling.

In a disturbing footnote, Hearty was arrested in 2005 for possession of child pornography and again in 2012 for the same offense. An expert was quoted saying some child pornographers were victims of abuse in their own childhood, though one didn't necessarily lead to the other.

Hearty was sentenced in that case to 10 years in federal prison.

Lum was permitted to remain a Catholic priest but assigned "a life of prayer and penance."

Arrested: [Lum charged with sexual abuse \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175013-Lum-Arrest-4-19-1997.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175013-Lum-Arrest-4-19-1997.html)

Guilty: [Lum pleads guilty to misdemeanor \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175017-Lum-Pleads-Sat-Aug-2-1997.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175017-Lum-Pleads-Sat-Aug-2-1997.html)

Settlement: [Diocese settles suit with Lum victim \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175022-Lum-Diocese-Settlement-5-9-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175022-Lum-Diocese-Settlement-5-9-2002.html)

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Rev. John F. Gormley

- Ordained 1959
- Holy Redeemer, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1959-62
- St. Mary, Corning, assistant pastor, 1962-65

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65-66
ty, assistant pastor, 1966-67
yler County, director, 1967-69

- Leave of absence, 1969
- Episcopal Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA, ecumenical assistant, 1969
- Resigns the priesthood, 1971

Rev. John Gormley, who was a priest for only a dozen years, was at the heart of one of the saddest, strangest and most maddening tales of child sexual abuse ever disclosed in the Rochester diocese.

A native of Auburn, Gormley was ordained there in 1959. He cycled through churches in Rochester, Corning, Watkins Glen, and two Wayne County communities over the next eight years.

In 1969 he was assigned to a secular mission in Schuyler County when he left the post for a leave of absence. He remained a priest for two more years but did not serve in a church.

In 1971, Gormley gave up the priesthood and married. He lived in the Elmira area, worked in business and taught in schools and as an adjunct professor at Elmira College.

For more than two decades, Gormley's victims — and Gormley himself — wrestled in private with the damage wrought by his sexual compulsions.

But in 1993, Gormley and one of his victims had a chance encounter on a rural road in Texas, 1,500 miles from Elmira. That one-in-million meeting prompted Gormley to apologize and the victim, John Hayes, to approach the Rochester diocese about his experience.

And in June 2002, amid a nationwide flurry of recrimination over sexual abuse by priests, Hayes took his story to the *Elmira Star-Gazette*. Reporter Jennifer Kingsley conducted in-depth interviews with both Hayes and Gormley, and wrote a remarkable package of stories entitled "Sin of Secrecy."

The stories laid out that Hayes, an altar boy who grew up to be assistant district attorney in Schuyler County, was sexually abused at least twice by Gormley, who was a family friend.

Hayes told Kingsley he had been haunted his entire life by the abuse he endured. He had filed a claim with the diocese in 1993 and received a \$70,000 out-of-court settlement.

The settlement didn't assuage him. In 2002, Hayes still blamed Gormley for the abuse and also blamed the church hierarchy, which he said had shown "callous indifference" to the plight of abuse victims.

Gormley told the reporter that he, too, was haunted by what he had done.

He told the reporter that in the late 1950s, while at St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, he had engaged in inappropriate activity with a boy. Higher-ups told him to pray over it and allowed him to be ordained a priest.

Gormley further confessed that he engaged in sexual abuse of minors at his first posting, Holy Redeemer Church in Rochester.



Rev. John Gormley, 1967 (Photo: File photo/Elmira Star-Gazette)

Realizing he was troubled, the diocese transferred Gormley from Rochester to Corning, where he voluntarily underwent psychiatric counselling to control his impulses.

It didn't work. The diocese later sent him to Watkins Glen, where he met the Hayes family.

Gormley finally walked away from the priesthood in 1971, and was married not long after. His wife encouraged him to enter in-patient treatment for his sexual compulsion, which he said he'd finally been able to control.

"I have worked over 30 years in ongoing therapy to achieve and then maintain recovery," Gormley told the *Star-Gazette* reporter in 2002. "I have tried to work for reconciliation with those involved whenever possible, made amends the best I could, respected confidentiality, and sought ways to contribute productively to society."

The diocese has not released any public accounting of Gormley's admitted sexual abuse of minors while posted in Rochester.

In a startling coda to the story, another man — not Hayes — filed suit against Gormley in August 2019. That man alleged that Gormley had sexually abused him repeatedly between 1965 and 1968 while posted to St. Mary on the Lake in Watkins Glen.

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r to the man's parents and other family members in 1994, admitting his sexual abuse.
ictimization, according to the lawsuit.

Gormley blamed his conduct on "that insane behavior of mine which stemmed from the deep pathology I was laboring under at the time," according to the letter as quoted in the lawsuit.

Gormley's letter also asserted that "diocesan personnel were aware of this disorder of mine at the time of the incidents (involving the plaintiff), through my acknowledgement to them of the problem and the seeking of appropriate help for myself and for those affected, and continued to employ me without affording me that help or affording those affected by these behaviors with appropriate support and help for themselves."

The lawsuit said the plaintiff had never been contacted by the diocese.

Sin of Secrecy: [2002 stories on Gormley and a victim \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6212978-Gormley-6-9-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6212978-Gormley-6-9-2002.html)

Rev. Robert Gaudio

- Ordained 1974*
- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brockport
- St. Alphonsus, Auburn, assistant pastor
- St. Andrew, Rochester
- Holy Name of Jesus, Greece
- St. Monica, Rochester, pastor, 1985-92
- St. Anne, Palmyra, and St. Gregory, Marion, pastor, 1992-2004
- St. Christopher, Chili, pastor, 2004-2019
- Administrative leave, 2019
- *Chronology incomplete*

Over the course of 45 years, the Rev. Robert Gaudio was assigned to eight churches in Monroe and Wayne counties. He was pastor at three of them, including St. Christopher in Chili, where he began in 2004.

His stay there ended abruptly in February when he was pulled from St. Christopher's after the Rochester diocese received an allegation that Gaudio had sexually abused a 14-year-old altar boy in the 1970s.

Parishioners at St. Christopher's learned their priest had been removed from an announcement at Mass on Feb. 24. The abusive acts allegedly occurred while Gaudio was assigned to St. Andrew Church in northeast Rochester.

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St. Andrew Church, 2010 (Photo: File photo/Will Yurman)

Gaudio vehemently denied the accusation, according to a statement released by the diocese. "I never did this," he was quoted as saying. The diocese also said it had never before received complaints of that nature against Gaudio.

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er Brian DeLafranier said he met Gaudio at a time he was undersized and

"Eventually, he started touching me like a friend would, putting his arm around me — that sort of thing. Then it progressed. He eventually started doing things to me that made me feel embarrassed, ashamed and hurt," the man said in his written statement. "I didn't know what to do. I felt it was wrong. I finally resisted him, which was hard to do. When I did, he immediately lost interest in me as an altar boy and as a friend.

"I was devastated in so many ways. It damaged my self-esteem, stole my faith and left me feeling embarrassed, dirty and ashamed. This was a turning point in my young life. I spiraled downward from there," the man said.

He said he'd come forward when he did because he'd seen a news report about other abuse victims seeking compensation and reconciliation from the diocese.

In August, a man filed suit against Gaudio, claiming he had been sexually abused by the priest at St. Andrew on Portland Avenue in 1979.

The lawsuit may have been filed by the same man whose allegations caused the diocese to remove Gaudio from active ministry in February 2019, though that has not been confirmed.

Gaudio, who is in his early 72, remains on leave pending a diocesan investigation the allegations. He cannot involve himself in any public ministry.

Gaudio removed: [Rochester priest placed on leave pending investigation into 1970s child sexual misconduct allegation \(/story/news/2019/02/24/rochester-priest-administrative-leave-robert-gaudio-sexual-misconduct-investigation/2971753002/\)](#)

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Rev. Vincent Panepinto

- Ordained June 1967
- St. Philip Neri, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1967-72
- St. Anthony, Elmira, assistant pastor, 1972-77
- Becket Hall residence, Pittsford, spiritual director, 1978-82
- St. Michael, Rochester, pastor, 1982-91
- St. Thomas, Elmira, 1991-92
- Elmira Correctional Facility, Elmira, chaplain, 1992-96
- Willard Drug Treatment Center, Seneca County, 1997-2001
- St. Francis de Sales, Geneva, 1999
- Five Points Correctional Facility, Willard, Seneca County, chaplain, 2001
- Our Lady of the Americas parish, Rochester (included Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier and Corpus Christi churches), pastor, 2001-10
- Monroe County Jail, chaplain, 2004-07
- St. Francis Xavier Cabrini parish, Rochester (included St. Michael's, Annunciation and Our Lady of the Americas churches), sacramental minister, 2010-11

Vincent Panepinto, ordained in June 1967, served in parishes in Rochester and in Elmira.

"Father Vinnie," as some called him, proved to be an active, outgoing, popular priest. He spoke Spanish as well as English and embraced a multi-cultural ministry.

"I'm not Hispanic — my own descendancy is Italian. And neither am I black. But I find it very satisfying to live here, even with the problems that exist," Panepinto was quoted as saying in a 1986 *Democrat and Chronicle* story about North Clinton Avenue where his parish, St. Michael's, was centered.

He served as chaplain at the at Monroe County Jail, Our Lady of Mercy high school, two state prisons and a state drug-treatment center in Seneca County and became a go-to priest for reporters who wanted to witness a special service or glean thoughtful perspective.

He wore his heart on his sleeve.

"I see money directed to national defense while children are deprived of an excellent education — why? When I attend the funeral of a teenager killed on the streets — why? So many die of genocide and the world provides very little help — why?" he wrote in a 2005 opinion column for the D&C.

"The answer is that we need a greater power in our lives to deal with those whys."

But something had happened early in Panepinto's tenure as a clergyman and in late March 2011, at age 69, he was abruptly pulled from his parish assignment and told he could no longer serve as a priest.

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Rev. Vincent Panepinto, 2005 (Photo: File photo/Will Yurman)

"An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor dating back to the late 1960s has been made against ... Panepinto and deemed credible after an investigation," the Rochester diocese said in [a public statement](http://www.dor.org/index.cfm/news/news-docs/diocese-statement-on-abuse-complaint/) (<http://www.dor.org/index.cfm/news/news-docs/diocese-statement-on-abuse-complaint/>).

No other information has ever reached the public eye about this accusation, and no additional accusations against Panepinto have come to light.

An online discussion group launched shortly after his removal is filled with praiseful comments from friends and parishioners. "The entire parish was shocked to hear the sad news at the end of Mass. I'd have to agree that he is loved and respected by the people of Our Lady of the Americas," one person wrote.

But another parishioner recalled Panepinto's "peculiar" last homily, delivered at St. Andrew the Sunday before the diocese disclosed the allegations against him.

He spent time discussing the lives of two saints and their "serious sexual sins," and then said 90 percent of men both young and old were guilty of such sins.

"Father Panepinto made comments to relay that it didn't matter and it was trivial in regard to carrying out God's mission. He kept repeating that message and pretty much ended his homily with the line, 'serious sexual sin, so what?!'" [the parishioner wrote](http://www.cleansingfire.org/2011/03/fr-vincent-panepinto-suspended-following-allegation/) (<http://www.cleansingfire.org/2011/03/fr-vincent-panepinto-suspended-following-allegation/>).

His downfall after 44 years a priest came with an odd footnote. Four months after being pulled from his ministry, the *Democrat and Chronicle* reported that Panepinto had been arrested for stealing \$10,000 from Our Lady of the Americas parish several years earlier.

The story said Panepinto had told the diocese he was being blackmailed. No other information about the blackmail was contained in court documents available at the time, and it was not clear if the blackmail was related to the accusation of sexual abuse.

Panepinto made restitution to the parish, according to the diocese, and the criminal charges apparently were dropped.

The accusation against Panepinto is one of the most recent to be made against a priest in the Rochester diocese. He remains a priest, directed to live a life of prayer and penance.

In 2019, an accusation emerged in a lawsuit that Panepinto had sexually abused a minor male starting when the boy was 5 years old and continuing for a full decade

Panepinto was studying for the priesthood at St. Bernard's Seminary when the abuse began in 1960, the lawsuit asserted, and continued after Panepinto was

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It was not clear if the plaintiff in the lawsuit was the same person whose private complaint led to Panepinto's removal from the ministry in 2011.

Accused: [Panepinto named as suspected abuser \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6181700-Panepinto-Accused-of-Abuse-3-28-2011.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6181700-Panepinto-Accused-of-Abuse-3-28-2011.html)

Missing money: [Panepinto accused of larceny \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6181701-Panepinto-Accused-of-Grand-Larceny-7-21-2011.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6181701-Panepinto-Accused-of-Grand-Larceny-7-21-2011.html)

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Rev. Albert H. Cason Jr.

- Ordained June 1962
- Good Shepherd, Henrietta, assistant pastor. 1962-63
- Sacred Heart, Auburn, assistant pastor. 1963-68
- St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, 1969-73
- St. Patrick, Owego, Tioga County, co-pastor, 1974-85
- Diocese of Rochester, sick leave, 1986
- Diocese of Rochester, unassigned, 1987-88
- Removed from ministry, 2002

The Revs. Albert H. Cason Jr. and Robert F. O'Neill have separately been accused of sexually abusing numerous young people and each is expected to be the subject of multiple lawsuits against the Rochester diocese.

The two men grew up contemporaries in Rochester and, oddly, were ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral on the same day in June 1962.

Cason, who reportedly was a counselor at the diocese's Camp Stella Maris before he was a priest, had a lengthy, varied career in the cloth.

It was at his fourth assignment, as co-pastor of St. Patrick's Church in the Southern Tier village of Owego, when Cason was pulled from the ministry in June 1985 over allegations he had sexually abused boys in the parish.

The allegations were made to the Rochester diocese and to the Tioga County Sheriff's Office. Deputies investigated, but said later that the families involved declined to press charges. They made no public disclosure of the allegations.

Some members of the parish knew of the allegations, it was reported later, and some did not. The diocese placed Cason on leave but did not publicly explain his removal from St. Patrick's.



Rev. Albert Cason, 1972 (Photo: File photo)

Cason remained a diocesan priest but was not assigned to another church, according to the diocese.

The truth about the allegations against Cason emerged amid the nationwide controversial over sexual abuse by priests that followed the *Boston Globe's* seminal report on the subject in January 2002.

Three months later, the Rochester diocese acknowledged that several priests here had been disciplined for abuse. Among them was Cason who, the diocese acknowledged, had been credibly accused 17 years earlier.

In late 2002 and early 2003, approximately 10 lawsuits were filed against the Rochester diocese and the Vatican, claiming they were responsible for Cason's misconduct.

Most of them also named St. Patrick in Owego as a defendant, saying he had sexually abused minors while assigned there.

One complaint filed by a 36-year-old man identified in the suit as John Doe alleged that Cason took boys on recreational outings and camping trips, allowed them to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana.

The suit alleged that the youth was about 10 when Cason began to fondle, molest and at times forcibly rape him. The young man went on to a troubled life that he blamed on Cason's abuse.

One lawsuit was filed against the diocese in Monroe County. In it, a 47-year-old man who also used the John Doe pseudonym said he had been molested by Cason while he was an altar boy at St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport, where Cason was assigned from 1969 to 1973.

The priest was a trusted authority figure and a friend of the boy's family, the court papers alleged. Cason took the youth on overnight trips and outings, and over the course of a year fondled and abuse him many times. He allegedly attempted to rape the boy at least once during a camping trip.

The lawsuits all alleged the diocese had been aware of Cason's abusive nature before assigning him first to St. John Evangelist and then to St. Patrick's in Oswego. The papers also alleged that officials in both parishes were aware of Cason's proclivities but did nothing to stop him.

The lawsuits were dismissed because of New York's then-draconian statute of limitations and on other grounds. Appeals were filed but the dismissals were upheld.

Cason left the priesthood sometime after 2002. He reportedly is still alive.

Ronald Benjamin, a lawyer in Binghamton who brought the lawsuits involving Cason, said earlier this year he was considering bringing fresh claims under the Child Victims Act.

Accusations aired: Revelation that Cason had been accused years earlier (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6269207-Cason-4-18-2002.html>).

Victim speaks: A Tioga County man talks about his abuse (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175027-Cason-Victim-Speaks-5-5-2002.html>)

Spencerport suit: 2002 civil complaint against Cason in Monroe County (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175032-John-Doe-Spencerport-v-Holy-See-Cason-Complaint.html>)

Owego suit: 2002 civil complaint against Cason in Tioga County (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6175031-John-Doe-Oswego-v-Holy-See-Cason.html>).

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Rev. Dennis R. Sewar

- Ordained 1983
- St. Helen, Gates, associate pastor, 1984-88
- Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fairport, associate pastor, 1989-91
- St. James, Irondequoit, 1992-95
- St. Mary, Waterloo, 1998
- Church of the Annunciation, Rochester, pastor, 1999-2003
- St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, 2004-05

On July 22, 2005, Sewar was arrested by Rochester police and charged with sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child.

When the news hit the media two days later, the Rochester diocese issued a statement saying it had received an accusation against the long-time Rochester-area priest and forwarded it to the authorities.

His accuser, a young man, told those authorities that Sewar had befriended him in 1999 when he was a teenager. Sewar was pastor of the Church of the Annunciation on Norton Street in Rochester at the time.



Rev. Dennis Sewar booking photo, 2005 (Photo: File photo)

The young man said that Sewar fondled him through his clothes on many occasions over a two-year span while the two of them sat in Sewar's quarters, often while they watched baseball on television.

"I was uncomfortable with this but I was afraid to tell him to stop," the alleged victim said in a deposition filed in court. "He had become a father figure to me and I did not want to upset him."

At the time of his arrest, Sewar had been on leave from his post as pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport for reasons that were never specified.

A year after his arrest, Sewar reached a deal that allowed him to plead guilty to endangering the welfare of a child, a misdemeanor. Because the sexual abuse count was dropped, he avoided having to register as a sex offender.

See

t the country.

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Sewar's name hit the news against in September 2008, when he was fired from a primary school in Hong Kong after a parent stumbled on news stories about his conviction in Rochester.

At some point, either before the Hong Kong incident or afterward, Sewar was involuntarily removed from the priesthood.

Arrested: [Rochester diocese statement on Sewar's arrest in 2005 \(https://www.dor.org/wp-content/uploads/07.24.05-DS-Arrest.pdf\)](https://www.dor.org/wp-content/uploads/07.24.05-DS-Arrest.pdf)

In court: [Sewar to answer charges \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178578-Sewar-Due-in-Court-7-26-2005.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178578-Sewar-Due-in-Court-7-26-2005.html)

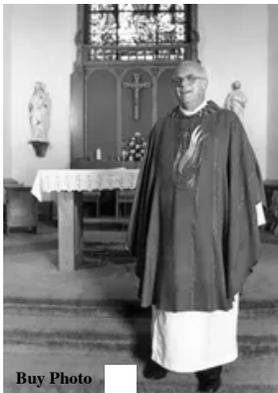
Guilty: [Sewar pleads to minor charge \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178579-Sewar-Pleads-Guilty-8-1-2006.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6178579-Sewar-Pleads-Guilty-8-1-2006.html)

Rev David N. Gramkee

- Ordained, 1966
- Immaculate Conception, Ithaca, assistant pastor, 1966-71
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton, assistant pastor, 1971-75
- St. Mary, Auburn, assistant pastor, 1975
- St. Louis, Pittsford, associates pastor, 1975-79
- Elmira Correctional Facility, chaplain, 1979-83
- St. John the Baptist, Elmira, pastor, 1983-92
- St. Cecilia, Elmira, pastor, 1983-92
- Sts. Peter and Paul, Elmira, pastor, 1990-92
- St. Patrick, Seneca Falls, pastor, 1992-2002
- Died 2002

In 1993, more than a quarter-century after Rev. David Gramkee took his vows, a young woman informed the Rochester diocese that she had had an intimate relationship with Gramkee in the late 1970's.

Diocese officials later told the *Democrat and Chronicle* they had believed the woman was a young adult at the time of the relationship. A church panel recommended Gramkee undergo counseling but be allowed to remain in active ministry.



Rev. David N. Gramkee (1988 photo) (Photo: File photo)

The woman approached the diocese again in 2002, at a time of national uproar over child sexual abuse by priests, and indicated that she had been a minor at the time of her relationship with Gramkee.

The priest, who was then pastor of St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls, was placed on leave in June of that year so that diocesan officials could look into the allegation. Many parishioners objecting, saying they respected Gramkee and did not believe he had done anything wrong.

Gramkee died in August of that year before the diocese had reached any conclusion.

Gramkee dies: [Priest passes away two months after abuse accusation \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6508826-Gramkee-Dies-8-2-2002.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6508826-Gramkee-Dies-8-2-2002.html)

Rev. Robert Hammond

- Ordained 1967
- Holy Trinity, Webster, assistant pastor, 1967-71
- St. Michael, Newark, Wayne County, assistant pastor, 1971-74
- St. Casimir, Elmira, assistant pastor, 1980
- Notre Dame High School, Elmira, chaplain, 1980
- St. Anne, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1981-82
- Holy Ghost, Gates, assistant pastor, 1983
- St. Cecelia, Irondequoit, assistant pastor, 1984-87
- St. Mary, Bath, Steuben County, pastor, 1987-98
- St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit, pastor, 1998-2000

The 0-plus years he was active in the Rochester diocese.

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But the focus could wind up on a ninth location -- a cottage near Port Bay in Wayne County. In separate complaints filed years apart, two men say they were sexually abused by Hammond in the out-of-the-way cabin.

Robert W. Hammond was ordained a priest in 1967. Over the next two decades he hopped back and forth between churches in suburban Rochester and those in smaller communities in other counties, the Rev. Robert Hammond settled in at St. Mary parish in Steuben County in 1987.

He was pastor there for 11 years, and was active in the local Boy Scouts. In the summer of 1998, he moved back to the Rochester area when he became pastor at St. Margaret Mary in Irondequoit. It was a position he would have expected to hold down for many years.

But Hammond lasted there less than two years. In March 2000, he resigned his post at the Irondequoit parish for what were later described as "personal reasons." Hammond remained a priest, though what he did and where he lived is not clear.

In January 2003, Bishop Matthew Clark announced that someone had come recently forward to accuse Hammond of sexual misconduct. Clark said he was stripping the priest of his ability to engage in day-to-day pastoral activities while the allegation was investigated further.

That allegation came from a Rochester-area man who was then in his mid-40's, the Democrat and Chronicle reported in January 2003. He said told a reporter the same thing he'd told the diocese - that he'd been a dinner party in the cottage in the late 1970's, when he was 19 years old.

He'd wound up sharing a bed with Hammond, and inappropriate touching had taken place. The man had said nothing at the time, but told a reporter he came forward when he did because of extensive publicity in 2002 over child sexual abuse by priests.

Clark eventually concluded Hammond could remain a priest so long as he did not engage in public ministry and lived a life of "prayer and penance."

In August of this year, however, a second man stepped forward to allege he'd been sexually abused in the Port Bay cabin as well.

The man, who lived in Wayne County in the 1970's and now lives out of state, claimed in a lawsuit filed in August 2019 that Hammond had befriended him when the priest was assigned to St. Michael's in Newark.

He alleged that Hammond had sexually abused him multiple times during trips to the cottage between 1972 and 1974. He was 12 or 13 at the time, the man said in his legal papers.

The lawsuit alleges that Hammond abused "multiple other children" at the cottage but offers no evidence of such. Nathaniel Foote, a lawyer for the plaintiff, said they have no other clients at present who allege they were abused by Hammond.

Hammond, who apparently still lives in upstate New York, could not be reached for comment.

2003: [Rev. Robert Hammond not allowed to function as priest \(https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6359076-Hammond-Jan-31-2003.html\)](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6359076-Hammond-Jan-31-2003.html)

Rev. Richard J. Orlando

- Ordained, 1947
- St. Francis Xavier, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1947-54
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1954-55
- St. Anthony of Padua, Rochester, 1955-58
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1958-63
- Holy Rosary, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1963-66
- St. Helen, Gates, assistant pastor, 1966-68
- St. Michael, Lyons, pastor, 1968-93
- Retired, 1993
- Died 2006

The Rev. Richard Orlando was a priest in the Rochester diocese for more than a half-century, and spent 25 years as pastor at St. Michael in Lyons, Wayne County.

After he died in 2006, colleagues described him as kind, witty, conservative, affable and "a good priest."

But in 2018, Orlando was accused in vague terms at a lawyer's news conference of sexually abusing a minor at some point in his past.

And sexually abusing a child age 12 to 13 while he was at St. Helen in Gates in 1967 and



Rev. Richard J. Orlando (1950 photo) (Photo: File photo)

-
- St. Anne, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1957-58
- St. Ann, Hornell, assistant pastor, 1958-61
- Corpus Christi, assistant pastor, 1961-66
- Catholic Relief Services, Africa, 1966-68
- Holy Rosary, Rochester, pastor, 1968-1993
- Retired 1993
- Died 2010

No other details were available. The lawsuit is pending.

Obituary: [Rev. Richard Orlando dies in 2006.](https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-richard-orlando-lyons-pastor) (https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-richard-orlando-lyons-pastor)

Rev. Robert A. Meng

- Ordained 1945
- St. Jerome, East Rochester, assistant pastor, 1945-49
- St. Alphonsus, Auburn, assistant pastor, 1949-1953
- St. Patrick, Rochester, assistant pastor, 1953-1956
- St. Aloysius, Auburn, assistant pastor, 1956
- St. Felix, Clifton Springs, assistant pastor, 1956-57

The Rev. Robert A. Meng was ordained at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral on St. Patrick's Day in 1945.

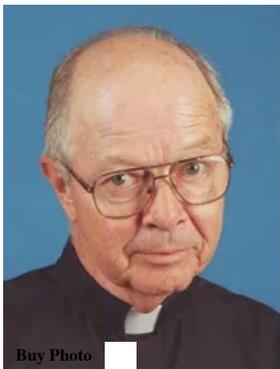
His assignments took him from Rochester-area churches to parishes in outlying small towns, and then back again. In the first 25 years of his pastoral career, Meng moved eight times.

Newspaper archives contain few references to Meng's work during this time beyond wedding and funeral announcements. Of interest, though, was a 1959 story about his leadership of the Hornell Decent Literature Committee, in Steuben County.

The group's mission was to stamp out the sale of publications that included lewd photos or drawings, portrayals of sex acts, or language that was disrespectful of authority, soft on crime or blasphemous.

After a three-year stint doing humanitarian work in Africa, Meng returned to Rochester and was named pastor of Holy Rosary on Lexington Avenue. He remained there for 26 years.

If one believes the accusations in a lawsuit filed in August, it was while he was at Holy Rosary that Meng to sexually abuse a girl.



Rev. Robert A. Meng (1994 photo) (Photo: File photo/Melissa Mahan)

The child was four years old when the abuse began, according to legal papers.

The alleged abuse, the nature of which is not spelled out, occurred from 1969 to 1972. Many of the incidents of abuse occurred in the church rectory, the legal papers say. One took place while a family member was cleaning another part of the priest's living quarters, the lawsuit alleged.

This is the only public accusation of sexual abuse made against Meng. He retired from the church in 1993 and lived another 17 years.

2010: [Obituary of Rev. Robert Meng](https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-robert-meng-longtime-priest-holy-rosary-pastor) (https://catholiccourier.com/articles/father-robert-meng-longtime-priest-holy-rosary-pastor)

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