

NEWS RELEASE

The Diocese of Peoria, Illinois

December 19, 2018

For Immediate Release:

Diocese of Peoria Responds to Report of Attorney General, Lisa Madigan

In August 2018, Attorney General Lisa Madigan approached the Diocese of Peoria seeking cooperation regarding disclosure of sexual abuse of minors by priests of the Diocese of Peoria. The Diocese of Peoria has fully cooperated with the Attorney General's requests throughout this process. Bishop Jenky took seriously the Attorney General's request that the Church needs to open their files for independent review. Bishop Jenky immediately called for a review of all clergy personnel files dating from the beginning of the Diocese in 1878. Bishop Jenky firmly believes that a review of all files was the proper way to bring truth and transparency, which will bring reconciliation for the past and hope for the future. Over 1,800 priest files were reviewed and any possible allegation of sexually inappropriate behavior with a minor in the broadest sense of the definition was isolated for further review by the Attorney General's office. This review is now complete in the Diocese of Peoria. Out of an abundance of caution and transparency, Bishop Jenky has reported to the appropriate State's Attorneys all known allegations of sexual abuse of a minor from the past regardless of how long ago that it occurred.

Since 2002, the Diocese of Peoria has removed fifteen priests from ministry. In these cases the abuse occurred prior to 2002, and in most cases occurred many decades ago.

The priests removed from ministry with credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were reviewed by the Diocesan Review Commission, which has been in place since 2002 for the purpose of reviewing allegations of abuse by clergy. The Review Commission in effect during this time period has been comprised predominately of lay people with professional backgrounds such as law enforcement, criminal and civil lawyers, education, child psychology, physicians, and past victims of abuse.

The Diocese of Peoria has also been making significant steps to continue to improve the Safe Environment and Victim Assistance Offices to include personnel that hold credentials and professional licensed in counseling in order to help respond to the needs of victims of abuse. Retired law enforcement investigators have also been retained to assist if needed in any investigation. Any victim of clergy sexual abuse of a minor is encouraged to contact law enforcement. They can also contact the Diocese of Peoria Victim Assistance number at 309-677-7082.

Since 2002, the Diocese of Peoria has always issued a public press release when a priest has been removed from public ministry. These press releases have always been posted on the Diocesan website upon their release. Additionally, a list of

priests removed from ministry and their press releases can be accessed through the Diocese of Peoria website at www.cdop.org under the Department of Safe Environment.

Additionally, the Diocese of Peoria has fully implemented the elements of the *Charter for the Protection of Children*. Since the *Charter* was implemented in 2002, the Diocese of Peoria has trained and screened more than 12,000 adults to ensure the children and young people entrusted to our care remain safe. Over 35,000 children and young people have also been educated on ways to stay safe and how to seek help when needed.

Bishop Jenky continues to express his sorrow that any child was a victim of misconduct by a priest, deacon, teacher, employee, or volunteer serving the Catholic Church. He remains vigilant in his efforts to protect our youth.

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