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# Clergy Credibly Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Diocese of Gaylord

In 2002, the Diocese of Gaylord completed a review of all of our priests' files dating back to the establishment of the diocese in 1971. The results of that effort were then reported to the prosecutors in each of our twenty-one (21) counties. At that time, we pledged to report any future allegations of sexual abuse of a minor involving clergy of our diocese to them, regardless of when the incident was alleged to have occurred, or whether the accused was living or dead. This has been, and will remain, our practice.

Over the past sixteen (16) years, we have worked diligently to learn from the past, to compassionately assist victims on a path to healing, and to do all we can to prevent any child from being abused in the future. The Diocese of Gaylord has fully implemented the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and *Essential Norms* established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002 and updated in 2005 and again in 2018. The *Charter* and *Norms* contain a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy along with preventive measures designed to help keep minors safe from harm. Among them are mandatory background checks for employees and volunteers who work with minors as well as training for adults and children to help identify warning signs, maintain appropriate boundaries and what to do should abuse be suspected. Also included are guidelines for reconciliation and healing for victim-survivors and for accountability. An independent

annual audit is completed each year which specifically evaluates the Diocese's compliance with the *Charter* and *Norms*. The Diocese of Gaylord has been found in compliance every year since the *Charter* was established in 2002.

Though we have publicly released information regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors involving clergy of our diocese previously, we understand that it may be helpful to the healing process for victim-survivors, and to our continued efforts for increased transparency, to publish and maintain a list of those clergy who served in the Diocese of Gaylord at some time and were credibly accused of abuse of minors, either locally or in another area.

The list contains those priests who lived in the Diocese of Gaylord and/or were assigned by the Bishop of Gaylord to ministry, as well as priests of religious orders, eparchies and other dioceses or archdioceses, serving here, who were named in a credible accusation of sexual abuse of a minor. Please note that religious orders function independently from any archdiocese or diocese, including in matters of reviewing abuse complaints, and this list is dependent upon the Diocese of Gaylord receiving notification from a religious order of an individual's restriction and/or removal from ministry.

Individuals on the list below who are still living are prohibited from engaging in any form of public ministry or presenting themselves publicly as priests. For purposes of this list, a "credible and substantiated allegation" against a priest or deacon who has served in the Diocese of Gaylord is an accusation that, after an investigation and review of available information, appears more likely true than not and has been accepted as credible by the bishop. The most recent credible incident of sexual abuse of a minor involving clergy in the Diocese of Gaylord is alleged to have occurred three (3) decades ago.

The list below gives the clergy's name, individual's current clerical status and date of death as applicable. This list will be updated if additional information comes forward or if there are future determinations of credible allegations. *(Last updated April 2021.)*

**Diocese of Gaylord ordained or incardinated priests against whom credible and substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been made:**

**Patrick Barrett**

Permanently removed from public ministry 2002

Deceased 2006

**Ronald Gronowski**

Permanently removed from public ministry 2002

**Lionel Harnish**

Removed from ministry 1986

Deceased 2011

**James Holtz**

Permanently removed from public ministry 2002

Laicized 2021

**Benedict Marciulionis**

Removed from ministry 1981

Deceased 2000

**Raymond Pilarski**

Permanently removed from public ministry 2006

Deceased 2017

**Terrence Raymond**

Left priesthood 1985

Deceased 1986

**Robert Gordon Smith**

Retired from ministry 1978

Deceased 1980

**John Tupper**

Removed from ministry 2002

Deceased 2004

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**This section includes the names of priests of religious orders, eparchies and other dioceses or archdioceses who served within the Diocese of Gaylord and against whom credible and substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were made, regardless of where or when the abuse took place. The priests in this section no longer are in ministry in the Diocese of Gaylord, and some are deceased.**

**Laurus Rhode, OFM**

Removed from diocese and returned to Religious Order 1993

Deceased 1995

**Leo Olschaysken, O. Praem**

Removed from diocese and returned to Religious Order 1974

Deceased 1987

**Wilbert Hegener, OFM**

Returned to Religious Order 1999

Deceased 2009

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In the State of Michigan, many professionals, including clergy, teachers, doctors, counselors, etc., are mandated reporters. These individuals are required by law to make an oral report immediately to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) if they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is being neglected or abused in any way. The MDHHS maintains a statewide reporting hotline that is answered twenty-four (24) hours a day. That hotline number is: 855.444.3911.

Further, individuals with knowledge of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church representatives are urged to contact local law enforcement and/or the Michigan Attorney General's Office at 844.324.3374. Individuals may also contact the Diocese of Gaylord

Victim Assistance Coordinator Larry LaCross at 989.705.9010. There are no time limits or restrictions on individuals wishing to report abuse.

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### Contact Us (/form/contact-us)

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