

Man Sues Diocese for Abuse By 2 Priests

By Law Offices of Joseph C. George | December 31, 2019

[Man sues diocese for abuse by 2 priests](#)

[One headed diocese's youth program at Camp Pendola](#)

["He was around 1000s of kids and young adults," attorney says](#)

[That cleric is still alive and lives in South Lake Tahoe](#)

[The other was "feared" by some as "a strong personality"](#)

[Both priests are on Sacramento diocese's 'credibly accused' list](#)

The Sacramento diocese is being sued under a new state law that soon takes effect giving potentially thousands of California adults the chance to expose child molesters who hurt them no matter how long ago.

Both clerics spent decades around kids.

A Sacramento man, identified only as "John Doe 140," says in a new civil lawsuit that he was first violated as a teenager in 1984 by Msgr. Murrough Wallace at Camp Pendola in Yuba County. Then, about two months later, he was again molested, this time by Msgr. Vito Mistretta at Holy Family church in Citrus Heights.

Both clerics were 'outed' a year ago, when Doe and his attorney/psychologist, Dr. Joseph George, held a news conference and revealed Doe's suffering. Before that, neither priest had been publicly accused of abuse.

<https://www.psyqlaw.com/blog/2018/december/he-s-never-spoken-out-publicly-before-he-s-outin/>

(At that time, KCRA TV was able to reach Msgr. Wallace but he refused to comment.)

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2018/11_12/2018_12_06_Gonzalez_SacramentoDiocese.htm

Both clerics have now been added to the Sacramento diocese's 'credibly accused' clerics list in April of this year.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/diocesan_lists/Sacramento/2019_04_30_Sacramento_List_of_Accused_Priests.pdf#page=24

According to the lawsuit, Doe was a teenager and volunteering at Camp Pendola when Msgr. Wallace sexually violated him. Then, months later, Msgr. Vito Mistretta sexually abused him at Holy Family parish in Citrus Heights.

A few years ago, Doe says he confronted Msgr. Wallace about the abuse and the priest cried and apologized. The Diocese has not acknowledged that Msgr. Wallace admitted the abuse. "I look forward to looking into Msgr. Wallace's eyes and seeing if he is willing to tell the truth, in his deposition under oath, when asked if he sexually assaulted me, or other minors or young adults at Camp Pendola or other Diocesan facilities," said Doe.

Msgr. Wallace is now 82 and believed to be living in South Lake Tahoe. For two decades, he headed the Sacramento diocese's Youth and Young Adult Ministry program.

"This takes incredible courage - to warn parents and the public about a prominent living predator priest and to expose a second deceased predator priest," said Dr. George, who represents Doe.

"Doe has suffered incredibly yet found the strength to speak up so other youngsters might be spared the horror he has endured and other victims need not suffer in silence."

Doe's lawsuit is made possible by Assembly Bill 218, which was signed into law by California Governor Gavin Newsom in October. It passed overwhelmingly in the state legislature and gives anyone who was molested as a child - no matter when the crimes took place - three years to seek justice through civil lawsuits. The law takes effect on January 1, 2020.

Called a "window," the measure is similar to a bill lawmakers enacted back in 2003. It covers abuse by any individual and cover ups by any institution, not just the Catholic church.

"These 'windows' help protect kids, expose predators, deter cover ups and heal victims," said David Clohessy, former long time executive director of SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. "And we predict that hundreds or thousands of deeply wounded California adults will step forward, get some closure and make the state safer for all girls and boys."

MSGR. WALLACE abused at least three males, according to the diocesan website. Two under the age of 25 reported their abuse to the church in 1995. Another one, under 18, reported to the church in 2018.

His crimes took place from 1971 to 1995.

<https://www.scd.org/clergyabuse/list/murrough-wallace>

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(1960-1966) and the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament (1970-1990).

Msgr. Wallace was born in 1936 (in Ireland, where he also attended seminary), was ordained in 1960, retired in 2003, came out of retirement from 2009-2010, and had his 'priestly faculties' removed in 2018, only after Doe's December 2018 news conference.

MSGR.MISTRETTA is described on a church website him as "stubborn," "a strong personality" who some "feared" because of his "strong Sicilian temperament."

https://www.scd.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/Vol_5_No_21_Mistretta_Msgs_Vito.pdf

Msgr. Mistretta abused at least four males, according to the diocesan website. One was under 18 and reported to the church in 1993. A second, of undetermined age, was reported to the church in 2018. And two more, both under 18, were reported to the church this year.

His crimes took place from 1952 to 1989.

<https://www.scd.org/clergyabuse/list/vito-mistretta>

He worked at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento (1942-1946), St. Rose of Roseville (1946-1949) and Holy Family parish in Citrus Heights (1990), a parish he founded with a parochial school that at one point was the largest in the diocese (with 700 kids). According to church sources, he "visited the school regularly and taught there weekly."

A native of New York, Msgr. Mistretta was born in 1917, went to seminary in Pennsylvania, was ordained in 1942, retired in 1990, then moved to Sacramento (living with his nephew Robert Mistretta) and died in 2002.

Doe's suit, filed in Sacramento County, seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

Several photos of both clerics are available online. And more information about them can be found at BishopAccountability.org

That same website lists 50 publicly accused Sacramento Catholic clerics.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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