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## LOCAL

# Virginia Catholic dioceses list 58 clergy with sex abuse allegations

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Published 7:47 p.m. ET Feb. 13, 2019 | Updated 8:50 p.m. ET Feb. 13, 2019

*Updated 8:45 p.m. with two priests formerly assigned in Staunton on list.*

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia's two Roman Catholic dioceses on Wednesday published lists of 58 priests credibly accused of sexually abusing minors, joining other dioceses around the country in answering calls to make public the names of abusive clergy.

The diocese of Richmond said each of the 42 priests on its list had a "credible and substantiated" allegation of sexual abuse against a child. The names of 16 priests appeared on a list released by the diocese of Arlington.

Both dioceses said the lists were published after independent reviews of all clergy personnel files. The bishops of both Richmond and Arlington said none of the clergy whose names appear are currently in active ministry. Both bishops apologized to victims in letters that accompanied the lists.

"To those who experienced abuse from clergy, I am truly, deeply sorry," Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout wrote. "I regret that you have to bear the burden of the damage you suffered at the hands of those you trusted. I am also sorry that you must carry the memory of that experience with you."

Knestout said publishing the list "can help bring about healing" and "heighten the awareness of this tragic situation."

One priest on the list, Roland Edmund Leveille, served at St. Francis Assisi Catholic Church in Staunton from 1969-1971, according to News Leader clippings from that period. He was removed from ministry in 1973 and died in 1994.

Another was pastor of St. Francis in the 1950s and 1960s. James Henry McConnell was accused of abuse after his death in 1969, the Richmond diocese said. He retired abruptly in

1964 and in a News Leader story of the time blamed "rapidly developing events in my life." He left before a replacement was named.

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The move comes as dioceses in more than two dozen states around the country have taken similar action since a grand jury report released in August alleged that more than 300 priests abused at least 1,000 children over seven decades in Pennsylvania.

On Wednesday, New Jersey's five Roman Catholic dioceses listed more than 180 priests who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors over a span of several decades.

Thirteen of the 42 priests on the Richmond list are now deceased. Six have been criminally convicted. That list covers allegations dating from the 1950s to the most recent substantiated allegation in 1993, said Deborah Cox, a spokeswoman for the diocese. The list doesn't include details about the allegations or what parishes the priests were serving in at the time.

Cox said Knestout does not know of any priests or deacons currently serving in ministry or in any other capacity with a credible and substantiated allegation of sexual abuse against them. Cox said that if victims come forward with allegations against any clergy in active ministry, Knestout "will respond in accordance with our commitment to addressing allegations of sexual abuse."

One of the priests listed by the Richmond diocese is the Rev. John P. Blankenship, who pleaded guilty in 2002 to sexually abusing a 14-year-old boy in 1982 while the boy and his mother went to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Prince George County to do housekeeping chores. Blankenship was given supervised probation and avoided a prison sentence. He was removed from ministry in 2002 and dismissed from the priesthood in 2007.

Eight of the priests on the Arlington list are deceased.

"The publishing of this list will bring a range of emotions for all of us. Embarrassment, frustration, anger and hurt are all natural emotions to experience in a time such as this. I share those emotions," Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Arlington diocese wrote.

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring said in October that his office and state police were investigating possible clergy sexual abuse of children and whether any church officials may have covered up or "abetted any such crimes."

Herring set up a hotline and an online reporting form for any victims to report abuse.

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A spokesman for Herring did not immediately return a call seeking comment Wednesday.

After the clergy sex abuse crisis exploded in Boston in 2002, U.S. bishops adopted a series of reforms, including stricter requirements for reporting allegations to law enforcement. Since then, abuse allegations have been reported in dioceses around the country.

*The News Leader contributed to this report.*

## **Richmond Diocese**

**Here's a list of priests credibly accused** of abuse as released by the Diocese of Richmond, which includes all of central and western Virginia. The diocese did not say at what parishes the priests served. Key dates in their careers are available on the Richmond Diocese website.

## **Priests of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond**

### **Last Name, First name, Status**

Beardsley, Fredrick James, Suspended/Deceased

Blankenship, John Paul, Convicted/Laicized

Bostwick, John Raymond, Removed

Butler, John Robert, Laicized

Dozier, Carroll T., Deceased

Goff, Richard Bernard, Laicized

Goodman, Julian B., Removed

Hesch, John Beaman, Deceased

Higgins, Philip J., Removed/Deceased

Leonard, John E., Convicted/Removed/Deceased

Leveille, Roland Edmund, Dispensed/Deceased

Majewski, Joseph B., Suspended

McConnell, James Henry, Deceased

Murphy, Dennis Paul, Suspended

Pham, Joseph Thang Xuan, Suspended

Rizer, James Lee, Deceased

Rodriquez, Oscar Alexander "Paul", Convicted

Rule, Steven R., Suspended

Shrader, Dwight Edward, Laicized/Deceased

Teslovic, Eugene John, Removed

**Priests ordained in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond**, alleged to have committed abuse in the present-day territory of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond and later incardinated to the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, or alleged to have committed abuse in both dioceses.

**Last Name, First name, Status**

Findlay, Harris Markam, Laicized/Deceased

Kamerdze, Paul Jude, Deceased

Krafcik, Andrew William Paul, Laicized

Munley, John Joseph, Deceased

Nudd, Robert Eugene, Deceased

Rea, John, Deceased

Reinecke, William Thomas, Deceased

Ryder, Austin Lewis, Deceased

**Religious and Priests of Other Dioceses** with allegations of abuse that occurred in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond

**Last Name, First name, Status, Affiliation**

Brady, Martin D., TOR, Deceased, Franciscan

Burkhardt, Gordian, OSB, Laicized, Benedictine

Earley, Richard, R. SSJ, Deceased, Josephite

George, Frederick, OSB, Removed, Benedictine

George, George, Convicted, Maronite

Melody, Roland (Owen John), m.s.ss., Convicted, Trinitarian

Philben, Francis M., CSS p, Deceased, Holy Ghost

Ryan, Paul David, Convicted/ Removed, Ballarat, Australia

Smalls, Oliver Joseph, Unknown, Belize, S. A.

**Religious and Priests of Other Dioceses** with allegations of abuse elsewhere, who worked in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond

**Last Name, First name, Status, Affiliation**

Bourbon, Francis R., S.J., Unknown, Jesuit

Burton, Charles Jeffries, S.J., Removed/Deceased, Jesuit

Dyer, Bernardine George, O.P., Dismissed/Deceased, Dominican Friar

Fedor, James, Laicized, Scranton

Ludwig, Augustine, OSB, Abandoned Ministry/Deceased, Benedictine

**Glossary**

As provided by the Diocese:

Clergy – Ordained bishops, priests, or deacons.

Deacon – Ordained to ministry of service, may be married. May preside at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. May preach at Mass or other services. May not preside at Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, or Anointing of the sick.

**Diocesan Priest** – Ordained to serve in the Catholic Church under a bishop who exercises supervision, provides assignments and offers support.

**Religious Order Priest** – Ordained to serve in the Catholic Church as a member of a particular religious community whose work may include duties within the diocese.

**Incardinated** – A canonical action by which a priest or deacon becomes a member of a particular diocese or religious order.

**Minor** – Any person younger than age 18.

**Removed** – A canonical action imposed by the Holy See (Vatican/Rome) through which no public active ministry is to occur, yet there remains obligation for supervision and support from the Diocese.

**Laicized/Dismissed** – A canonical action imposed by the Holy See through which no public ministry is to occur. No obligation for supervision by and financial support from the diocese or religious community remains.

**Dispensed** – A canonical action imposed by the Holy See at the request of the priest so that he is no longer obliged to public ministry. No obligation for supervision and financial support remains.

**Suspended** – A canonical action imposed by the diocesan Bishop in which no public ministry is to occur, pending the possibility of removal by the Holy See.