

# New lawsuits by 14 child sex abuse victim plaintiffs against Diocese of Pittsburgh include complaints against 3 previously unnamed priests

by **Bob Mayo**

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A dozen new lawsuits filed by 14 plaintiffs alleging child sexual abuse by priests were filed against the Diocese of Pittsburgh on Thursday by their attorney, Alan Perer.

Perer says thick stack of complaints tell story after story of victims from decades past who suffered in silence with their memories of being victimized and silenced by so-called sexual predator priests.

"They were all alone and had to live with the shame and the fear and the intimidation until now" Perer told Pittsburgh's Action News 4. He said the revelations in the Pennsylvania grand jury report on other cases triggered the plaintiffs to come forward. In August, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro released the report of the

grand jury that investigated child sexual abuse in a half-dozen Pennsylvania dioceses, including Pittsburgh.

Three of the priests named in the lawsuits were not named in the state grand jury report. The diocese, while not commenting on the lawsuit, confirmed that it had not received complaints against the three newly named priests, who are now dead..

"It's significant that the scandal and the abuse is broader than just what the grand jury came up with," Perer said.

The newly name priests are:

- The Rev. Peter Pilarski, formerly of Resurrection parish, from 1966 to 1967, when the victim was 15 to 16 years old.

- The Rev. George Leech, formerly of Saint Bartholomew parish, during 1960 to 1962 when the victim was 12 to 14 years old.

- The Rev. John Unger of Sacred Heart Elementary School, from 1969 to 1971, when the victim was 10 to 12 years old.

Seven other priests are named in the complaints. Those

priests' names do appear in the grand jury report.

Perer said Unger may be one of the priests whose name was redacted in the grand jury report.

Perer said Unger's victim was an altar boy who was repeatedly abused.

"In a tunnel connecting the school and the church, and a choir changing room, Unger actually sodomized him," Perer said.

Perer said that the altar boy was intimidated.

"He tried to avoid him. And he was also told that Jesus would harm his family if he told anybody," Perer said.

The suits argue that because information about the priests in church files were not known to the victims, the statute of limitations should not apply. They seek to expand the statute of limitations for past abuse victims.

"Our cases are against the diocese -- not against the priests, who in most cases are dead anyway. It's against the diocese for their cover-up and their concealment of this pattern of abuse that went on rampantly," Perer said.

Bishop David Zubik and Cardinal Donald Wuerl are named as defendants, along with the Pittsburgh Diocese.

