



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

NEWS

MENU

Media Release: Diocese Publishes Names of Priests Credibly Accused of Abusing Minors

September 27, 2019

Diocese of Lansing



DIOCESE OF LANSING

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE OF LANSING

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, September 27, 2019: Embargoed until 09:00 EDT

Attn: News Desks

An estimated 2.8% Diocese of Lansing priests credibly accused of abusing a minor since 1937

An estimated 2.8% of priests belonging to the Diocese of Lansing have been subject to a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor since the foundation of the diocese in 1937 – over 90% of such allegations stem from a three-decade period beginning in the 1960's. That's according to new data published by the Michigan diocese listing the names of all those priests credibly accused -- all of whom are now dead or no longer in active ministry.

“The primary intended audience of this list are victims of abuse: to encourage presently unknown victims to come forward; to help victims expose their abusers; and to assist victims in finding healing – it is also hoped that this information will assist all to ensure that such abuse never happens again,” said Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing, 27 September.

Since 1937, there have been an estimated 1,654 priests who served within the Diocese of Lansing, consisting of 471 diocesan priests, 518 religious priests, and 665 who were ordained for another diocese but who have resided, even temporarily, in the Diocese of Lansing.

The publication of today's list is the result of an internal review of reports of sexual abuse of minors made to the diocese over the past 82 years. It reveals that a total of 17 priests have been subject to a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor during that time: 13 diocesan priests; three priests from religious orders; and one priest from another diocese. The list of names was compiled by diocesan staff with the assistance of the Diocese of Lansing's Review Board for the Sexual Abuse of Minors, including past Review Board chairs.

“I think it's courageous of Bishop Boyea and the Diocese of Lansing to publish these names -- but I also think it's the right thing to do,” said Kathy Damman, a survivor of clerical sexual abuse who now helps organize healing programs for fellow victims at the Diocese of Lansing Retreat Center in DeWitt.

“We're not going to move past everything until our house is cleaned, until we are no longer hiding anything under a bushel basket, that we bring everything to the light.”

The new list and accompanying statistics reveal that the vast majority of credible allegations stem from the years between the 1960's and mid-1990's with the Diocese of Lansing not being aware of any credible allegations of clerical sexual abuse of a minor occurring since the implementation of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children in 2002. Conversely, in the vast majority of cases the alleged abuse was not reported to the diocese until after the 2002 charter was established.

"Back in the 1960's, with the sexual revolution, morals probably were not as high back then," suggests Kathy, "I think that there was a lot of promiscuity back in those days, and people turned a blind eye to what was really happening, so I think as we became more aware, things began to change, and for the better."

The published data further reveals that for these 17 priests who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse, there have been 73 total allegations against these priests. The alleged victims in these reports include 66 boys, four girls; and three where the gender of the victim was unreported.

"Since 2008 when I started helping out with retreats, the majority of the people who came on the retreat were women; there's been some men but very few," Kathy observes. "I could only imagine, as a woman, how difficult it is to be a man and especially, maybe, a married man who now has to come forward and say, you know, I was abused as a young boy by another man."

"There's an embarrassment with that but I'm hoping that, over time, more and more men will be able to come forward and get the help that they need and the help they deserve."

The Diocese of Lansing also reports that, during the time period under review, it has received a total of 155 allegations against priests alleging sexual abuse of minors. These allegations include the 73 allegations against the 17 priests credibly accused, and also allegations which were deemed to have insufficient evidence available to determine credibility, often because of the age of the report and the fact that the accused priest was already deceased. In total, that amounts to 69 clergy serving within the diocese, including those 17 credibly accused. The Diocesan Review Board is also currently considering several allegations received over the last year.

Again, the vast majority of the reports of abuse were received after 2002, and alleged abuse occurring from the 1960s to 1990s. In fact, the diocese states that there has been only been one allegation of sexual abuse of a minor alleging that the abuse occurred since 2000. That particular

allegation was promptly referred to law enforcement and, in cooperation with law enforcement, determined to be a false accusation.

All today's figures are based upon the internal records presently available to the Diocese of Lansing and will be updated should new information become available in future and especially if, as is expected, the publication of today's list encourages other victims to come forward.

"I know I am not alone in feeling deep shame and sorrow upon learning of the plight of victims in recent years," said Bishop Boyea, "I have met with many of them; all deserve our compassion, solace and support."

"As a Church, we are deeply sorry for what happened to you. As your bishop, I offer you a profound apology for the sins of my brothers. As a diocese, we are pledged to help you find healing and peace."

In recent months, more than 140 religious orders and Catholic dioceses across the United States have released lists of priests credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor with the Diocese of Lansing being the latest to do so.

"My hope in telling my story is that if there are other victim survivors out there that they know that healing and hope are possible," said Kathy, "forgiveness is possible, and that freedom is possible and that they're worth fighting for and that there are people here that are willing to walk with them on their journey."

* The Diocese of Lansing has a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse of minors. Those with credible allegations are removed from ministry. The diocese is aware of no one currently active in ministry within the diocese who has abused a child. The diocese is committed to cooperating fully with law enforcement so that anyone who harms children can be brought to justice. Reports of sexual abuse of minors brought to the diocese are shared with law enforcement and have been since at least 2002. If anyone has reason to suspect physical, sexual or emotional abuse of any person of any age, please contact Protective Services or the police, as appropriate. If abuse by anyone connected to the Church is suspected, contact the office of the Michigan Attorney General Investigation hotline at 844-324-3374. For healing and support, please also contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at (888) 308-6252 or email: vac@dioceseoflansing.org.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. For purposes of this list, the term “credible allegation” means that diocesan officials have determined, that regarding an allegation of clerical sexual abuse of a minor made to the Diocese, one or more of the following existed:
 - With the assistance of the expert Diocesan Review Board, the Bishop of Lansing determined that the allegation was credible, i.e., that the allegation appeared to be true.
 - The accused admitted the allegation;
 - The allegation resulted in a criminal conviction;
 - The allegation resulted in the accused’s removal from ministry or laicization; or
 - The allegation resulted in a civil settlement with either the accused or the Diocese.
2. A full list of all those priests credibly accused of abusing a minor within the Diocese of Lansing (1937 – 2019) can be viewed online [here](#):
3. A full interview with Kathy Damman, victim of clerical sexual abuse, can be watched or downloaded from YouTube [here](#).
4. The Diocese of Lansing was established by Pope Pius XI on May 22, 1937. It comprised of 10 counties covering 6,218 square miles: Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Shiawassee and Washtenaw counties. Major cities are Lansing, Adrian, Ann Arbor, Flint, Jackson, Owosso and Ypsilanti. It has 74 parishes. The U.S. Census Bureau estimate the total population in the 10 county area at 1,795,538. The approximate Catholic population is 195,858.
5. The boundaries of the Diocese of Lansing have changed since 1937. In May 1938, with the establishment of the Diocese of Saginaw, the counties of Allegan, Barry and Ionia were annexed from the Diocese of Lansing to the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and the counties of Genesee, Livingston and Shiawassee were annexed from the Archdiocese of Detroit to the Diocese of Lansing. In July 1971 from the Dioceses of Lansing, Grand Rapid and Saginaw, the Dioceses of Kalamazoo and Gaylord were formed. At that time, Washtenaw and

Lenawee Counties were annexed to the Diocese of Lansing from the Archdiocese of Detroit. The diocesan boundaries have remained unchanged since.

The Story of a Survivor: Meet Kathy Damman



Share

Tags

Office of Child and Youth Protection

Related news



Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Church
Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Church



Prayer and Penance for the sins of the Bishops

Prayer and Penance for the sins of the Bishops



Diocese of Lansing welcomes Michigan Attorney General investigation

Diocese of Lansing welcomes Michigan Attorney General investigation

STAY CONNECTED

FOLLOW
DIOCESE OF LANSING

FOLLOW
BISHOP BOYEA

FOLLOW
FAITH MAG

CONTACT
SIGN-UP E-NEWS

SITEMAP
OUTREACH MASS

Diocese of Lansing: 228 N. Walnut St | Lansing, MI 48933 | 517-342-2440 • FAITH Catholic: 1500 E.
Saginaw St | Lansing, MI 48906 | 517-853-7600 © 2018

[Catholic Charities](#) [FAITH Catholic](#) [FAITH Pub](#) [DOL Data](#) [Mass Times](#) [St. Francis Retreat Center](#)
[Lighthouse Incident Reporting Website](#) [Catholic Event Finder](#) [My Parish](#) [Careers](#) [Child and Youth Protection](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) [Log in](#)