



Archdiocese of Seattle Adds Two Names to List of Credibly Accused

SEATTLE, March 31, 2023 – Today the Archdiocese of Seattle announced the addition of two new names - Sister Jerry Lyness, O.P and Father Thomas Phelan - to the official list of Clergy and Religious Brothers and Sisters for Whom Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor Have Been Admitted, Established or Determined to be Credible.

This list was first published in 2016 with review from former FBI-agent Dr. Kathleen McChesney and her firm, Kinsale Management Consulting. The names of those identified in this review were then provided to the Archdiocesan Review Board made up of independent lay experts and advocates and to Archbishop J. Peter Sartain who approved publication of the names.

Since then, the list has been updated with links to other public lists provided by religious orders that worked in the archdiocese as well as status updates related to people currently on the list.

This week, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne approved the addition of Sister Jerry Lyness, O.P and Father Thomas Phelan to the List of Clergy and Religious Brothers and Sisters for Whom Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor Have Been Admitted, Establish or Determined to be Credible, after and independent review from Dr. McChesney, Kinsale Management Consulting and guidance from the Archdiocesan Review Board. The updated list can [be found here](#).

Recent Settlements

In December 2022, the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Sisters of St. Dominic of Tacoma settled a case involving allegations of inappropriate touching by Sister Jerry Lyness, O.P., in approximately 1982 at St. Patrick Catholic School in Tacoma. Sister Lyness, O.P. was a teacher at St. Patrick Catholic School from 1976 to 1994 and as co-Principal from 1991 to 1994. She is now deceased.

In December 2022, the Archdiocese of Seattle settled a case involving allegations of childhood sexual abuse by Father Thomas Phelan, in approximately 1978 at St. Ann Parish in Tacoma. Father Phelan served as pastor at St. Ann from 1973 to 1983 and is now deceased.

In March 2023, the Archdiocese of Seattle settled a case involving allegations of a single incident of assault and inappropriate touching by a student at Bishop Blanchet High School around 1983.

Commitment to transparency

As part of its commitment to transparency, the Archdiocese of Seattle invites people to visit its [Protect and Heal website](#) to learn about the history of sexual abuse in the archdiocese, which peaked in 1975 and has since sharply declined. The website also outlines the focus on helping victim survivors and their families find healing, and how since the early 1980s the archdiocese has taken steps to prevent abuse and protect the community.

Today the archdiocese enforces its [Safe Environment Program](#) with policies and procedures designed to prevent and recognize signs of sexual abuse of minors.

To report any suspicion of abuse by any Catholic Church personnel, please contact local law enforcement. In addition, anyone who has knowledge of misconduct by a member of the clergy, an employee or a volunteer of the Archdiocese of Seattle is urged to call the archdiocesan hotline at 1-800-446-7762.

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic schools, and 174 pastoral locations in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit archseattle.org.

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