

**Questions and Answers Concerning the Release of Names of Credibly Accused
Roman Catholic Clergy in New Jersey
February 13, 2019**

1. What are the Roman Catholic Dioceses of New Jersey releasing?

The Roman Catholic Dioceses of New Jersey are releasing the names of priests and deacons against whom a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been made and reported to one of the five Dioceses. The lists were compiled from the records maintained by the five Dioceses. All of the names released already have been reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies, including the county prosecutors.

2. What is the definition of a credible allegation?

A credible allegation is one that after a review of available and relevant information, there is reason to believe the allegation is true.

3. What is the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People?

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops established the Charter in 2002, and revised the Charter in 2005, 2011, and 2018. The Bishops' annual meeting at which the Charter was first approved took place in Dallas, and so the Charter is sometimes referred to as the "Dallas Charter."

4. What is the definition of a minor for the purposes of this list?

A minor is anyone under the age of 18 at the time the alleged abuse occurred.

5. Have the clergy included on this list been reported to law enforcement?

Yes, for over twenty years, the New Jersey Catholic Dioceses have endeavored to report all child sexual abuse to county prosecutors or local police agencies. The Dioceses have memorialized that commitment in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Dioceses and the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice. On December 2, 2002, the Division of Criminal Justice described its agreement with the Dioceses as "the most comprehensive and precise agreement of its kind in the nation."

The Division of Criminal Justice said that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dioceses and the 21 county prosecutors "accomplished the overriding goal of protecting victims of sexual offenses and other vulnerable members of society, while ensuring that

prosecutors be provided with all relevant information regarding allegations of sexual assault – whether past, present or future.”

6. Will the five Roman Catholic Dioceses continue to disclose the names of clergy, and others, against whom a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been made?

Yes. The lists released on February 13, 2019 reflect the information reasonably available to the Dioceses at the present time. The Dioceses will provide additional information as warranted, as part of an ongoing commitment to keeping the public informed. The Dioceses continue to encourage all victims of abuse to *first* report that abuse to law enforcement, and then to contact one of the Dioceses’ Victims Assistance Coordinators to access pastoral and therapeutic resources if so desired.

7. Why are the Dioceses releasing the names at this time?

The list is being published as part of the five Dioceses’ ongoing commitment to transparency and to encourage persons sexually abused by clergy to come forward. Additionally, the disclosure of the names is part of the Dioceses’ ongoing efforts to promote healing for all victims of child sexual abuse.

8. How were the lists compiled?

The lists released on February 13, 2019, were compiled from a review of all available files of priests who have served in the five Dioceses. Despite the best efforts of the Dioceses to produce a complete and accurate list, the size and age of the Dioceses make it difficult to guarantee that all historic abuse has been captured. The Dioceses encourage any victim of abuse, whether that abuse is reflected in the Dioceses’ list or not, to report the abuse to law enforcement.

9. What does the Church do to protect Children?

All New Jersey Dioceses have fully implemented comprehensive safe environment programs and together have trained more than 2.3 million adults, children, employees, clergy and volunteers. The Dioceses have conducted over 380,000 background checks on all Diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with children. The Dioceses remain vigilant to ensure a safe environment for every child we serve.

10. Do the Dioceses listen to victims?

Yes, no victim is ignored. The Dioceses listen to all victims and attempt to help them on the road to healing whenever and however possible. The Dioceses strive to settle all claims of victims involving priests, deacons, or others where abuse has been established. Together the

Dioceses have paid more than \$50 million in settlements - \$38 million of which were to victims whose claims were beyond the time limits allowed by the current statute of limitations.

11. **What should I do if I suspect a priest or church employee has engaged in sexual abuse of a child?**

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being or has been abused should notify law enforcement immediately.

12. **Do the Catholic Dioceses require confidentiality and no comment after reaching a settlement with a victim?**

NO. The Catholic Dioceses in New Jersey do not require confidentiality after reaching settlement with a victim. In fact, the 2002 Dallas Charter prohibits any such requirements of confidentiality unless the victim requests it. If a confidentiality agreement exists, it is always at the request of the victim. All other victims are able to comment on their case and its settlement, and many have done so.

13. **What about religious order priests who have been credibly accused?**

Ministry in the Diocese of Metuchen by religious order priests is based on the religious community's official confirmation that any priest assigned here is in good standing – meaning free from any allegations or other encumbrances that would make them unfit for ministry. When a religious order priest is the target of a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor while serving in the Diocese of Metuchen, the Diocese:

- notifies law enforcement;
- notifies the major superior of the religious community to which the accused priest belongs and
- bars the priest permanently from ministry in the Diocese.

Releasing the names of religious order priests against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been made is the responsibility of the religious orders to which they belong. The Diocese is available to assist religious orders in this process.