



DIOCESE OF STOCKTON

Questions and Answers Regarding the Updated Credibly Accused List

The Diocese of Stockton has updated its list of Credibly Accused Clergy and Religious

What was done to update the list?

This updating of the list comes after a review of all Diocesan clergy personnel files. The review was conducted by Kinsale Management Consulting, an independent consulting firm headed by Dr. Kathleen McChesney, a former executive assistant director of the FBI and a founding member of the Office of Child Protection at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Dr. McChesney and her firm are recognized as experts in reviewing personnel files and detecting indications of possible abuse by clergy and religious. Dr. McChesney's firm examined every clergy personnel file in our possession for accusations or indications that a credible accusation of child sexual abuse was made.

What is new or different on this updated list?

Dr. McChesney's work and our own examination of the files has led us to include a new category of names on the list. The new names are clergy or religious who served in the Diocese of Stockton at some time, who have been identified on a list of credibly or publicly accused by another diocese or religious order, or otherwise cited in public sources as being credibly accused. The Diocese is not aware of any sexual abuse by these persons while they were serving in the Diocese.

Dr. McChesney's work also identified one case in which no information could be found to substantiate or lend credibility to the sole accusation the priest faced. It was the recommendation of Dr. McChesney's firm that the name of this priest, Fr. Manual Pascual, be removed from the list. Following review by the Diocesan Review board, this was done.

Is there anyone on this list still serving in a Diocesan parish or school?

No.

The list is described as including all priests "credibly accused" of sexual abuse of a minor. What does "credibly accused" mean?

In determining what constitutes a credible accusation, we have followed criteria similar to that used in other dioceses, in keeping with the recommendations of Dr. McChesney. This includes any of the following: a judgment of a civil and/or canonical trial, a determination by an independent review board that the alleged behavior is more likely than not to have occurred, an

admission by the accused, or other facts and circumstances which give reason to believe that the conduct occurred.

What are you doing to prevent abuse from taking place in the future?

The Diocese of Stockton has adopted strict policies regarding the safety and protection of minors.

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The *Charter* sets for clear procedures for addressing clergy sexual abuse and for safeguarding the young and vulnerable. It includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse and serves as the basis for our own Diocesan policies and procedures. Our procedures are continually strengthened and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The Diocese of Stockton conducts thorough background checks for all diocesan personnel who could come into contact with young people. We require every clergy member, anyone training to become a clergy member, as well as any employee or volunteer, to be thoroughly trained in recognizing and preventing child abuse. An accusation of sexual abuse with even a semblance of truth results in immediate action. The accused clergy member is removed from ministry while the allegation is investigated. Law enforcement is notified immediately of any accusation of abuse of a minor, and the diocese fully cooperates in any resulting law enforcement investigation. A single established allegation of abuse of a minor results in a permanent removal from ministry and the perpetrator also faces other consequences, up to and including removal from priesthood or other ordained position.

Who verifies that you are following your policies and safeguards?

The Diocese maintains an independent Diocesan Review Board comprised of men and women who examine all allegations of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults involving clergy or diocesan personnel. The board also reviews the diocese's policies to ensure continued compliance and vigilance on the part of diocesan leadership.

Additionally, the diocese is audited annually by an independent examiner who verifies compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, established in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. That audit assesses such things as criminal background checks and safe environment training of diocesan personnel and volunteers who interact with children and reporting of the receipt of any new allegations of abuse.

Who is on the Diocesan Review Board?

The Diocesan Review Board is currently comprised of nine men and women from diverse backgrounds with a wide range of expertise and experience, both personally and professionally. These practicing and retired professionals come from fields including psychology, criminal justice, health care and social services.

Seven of the current nine members are lay persons; two are ordained. All share a commitment to ensuring our Diocese is safeguarding children and the vulnerable from clergy sexual abuse.

What happens today when abuse is reported?

The first thing the Diocese does when it receives a report is to obtain as much information as possible from the reporting party, to determine when and where the abuse took place, whether the alleged perpetrator is still in ministry in the diocese, and any other details. Typically, this is done through our Office of Victim Assistance.

The priority in this process is to ensure that no children or vulnerable adults are at risk. If a priest or deacon facing a credible accusation is in ministry, he is removed pending an investigation into the reported facts. If the report involves a minor, the Diocese reports the matter to law enforcement and any other pertinent authorities. The Diocese cooperates fully with any law enforcement response.

The Diocese, working with the Victim Assistance Coordinator, seeks to render any help – spiritual, psychological or pastoral – that the reporting survivor may need or want.

Finally, the diocese conducts its own investigation of the report. Typically, this would include interviews of the person making the report, any witnesses, and the alleged perpetrator. This information is shared with the Diocesan Review Board, who examines all the available evidence before advising the Bishop on a recommended determination. If the report is found credible, the cleric is permanently removed from public ministry and faces other sanctions, which could include removal from the priesthood or other ordained ministry.

What should I do if I suspect a loved one was abused?

If you have witnessed or have reason to suspect there is or has been abuse involving clergy, employees or volunteers at any of our parishes, schools, religious education programs or other church-related events, you should report this first to civil authorities -- law enforcement, child protective services, or adult protective services. Then, we ask that you report it also to the Diocese at 209-466-0636. You may also reach the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 855-566-7262. Reports can be made in English and Spanish.

Is it too late to report abuse that occurred long ago?

No. It is never too late for a survivor to reach out for help, or to speak the truth about an abuser. We encourage anyone with information about abuse, whether recent or long ago, to come forward – to help with their own healing and to make the truth known.

How much has the Diocese paid to settle claims of sexual abuse?

Since 1990, the Diocese has paid more than \$23 million to settle claims of sexual abuse. An additional \$24 Million has been contributed by insurance, religious orders and other institutions, for a total of about \$47 Million. This amount includes a fund established during bankruptcy to compensate victims who had not yet come forward.

In 2017, the Diocese of Stockton completed a reorganization in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Under the terms of this reorganization, a fund was created to cover the costs of any future claims of sexual abuse that occurred prior to the bankruptcy. Any such claims filed since the bankruptcy would be paid from this fund, not from current donations. Ultimately, however, it must be acknowledged that everything our church does is funded by donations. We cannot escape the reality that the betrayal and sin of clergy sexual abuse has taken away funds that could have been used for serving the people of God.

Are my donations to the Bishop's Ministry Appeal being used to pay settlements?

No. Funds raised for the Bishop's Ministry Appeal are restricted in use and can only be used for the purposes identified by that campaign.

When will this be over?

We cannot think of this as something that will pass. It will never be over for survivors and those whose lives they touch. The legacy of clergy sexual abuse will be with us always and we must be constantly vigilant to prevent it and identify when it happens.

We continue to pray for the survivors of sexual abuse. We must always seek to improve how we protect the young and vulnerable, and be worthy of the trust placed in us by the People of God.

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