



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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How the archdiocese responds when receiving allegations of clergy sex abuse

The little ones

At Newman Catholic School, in Mason City, for their all-school Mass, the seniors enter hand-in-hand with the kindergartners.

This is an expression of a lesson learned: that the followers of Jesus do no harm to anyone, but with humility and charity accompany, teach, and care for the little ones, whether children, young people, or grown-ups who can't provide for or protect themselves.

If the seniors graduate, having learned no other lesson than that one, even if they were to insist that $2 + 2 = 5$, then that school program should be judged a successful educational enterprise, I think.

We hope, don't we, for a Church membership, and for a world populated with people who will do no harm to anyone, but with humility and charity will accompany, teach, and care for the little ones.

Healing, protection and restoring trust

That is the lesson learned and put into practice in the matter of clergy sex abuse of minors: to protect children and young people from harm, and to promote the healing and wholeness of victims.

To the victims I say, once again, and never enough times, how I am sorry, so sorry for the harm done to them.

Also, I once again say that I am committed to protect children and young people from harm, to promote healing, and to restore trust in the Church, especially in its leaders.

Over the past weeks, some people have asked what response is made to a person who makes an allegation of clergy sex abuse of a minor.

In this regard, our response is directed by the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, published by the US Conference of Bishops in 2002. Prior to that, the response was guided by a protocol the Archdiocese of Dubuque adopted in 1993.

Why not until 1993?

As an aside, someone might reasonably ask why it took until 1993 to adopt a protocol for responding to accusations of clergy sex abuse. It should have been sooner, like from the time of the apostles!

A possible explanation is that, in the decade preceding 1993, a number of things came to a head, which led to adopting such a protocol, for example:

- Public uproar to the national media coverage of a priest (Gilbert Gauthe) in Louisiana who sexually abused numerous minors;
- The US Conference of Bishops publicly acknowledged that clergy sexual abuse of minors is a serious problem;
- The founding of SNAP, the Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests;
- Bishops started meeting with victims of clergy sexual abuse to hear their stories;
- Findings indicated that there is always a risk that a priest who would sexually abuse a minor will abuse again, and so he cannot be returned to ministry;
- Pope John Paul II approved changes to the law of the Church that made it easier to remove offending priests from the priesthood.

It is hard to imagine that people in the past did not know what is universally acknowledged today, but there you have it.

Response to an allegation

What happens when a person reports an incident of clergy sex abuse of a minor? According to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we report every accusation to the civil authorities, and to the Archdiocesan Review Board.

After studying the particulars of the allegation, the Review Board recommends to the archbishop whether the accusation has a semblance of truth (meaning not manifestly false or frivolous).

If there is a semblance of truth, a further investigation is made. And if that reveals that the accusation is credible (meaning there is sufficient evidence to believe that it did occur), and if the priest is still in ministry, then he is temporarily removed from ministry, the Vatican is informed, and the archbishop awaits instruction from there on how to proceed with the case.

If the Church proceedings establish the priest's guilt, he is permanently barred from exercising ministry, and may even be punished with dismissal from the priesthood. The priest could also go to prison if he is found guilty in the civil proceedings.

Claims of sex abuse of minors have been brought against 31 priests in the Archdiocese of Dubuque. The instances of abuse that have been reported took place from the 1930's to the 1990's. At the time the claim was made public, if the priest was still alive and in the priesthood, the archbishop placed restrictions on his ministry.

The names of these priests appear at the end of this article. The list is also posted on the archdiocesan website, under the [Office of Child Protection](#).

Response to victims

With regard to the number of victims here in the Archdiocese, there are known to be at least 160 people who, when they were minors, were sexually abused by a priest – even one is too many.

When an incident of clergy sex abuse of a minor is reported to the Archdiocese, in addition to the protocol outline above, the alleged victim is offered a meeting with the Victim Assistance Coordinator (a layperson who is a professional counselor and is not an employee of the Archdiocese), and with the archbishop; these invitations are not always accepted.

Also, in the interest of healing and wholeness, an offer of counseling has often been made as well; again, counseling has not always been pursued.

Cost of the sin and crime of clergy sex abuse of a minor

The victims of clergy sex abuse have of course suffered the greatest cost due to the harm done to them. Again, I am sorry, so sorry. All that is humanly possible will be done to protect children and young people, and to promote healing.

The members of the Church, as well as the general public, have also suffered a great cost from being scandalized by stories of clergy sex abuse, and of the failures of bishops, even to the point of disassociating with the Catholic Church altogether.

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has borne a financial cost related to the sin and crime of clergy sex abuse of minors.

Since the implementation of the Charter in 2003, a little over \$1 million has been spent to fund expenses related to doing criminal background checks and running a safe environment program for seminarians, deacons, Church employees and volunteers, to pay for an annual audit of our compliance to the Charter, and to do the business of the Review Board.

That money came from “taxa” – an annual tax on the parishes for the operations of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Some victims of clergy sex abuse of minors hired a lawyer to sue the Archdiocese. In this regard, since 1990, a little over \$25 million has been spent to investigate allegations of clergy sex abuse of minors, for lawyer’s fees, to offer counseling to victims, but most of it to pay settlements with victims.

That money came from three sources: some of the guilty priests themselves; insurance policies that were in place at the time; and from our archdiocesan property and liability insurance program (DAPP).

We will continue to use "taxa" money to pay for criminal background checks, a safe environment program, an annual Charter compliance audit, and for the business of the Review Board.

And we will continue to use DAPP money to investigate allegations of clergy sex abuse of minors (if necessary; hopefully never again), lawyer's fees, and offering counseling to victims.

With regard to settlements with victims and their lawyers, on that account DAPP became over-extended. To make up for that shortfall, money was borrowed from our archdiocesan deposit and loan fund (which is being gradually repaid). As a result, we can't continue to enter into settlement agreements without increasing DAPP indebtedness, or increasing the burden on parishes to pay higher premiums.

The word that heals

Protect and care for the little ones, whether they are children and young people, or grown-ups who can't provide for or protect themselves.

This is the word that faith in Jesus places in our hearts. This word is the heart of the teachings of Jesus. This is the word that we are to hear and put into practice. This word constitutes the practice of pure and undefiled religion, and the basis on which we will be judged.

And in this crisis, I believe that this word, heard and put into practice, will ultimately heal our souls and the Church. Not rules, rituals, and the rod of punishment, but protecting and caring for the little ones.

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Claims of sex abuse of minors have been brought against the following priests in the Archdiocese of Dubuque:

John J. Brickley (dec. 1998)

Albert L. Carman (dec. 1980)

Thomas F. Currier (dec. 2005)

Timothy L. DeVenney (dismissed from the priesthood, resides outside the Archdiocese of Dubuque)

Gerald E. Dolan (dec. 2007)

Henry N. Dunkel (dec. 1998)

Albert J. Forster (dec. 1990)

William A. Goltz (dec. 2006)

Peter M. Graff (dec. 1976)

Joseph F. Griffin (dec. 1999)

Thomas B. Knox (dec. 1968)

Clarence S. Kruse (dec. 2018)

Robert Marcantonio (dec. 1999)

Patrick W. McElliott (dec. 1987)

William G. McLaughlin (dec. 1993)

Julius J. Olinger (dec. 1993)

Joseph I. Patnode (dec. 1977)

John M. Peters (dec. 1997)

John T. Reed (dec. 1976)

Robert J. Reiss (dec. 2005)

William A. Roach (dec. 1986)

Robert J. Saunders (dec. 2007)

Allen M. Schmitt (dec. 2016)

John A. Schmitz (dec. 1991)

William T. Schwartz (dismissed from the priesthood, resides outside the Archdiocese of Dubuque)

Norbert F. Showalter (dec. 1971)

Robert V. Swift (dec. 1980)

Maurice J. Tracy (dec. 1990)

Dean L. Walbaum (dec. 1996)

Louis E. Wendling (dec. 1969)

Louis W. Wunder (dec. 1990)

Archbishop Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque