

*Bishop Anthony B. Taylor released the following update, Feb. 8, 2019, following the conclusion of Kinsale Management Consulting's independent review of clergy personnel files and the diocese's ongoing internal file review.*

"Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"On [September 10](#) of last year I wrote you about the steps we are taking to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis in Arkansas. I disclosed the names of 12 priests and former priests against whom credible allegations had been received in the last 70 years. I also announced that an independent review of our clergy files would be undertaken by [Kinsale Management Consulting](#) ("Kinsale").

"On [October 23](#) I provided an update, stating that since September 10 the Diocese had received reports of additional allegations of clergy sexual abuse from the public — most of which were against priests already listed; none of which were against priests who are currently in active ministry in Arkansas; and all of which were regarding events that would have occurred prior to 2002.

"Although it is difficult or impossible to investigate such allegations after a priest has already died, the Diocese investigated all the new allegations to the extent possible or referred them over to the appropriate civil authorities or religious orders. And all new allegations were also reviewed by Kinsale, who had access to all files contained in the Diocesan archives, all confidential files, and all active working files.

"We have also contacted several religious orders whose clergy may have served in our Diocese at some point in the past and obtained additional information from some of them. Several orders are currently in the process of conducting their own external review (including Subiaco Abbey), with the goal of publishing their own lists sometime in the future. When they or other dioceses publish or update their own lists, we will update ours as well.

"Kinsale's exhaustive review of over 1,350 files on clergy and religious who have served here has now been completed. They made no dramatic discoveries, but their efforts confirmed that we have a clear understanding of the scope of incidents of clergy sexual abuse committed in the past.

"The results of Kinsale's review as well as the Diocese's ongoing file review and investigations were all brought before the Diocesan Review Board — a group of majority lay people who are not employed by the Diocese and who meet regularly to advise me on various matters, including the credibility or lack thereof of such allegations against clergy.

"Sadly, as a result of this entire process, we must add the name of 1 additional priest and 1 religious brother against whom allegations of abusing minors in Arkansas can be considered credible at this time. There will also be a report on [how previous bishops handled allegations](#) in general in the upcoming edition of the *Arkansas Catholic* and on our

diocesan website. The following names, updated information on those priests previously disclosed, and an [exit letter from Kinsale](#) can also be found on our website.

"1. Additional Diocese of Little Rock Priests against whom credible allegations have been substantiated:

- **None**

"2. Additional Diocese of Little Rock Priests against whom unsubstantiated though credible allegations of abuse of a minor have been received:

- **Walter Rajmund** — Died 1990. Served in Arkansas 1956-1990. 2 known victims.

"3. Additional Priests of other dioceses or members of religious orders, against whom credible allegations were made *within* Arkansas as confirmed by other dioceses or religious orders:

- **Bill Wright, GHM** — Died 2011. Served at Holy Cross Church in Crossett, Arkansas, 1982-1986.

"4. Additional priests of other dioceses or religious orders who have served in Arkansas, against whom credible allegations *outside* of Arkansas have been confirmed by other dioceses or religious orders: Information regarding these priests can be found on the Diocese of Little Rock website.

- **Thomas Benkhe, OCD**
- **Gabriel Hentrich, OCD**
- **Albert Holmes, GHM**
- **Kevin McCarthy**
- **Bede Mitchell, OSB**
- **Patrick J.L. Nicholson**
- **Vance Thorne, SVD**

"5. In addition to the above names, I must address the public allegations involving **Ralph Esposito**, a diocesan priest in Pittsburgh 1967-1978 and in Arkansas 1978-2002. He appears on a list of 17 priests named in a 2007 group settlement of a lawsuit between 32 people and the Diocese of Pittsburgh, a settlement in which he was not consulted or involved.

"His case is listed as involving a "John Doe" accuser and based on his time in Pittsburgh, about which we have no further information. Significantly, Fr. Esposito does not appear in the list of 300+ priests named in last year's Pennsylvania grand jury report, nor does he

appear on the Diocese of Pittsburgh's public list of those credibly accused of child sexual abuse.

"Although there have been concerns expressed about boundary violations with minors during his time here in Arkansas, at this time none of these seem to rise to the level of child sexual abuse. He retired in 2002, returned to Pennsylvania in 2005, and has not engaged in any priestly ministry since then.

"Although to date the Diocese has not paid any money to settle legal claims related to the priests included in our [Clergy Disclosure List](#), since 2002 the Diocese has spent approximately \$205,000 out of the Diocesan insurance fund providing counseling and other assistance to persons alleging child sexual abuse by a priest, even including some cases in which the allegations were unverifiable but where the person was nevertheless in obvious need of help. We have tried to be as generous as possible in providing this help, always giving the person the benefit of the doubt.

"As I said at the end of my previous letters, I once again ask for your prayers for all the victims of sexual abuse from whatever source, but in particular those who have been abused by a priest, deacon or other representative of the Church. I would like to renew my call for any others who have been abused or know someone who has been abused to come forward by first contacting the calling the [Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline](#) (800-482-5964). And then please call our diocesan contacts: [Dc. Matthew Glover](#), Chancellor for Canonical Affairs (501-664-0340, ext. 361) or our Victims Assistance Coordinator (501-664-0340, ext. 425). I am deeply concerned to see to it that we offer whatever assistance we can provide.

"Let us continue to pray for one another during these most trying times in our Church. But let us pray most especially for the victims and their families — they are the ones who are hurting the most.

"Sincerely in Christ,

+Anthony B. Taylor

Bishop of Little Rock"

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