



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Diocese of Des Moines releases list of substantiated allegations against priests

Today, the Diocese of Des Moines released a list of priests who have substantiated allegations of sexually abusing children while serving in the diocese. The list contains the names of nine priests; all but two of the names on the list have already been shared with the public. The incidents of abuse occurred from the 1950s to the 1990s.

The list contains names of individuals against whom there is a substantiated claim of abusing a minor. A substantiated claim is one for which sufficient evidence exists to establish reasonable grounds to believe that the alleged abuse occurred. This is not the same as a conviction in the court of law.

All but two of the priests were alive when the allegations were made and had an opportunity to defend themselves. Of the two, Francis Zuch was accused publicly by multiple individuals with corroborating accounts and Dennis Mangan was credibly accused by more than one victim. The diocese is not disclosing the names of priests who had a single, uncorroborated allegation against them after death since it was not possible to substantiate the claim.

“Sexual abuse of children by clergy is a dark part of our history, and we must acknowledge and apologize for it. To those victims in the diocese and beyond, I am deeply sorry for the pain you have endured,” said Bishop Richard Pates. “It is my hope that the release of this list will affirm our commitment to providing accurate and transparent information, foster healing and encourage those victims who have not come forward to do so.”

Moving forward, the diocese is committed to ongoing disclosure. If a claim against a living priest is presented, the first step the diocese takes is to call the authorities. If further investigation of the claim shows it to be substantiated, we will add the name of the clergy member to the disclosure section of our website.

“Today, we are in a new era. The safety of our children is paramount. We have a zero-tolerance policy, and even one case is too many,” Bishop Pates added. “The church conducts background checks on seminarians, clergy, administrators, staff and volunteers who work with children and conduct safe environment training on a continuing basis. We also implement ongoing training programs and have a one strike rule in place.”

The diocese reviewed all files of living and deceased priests, looking for records documenting abuse claims as part of investigations conducted by the diocesan Allegation Review Committee, a consultative body of mostly non-church personnel with expertise in law, criminal justice and mental health. The files of living priests were reviewed by a private investigator.

The diocese encourages victims to contact the law enforcement or Sam Porter, with Polk County Crisis and Advocacy. Mr. Porter serves as a third party victim assistance advocate, he does not work for the diocese. Mr. Porter can be reached at 515-286-2015 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

The full list, along with information on how to file a report of an allegation and our safe environment program are on the diocesan website at www.dmdiocese.org/victim-assistance.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 80 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.