

Detroit Archdiocese: Priests and Policy Status Report

from Ned McGrath, Director of Communications

"The Archdiocese of Detroit implemented its Policy on the Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy in 1988; it has been revised three times. The most recent draft, promulgated in May of 2003, takes into consideration:

- recent events and experiences
- the document enacted in June 2002 by the bishops of the United States, *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* ([The Dallas Charter](#))
- the November revisions to the *Dallas Charter* and the additional revisions to select canonical (Church law) provisions, known as [The Essential Norms](#), that accompany the [Dallas Charter](#).

"As written, the provisions of the *Dallas Charter* and *The Essential Norms* to permanently remove a priest from ministry are to be utilized when the sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, certified either through an admission from the priest himself or by a determination that can be proven to a canonical standard. ([See Canon Law Backgrounder](#))

"This process, as required by Church law, involves [canonical investigations](#) that are reviewed and confirmed by the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) (CDF) at the Vatican. For a majority of its cases, the Detroit archdiocese has received responses from the CDF. The following priests have been permanently removed from ecclesiastical ministry, are prohibited from wearing clerical clothes and publicly presenting themselves as a priest: Edmund Borycz, William Brennen, Gary Bueche, Michael Daly, Jude Ellinghausen, Joseph Femminineo, Robert Haener, Richard Kelly, Michael Malawy, Alfred Miller, Timothy Murray, Timothy Szott, and Peter VanderLinden. Anthony Conti, Ralph Quane, and Joseph Sito, along with former deacon Frank Mullen, have been dismissed from the clerical state—laicized—in accord with the provisions of the above mentioned documents.

"The archdiocese awaits the disposition from Rome of the following cases: Frs. Dennis Duggan, Dennis Laesch, Ronald Williams, and James Wysocki.

"In their current status, these clerics are currently restricted from any public ministry and not allowed to present themselves publicly as a priest or deacon. In some cases, additional restrictions have been placed upon them. Monitoring duties are handled by Ina Grant, who serves as the Promoter of Ministerial Standards. Additional contact and communication with these clerics is coordinated by the cardinal-archbishop's delegate, Msgr. Ricardo Bass, with assistance from Msgr. Michael LeFevre of the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry.

Other Cases

"Frs. Robert Burkholder, Lawrence Edwards, Walter Lezuchowski, Lawrence Nawrocki, Thomas Physician, Gerald Shirilla, and Robert Wyzgoski, whose situations were also handled under the archdiocesan policy, are deceased. Gerald Vesnaugh, whose case was processed years before the establishment of the archdiocesan policy, has left the priesthood.

"Harry Benjamin and Dennis Martell were ordained for the archdiocese but were previously laicized. A backgrounder from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on the 'Loss of the Clerical State' offers more detail on what it means for the priest — and his former resident diocese — when he is dispensed from his sacramental obligations and returned to the status of a layman. ([See USCCB Backgrounder](#))

"Gary Berthiaume and Edward Olszewski were ordained for the Archdiocese of Detroit, but incardinated/transferred to other arch/dioceses — Berthiaume to Cleveland, Olszewski to Miami; Harold Depp once served as a priest of the Detroit archdiocese. Jason Sigler, ordained for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, has left the priesthood but served briefly in the Detroit archdiocese and the Lansing diocese as a visiting priest. Fr. Luis Javier de Alba Campos of the Diocese of San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico, served briefly in the Detroit archdiocese as an extern priest.

"As for the religious order priests who have served or resided in the archdiocese, Frs. Neil Emon, Bruce Maxwell, Jim Moeglein, and Thomas O'Brien are Crosier Fathers (OSC); Fr. Thomas Johnston is a Dominican priest (OP); Fr. Chet Warren is an Oblate priest (OSFS); Fr. John Powell is a Jesuit priest (SJ). Their respective provincials would have the latest information on their status.

Public Information

"In describing the status of those archdiocesan priests whose cases remain under review, examples can be found in how the media describes a lawyer who has been disbarred, a doctor who has had his license revoked, or a police officer who has been suspended. And to clarify the role of the archdiocese in these situations, it can be said that while the Church is responsible for these priests' ministerial assignments, they themselves, as private citizens, are responsible for their personal behavior and society rightly holds them accountable.

"Additionally, the names of these priests have been made public by the archdiocese and shared with civil authorities. Their stories have been reported in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Michigan Catholic*, in the major daily newspapers, and on radio and television; their current status is posted on the archdiocesan web site. In most of these cases, the priests have been offered and accepted professional counseling or treatment protocols. These individuals, who are not in public ministry, may not want to share their addresses and/or current living arrangements with reporters or the public. That is their choice to make; the archdiocese will not try to influence that decision.

"As it would with for any and all of its workers and/or hired staff, the archdiocese would respectfully decline to discuss specific details of the current 'personnel arrangements' with these priests, such as their support or medical benefits. Under Canon Law, a bishop must provide some level of support for his diocesan priests, regardless of their status.

Process and Prevention

"In September of 2002, the newly constituted [Board of Review](#) was introduced; it is led by a lay chairman, and its members include a psychologist, a prosecutor, a retired judge, a health care executive, and a canon lawyer. Four of the board members are parents.

"In November of 2002, the canonical norms that accompanied the *Dallas Charter* received Vatican approval (or [recognitio](#)); they became effective March 1, 2003. [Policies & Procedures Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests, Deacons and Other Church Personnel](#), as published by Detroit's archbishop, Cardinal Adam Maida, is particular law for the Archdiocese of Detroit.

"In January of 2004, the Detroit archdiocese received four commendations in a national audit of diocesan child protection efforts, including special recognition for its agreement with civil authorities in the six counties of the archdiocese for handling allegations of sexual abuse of minors. Additionally, the archdiocese also received special commendations for its mandated background check requirements for employees and volunteers; for its communications policy and procedures assisting parishes directly affected by abuse; and for its written sexual abuse policy implemented 16 years ago. The audit, conducted by the Boston-based Gavin Group for the USCCB, assessed how the nation's dioceses had complied with the *Dallas Charter*.

"[The audit results for the Detroit archdiocese](#) also included four recommendations (suggestions for

improvements) from the auditors, which were addressed as of December 1, 2003. The auditors found the Detroit archdiocese was found to be fully 'compliant' with the provisions of the *Dallas Charter*.

"In February of 2004, the Detroit archdiocese published 'Promise [to Protect. Pledge to Heal](#),' a special supplement of The Michigan Catholic which included: the number of clerics involved in sexual abuse allegations since 1950; the percentage of clerics involved in sexual abuse allegations; the number of victims known to the Archdiocese of Detroit; and, the costs of settlements and counseling. Also published was a [letter from the Archdiocesan Review Board](#) to Cardinal Maida summarizing their deliberations since September 2002.

"Also in February, two ground-breaking reports were issued in Washington, D.C. [The John Jay Study](#), a report commissioned by the USCCB on the sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons in the United States between 1950 and 2002, and the *Report on the Causes and Context of the Current Crisis in the Catholic Church* from the [National Review Board](#).

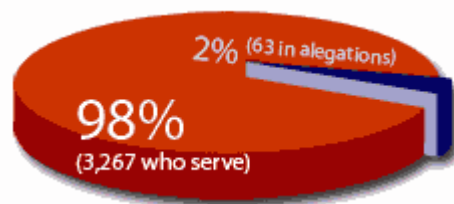
"The archdiocese's audit results, local figures, and other child protection materials are posted elsewhere on this website, The *John Jay Study* and National Review Report, along with the first round of diocesan audit results are available via the USCCB website of [The Office of Child and Youth Protection](#).

"A second national audit, conducted in 2004, found the archdiocese to again be 'fully compliant' with the provisions of the *Dallas Charter*. Because of a scheduling technicality, the 2005 audit found the archdiocese 'compliant, but incomplete in data collection and reporting.' That situation was quickly remedied and the 2006 audit again found the archdiocese to be in full compliance."

from Ned McGrath
Director of Communications

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These are figures regarding sexual abuse allegations in the Detroit archdiocese from 1950 - February, 2004



1, 897 archdiocesan priests 1, 191 members of religious orders 179 deacons	63 clerics, or 2 percent, have been involved in sexual abuse allegations
3, 267 TOTAL priests and deacons 1950-2004	

Other statistics on the Catholic Church

Questions about the scope of the Catholic Church's size, makeup and its involvement in various projects - can be answered by referring to the new "[Catholic Information Project](#)," a statistical resource developed by the ESCCB Department of Communications.

The Department of Communications posts a [status report](#) on past and current cases involving priests who have served in the Detroit archdiocese. Updated when new information is available.

Costs of Settlements and Counseling

116	Victims known to the Detroit archdiocese
\$1, 377, 000	
\$601,500 Paid by insurance carriers	\$775, 500 Paid through "self-insurance" fund

"Since there has been no other study like this of any other profession, it has no context. I can find only minimal attempts on the part of the media to discover the extent of the problem outside the Catholic priesthood. If society has any hope of eliminating this terrible exploitation of our youth, then we also have to face up to this scourge as it exists in the family, in school systems, and in all forms of professional and volunteer with young people." - *Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, president, USCCB*
