



Diocese of OWENSBORO



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Please note: These Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ’s”) pertain specifically to the release of names of priests about whom a substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor has been made.

Why is this list being published now?

In September 2018, Bishop Medley announced his desire to conduct an internal audit of priest records in order to know the number of priests with substantiated claims, the total number of allegations, and the number of victims who have come forward. The Bishop released those [statistics](#) in October and held four listening sessions around the Diocese. Ultimately, he felt that transparency through releasing the names of priests with substantiated allegations could potentially bring healing and reconciliation to not only victims, but to everyone in the Diocese.

Who decided which priests would be included on the list?

Bishop Medley put together a committee of former Diocesan Review Board chairs which included an attorney, a nurse and a psychologist, who were given access to all diocesan files. They then presented their findings to the bishop.

Bishop Medley decided which priests would be included on the list after careful review of all information available to him and in consultation with the full Diocesan Review Board.

What are the criteria for being on the list?

The [list](#) includes names of priests against whom a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor was made. For purposes of this list, an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest is substantiated when there is probable cause for believing the claim is true. The following may be considered as evidence of probable cause: 1) admission of guilt by the accused; 2) accused does not contest the allegation; 3) guilty finding rendered by a court; 4) finding rendered by an investigative process shows cause for believing the allegation is true on an objective basis.

The facts and circumstances that could warrant a priest from being on this list varied from case to case.

Is every priest who had an allegation of abuse made against him on the list?

Only those against whom a substantiated allegation was made, as defined above, are included on the list.

How many priests have served in the Diocese of Owensboro and how many have had a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor made against them?

To the best of our knowledge, 366 priests have served in the Diocese since its inception in 1937 and for whom there are files. Fifteen priests have been determined to have substantiated claims against them. The records indicate the first substantiated incident of sexual abuse of a minor made known to the Diocese of Owensboro occurred in the 1930s. The most recent allegation and investigation into sexual abuse of a minor made known to the Diocese of Owensboro as of April 12, 2019 occurred in the 1980s.

How are Bishop Medley and the Diocese of Owensboro confronting child sexual abuse?

The first and primary concern regarding child sexual abuse is responding to the needs of the victims and survivors. Bishop Medley and the Diocese of Owensboro remain committed to facing the sexual abuse crisis in the Church with courage, faith, hope and love, as well as action. Find more information by visiting at <https://owensborodiocese.org/accountability>.

Are there any priests with substantiated allegations of abuse of a minor serving in ministry in the Diocese of Owensboro?

No. The Diocese operates under a zero tolerance policy. When a substantiated allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest in the Diocese of Owensboro is determined, that priest is permanently removed from ministry. Should victims come forward with allegations against priests in active ministry, Bishop Medley will respond in accordance with our commitment to addressing allegations of sexual abuse and protecting God's children found on the diocesan website. The following actions are taken in conformity with the *Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures* of the Diocese of Owensboro:

- The diocese submits a report to civil authorities, if not already contacted, and fully cooperates with civil authorities as the investigation proceeds;

- The person who has been accused is placed on an administrative leave of absence;
- The diocese conducts an internal investigation of the accusation.

Will the list of priests with allegations of sexual abuse of minors be updated, and if so, how often?

Yes. Any substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse by a priest received by the Diocese will be reported publicly.

Why are religious order priests and priests from other dioceses on a separate list?

A bishop does not have equal authority over all priests working within his diocese. Some priests may be members of religious communities under the authority of those communities' leaders and are referred to as religious order priests. Also, priests of other dioceses may work within another diocese with the permission of their bishop.

When order priests or priests from other dioceses are assigned to work in the Diocese of Owensboro, the Bishop of Owensboro has authority over their public ministry. Nonetheless, the obligations of supervision and discipline remain ultimately with his specific superior or bishop. For these reasons, religious order priests and priests of other dioceses appear on lists separate from priests incardinated in the Diocese of Owensboro to reflect these differences.

How can I report abuse? What procedures and/or resources are in place to help abuse victims?

The Diocese of Owensboro urges individuals who have been sexually abused by anyone acting in the name of the Church to report abuse directly to law enforcement, including calling the Kentucky Child Protection Hot Line: 1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331 (Toll Free) or contact your local [Commonwealth Attorney](#).

To report abuse to the Diocese, current or past, by anyone acting in the name of the Church, please call and speak confidentially to one of our Pastoral Assistance Coordinators through one of our 24-hour phone lines: 270-852-8380 for Louanne Payne in English and 270-880-8360 for Nuria Elizondo in Spanish. You may also visit our Office of Safe Environment for more information.

Glossary of Terms Used:

Diocesan Priest – Ordained to serve in the Catholic Church under a bishop who exercises supervision, provides assignments and offers support.

Religious Order Priest – Ordained to serve in the Catholic Church as a member of a particular religious community whose work may include duties within the Diocese. In pastoral ministry they are under the jurisdiction of their local bishop.

Laicized/Dismissed – A canonical action imposed by the Holy See through which a priest is returned to the lay state. They are permanently barred from all priestly ministry.

Minor – Any person younger than age 18.

Removed – A canonical action imposed by the Holy See (Vatican/Rome) through which no public active ministry is to occur.

Substantiated Allegation – Probably cause available for believing the claim is true. The following may be considered as evidence of probable cause: 1) admission of guilt by the accused; 2) accused does not contest the allegation; 3) guilty finding rendered by a court; 4) finding rendered by an investigative process shows cause for believing the allegation is true on an objective basis.

Suspension – Church penalty under which a priest, while retaining his clerical status, is no longer permitted to perform priestly functions such as celebrating Mass, preaching or administering the sacraments.

While the Diocese has endeavored to make a complete and accurate disclosure, the information on this page is subject to change as additional information is received.

Diocese of Owensboro

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