

NEWS RELEASE

The Diocese of Peoria, Illinois

November 1, 2018

For Immediate Release

“Catholic Diocese of Peoria Removes Three Retired Priests from Public Ministry”

Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C., of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria, upon the unanimous advice of the Diocesan Review Commission, has required these three retired priests to step down from public ministry due to each having credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor:

Fr. George Hiland

Fr. Duane Leclercq

Fr. John Onderko

Hiland is alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor approximately fifty year ago.

Leclercq has been alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor approximately thirty years ago.

Onderko has been alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor approximately fifty-five years ago.

Effective immediately, Hiland, Leclercq and Onderko can no longer function as Catholic priests in any public capacity, wear clerical garb or the Roman collar, and are to refrain from using the title Reverend or Father.

It is the policy of the Diocese to report all allegations of child sexual abuse to the proper State’s Attorney. Accordingly, these allegations have been reported to the proper State’s Attorneys.

George Hiland’s assignments while serving in the Diocese of Peoria included: St. Stephen, Streator (1958-1971), St. Patrick, Arlington (1971-1976), St. John the Baptist, Fairbury and St. James, Forrest (1976-1992), St. Patrick, Dwight (1992-1994), Senior Status (1994).

Duane Leclercq’s assignments while serving in the Diocese of Peoria included: Holy Trinity, Bloomington (1964-1968), St. Mark, Peoria (1968-1971), St. Mary, Moline (1971-1973), St. Vincent de Paul, Peoria (1973-1976), Sacre Coeur, Creve Coeur (1976-1979), St. Edward, Chillicothe (1979-1982), Director of Teens Encounter Christ, with residence at St. Bernard, Peoria (1982-1983), St. John, Clinton, and St. Patrick, Wapella (1983-1989), St. Theresa, Earlville (1989-1991), St. Boniface, Peoria (1991-1994), St.

Patrick, Dwight (1994), St. Patrick, LaSalle (1994-2003), Sacred Heart, Granville and St. Patrick, Hennepin (2003-2008), Senior Status (2008).

John Onderko's assignments while serving in the Diocese of Peoria included: St. Hyacinth, LaSalle (1962), Sacre Coeur, Creve Coeur (1962-1965), St. Hyacinth (1965-1980), Holy Cross, Mendota and Sts. Peter and Paul, Peterstown (1980-1981), St. Mary, Moline (1981-1993), Resurrection, LaSalle (1993-2005), Senior Status (2005).

Under the direction of Bishop Jenky, the Diocese of Peoria remains committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children. The implementation of the current safe environment program used within the Diocese has made an important impact on the safety of the children in the Catholic faith communities throughout the 26 counties of the diocese.

Bishop Jenky continues to pray daily for all victims of sexual abuse and apologizes and prays that the Lord will heal the wounds resulting from this abuse

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