

# LETTER FROM BISHOP SERRATELLI



## DIOCESE OF PATERSON

Diocesan Center  
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Office of  
**THE BISHOP**

February 13, 2019

My dear friends in Christ,

I wish to inform you of our efforts to address the actions of certain individuals in the Diocese of Paterson, specifically priests and deacons, who betrayed the trust of the Catholic Church when they engaged in acts of sexual abuse toward children. Such misconduct by those ordained as ministers of our faith can never be tolerated. The faithful of our diocese have a right to know that the diocese is doing everything it can to ensure the safety of our children and to report perpetrators to law enforcement authorities. Today, in our effort to be transparent, we are publicly releasing the names of those clergy members who we believe have been credibly accused of such misconduct. None of these individuals is serving as a priest or deacon within the Catholic Church. To the extent that they had priestly faculties, those faculties were removed.

In recent years, we have received reports from adults that they were victims of abuse when they were minors within the Diocese of Paterson. All of those reports have been transmitted to law enforcement authorities. If you have been a victim of sexual abuse, my prayers and heart go out to you for this horrible action which has been committed against you. I pray for your healing and, on behalf of myself, our diocese and the Catholic Church, I deeply and sincerely apologize for the pain that you have endured. I also pray for the other members of our Church who have been devastated by this crisis that has caused many to question their faith. I pray also for our society which has gradually learned that these terrible actions have taken place in nearly every part of our nation, not just the Church.

Today, the dioceses in New Jersey are releasing the names of priests and deacons who have been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors. While many of these names have been released to the public over past decades, gathering them together in one list is a time of great sadness. What a tragedy to have to publish such a list. What a tragedy to know that such lists can be published from many walks of life in addition to the Catholic Church. Our society and certain members of the Church have failed children. We also have failed Jesus who said, "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Luke 18:16).

As their initial major response to the reality of the sexual abuse of minors, in June, 2002, the bishops of our country established the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. This document, commonly called the "Dallas Charter," established guidelines, structures and principles for all dioceses to follow in the United States. The importance of receiving training for all church ministers and volunteers was mandated. Criminal background checks were now required. A specific code of conduct was now to be accepted and followed for all priests, religious, church employees and volunteers. We have been enforcing all of these requirements to prevent a recurrence of these horrible actions of the past.

**Since the Dallas Charter in 2002, three priests from our diocese have been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors. Prior to the Dallas Charter, in the period between the founding of our diocese in 1937 and up to the time of the adoption of the Dallas Charter in 2002, another twenty four priests and one deacon had been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors. One case of a child being abused is one too many. In the name of the Church, I am profoundly sorry that even one priest or deacon abused one minor. I apologize to every single victim. We must remain vigilant. We can never be complacent.**

Why release this list? The most important reason is that we recognize the great harm done by persons who were supposed to represent Christ to the world and instead committed heinous acts against minors. We also invite any additional victims who were abused by priests or deacons to come forward to civil authorities.

At the end of this letter, you will find Schedule A, which presents the very precise reasons for the

development of this list, what has been done to make this process as fair and as comprehensive as possible, and, finally, the names of the priests and deacon who have credibly abused minors. We ask you to read it in its entirety so that you may be assured that we are doing everything possible to prevent such abuse in the future.

May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, help to heal those who have suffered so much from the actions of some of the Church's ministers. Together, let us pray for each other and hope that the steps being taken today may begin the process of healing.

Faithfully yours in Christ, +

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature reads "+ Arthur J. Serratelli" in a cursive script.

## • **SCHEDULE A**

Set forth in the following pages are the names of 28 individuals who served as priests or deacons of the Diocese of Paterson. The Diocese has found that each of these persons has been credibly accused of illegal sexual abuse involving minors. In the cases of several of the 28 individuals, they were also convicted of a criminal offense. As to others on the list, the Diocese of Paterson received information concerning possible misconduct by the individual, investigated the matter for corroborating evidence and determined that the report was credible. Accordingly, while those individuals may deny having engaged in illegal behavior involving a minor and they are entitled to be presumed innocent in a criminal court of law, the Diocese has determined that the information it received was credible and it has thus included their names on this disclosure.

Many of the credibly accused are deceased. As to the remainder, due to the serious nature of the allegations and the finding that each of these individuals was credibly accused, all of those individuals have been laicized and/or had their diaconate or priestly faculties suspended. The 28 names listed are based on the information known to the Diocese of Paterson at this time. As additional information is gathered and accused individuals are afforded due process, more individuals may be added to this list. We intend to publish those names as well.

This is not the first time that most of these names have been disclosed. These and other reports of abuse were previously reported by the Diocese of Paterson to law enforcement authorities for further investigation and, if they deemed it appropriate, prosecution. A number of these individuals were made known to law enforcement authorities in the 1980's and 1990's. Additionally, in May 2002, the Diocese of Paterson issued a comprehensive disclosure to law enforcement authorities in all three (3) counties in which the Diocese is located (Passaic, Morris and Sussex), disclosing all known allegations of child sex abuse involving Diocese of Paterson clergy that the Diocese was able to identify. Such disclosures became part of our standard operating procedures thereafter. Since 2002, every report received by the Diocese of possible sexual assault of a minor by a deacon, priest, clergy, teacher, or employee of the Diocese of Paterson, has been timely reported to law enforcement authorities in order to ensure transparency in handling such matters.

In some cases, due to the lapse of time (some incidents of abuse have been reported decades after the abuse had allegedly occurred), the death of the alleged abuser, a victim's lack of recollection concerning the identity of the individual or details of the accusations, or in some cases due to an understandable reluctance of victims to identify themselves, the Diocese of Paterson has not yet determined that a priest or deacon was credibly accused. However, whether a report of child abuse by a priest or deacon was deemed credible or not, the Diocese has taken these reports seriously. To that end, the Diocese has already disclosed all of those reports (and many others) to county and state law enforcement authorities for further investigation. The Diocese is continuing its review as well.

The protocol in instances involving sexual abuse of a minor is to immediately suspend the priest or deacon from public ministry or from any job that would generally involve contact with children, and to interview the accused concerning the allegation. If there are doubts as to whether the accused committed the act, he is subject to examination by outside experts, he is subject to review by a Diocesan Review Board and, if needed, he is subject to a trial per Canon Law.

The names of priests and deacons from the Diocese of Paterson, including those listed here, also were previously published in civil complaints filed both before and after 2002. Many of those cases were settled with the plaintiffs and their attorneys through common settlement agreements. The Diocese of Paterson will in no way try to shield those names from public disclosure or disclosure to

law enforcement. Instead, since 2002, no settlement agreement in such cases provides for any confidentiality. In other words, the victims and their attorneys have been free to speak publicly, to name the alleged perpetrator and even to disclose the settlement amount.

Moreover, the Diocese of Paterson declared in 2002 that, regardless of when any settlement agreement was entered, the Diocese would not seek to enforce any confidentiality clause contained in any settlement agreement involving child sex abuse by clergy. At all times, we have respected the victims' wishes. We simultaneously reported the allegations to law enforcement. We took action against perpetrators. This included suspending their priestly or diaconate faculties and/or seeking their laicization. This ensured that the alleged perpetrator could never be understood to be a priest or deacon in good standing nor in a position to commit such abuse as a priest or deacon in good standing.

Additionally, the Diocese of Paterson is requesting that any person who was the victim of sexual abuse by a Diocese of Paterson priest, deacon, teacher or employee, please contact the Attorney General's Hotline at 855-363-6548 and/or the Paterson Diocese at (973) 777-8818 to report the name of any individual priest, deacon, teacher or employee of the Diocese who you believe has engaged in the illegal sexual abuse of a minor, regardless of whether the individual is still working for the Diocese. Through such disclosures by victims, it is the intention and expectation of the Diocese that all perpetrators of child abuse within the Diocese be identified and, to the extent they have not already been removed, to remove them from their duties.

Finally, we wish to note that certain Catholic priests or deacons who have no formal connection under The Code of Canon Law or civil law with the Diocese of Paterson and do not fall under the ecclesiastical governance of the Diocese of Paterson, including those associated with particular religious orders or congregations that operate parishes or Catholic schools geographically located within the territory of the Diocese of Paterson, have been accused of acts involving the sexual abuse of minors. It is understood that some religious orders or congregations have already publicly disclosed, or intend to publicly disclose in the near future, a list of their members who have been credibly accused of such acts. This Schedule A does not include the names of individuals from those religious orders or congregations.

## • NAMES OF THOSE DETERMINED TO BE CREDIBLY ACCUSED

Name: Jose Alonso

Born: June 13, 1940

Ordained: 1968

Status: Deceased — September 29, 2003

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Agnes, Paterson
  - St. John Cathedral
  - Our Lady of Victories, Paterson
  - St. John Cathedral
- 

Name: Charles Bradley

Born: March 12, 1942

Ordained: June 28, 1968

Status: Removed from Ministry - 1995

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. John Cathedral, Paterson
  - Neumann House, Wayne
  - Faculty, Paterson Catholic High School, Paterson
  - Faculty/Chaplain, Bayley-Ellard High School, Madison
  - Our Lady of Consolation, Wayne
  - Faculty, DePaul Catholic High School, Wayne
- 

Name: George Costigan

Born: October 2, 1926

Ordained: May 25, 1974

Status: Removed from Ministry - April 28, 1994

Deceased - September 21, 2015

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- Chaplain, Dover General Hospital, Dover
- 

Name: Absalom Coutinho

Born: December 2, 1944

Ordained: April 23, 1972

Status: Removed from Ministry April 20, 2002

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Jude, Budd Lake
  - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Boonton
  - Immaculate Heart of Mary, Wayne
  - Annunciation, Wayne
- 

Name: William Cramer

Born: December 26, 1951

Ordained: May 14, 1977

Status: Removed from Ministry —June 2002

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Our Lady of the Lake, Sparta
  - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Boonton
  - Chaplain, St. Joseph Hospital, Paterson
- 

Name: Francis Dennehy

Born: February 28, 1925

Ordained: June 3, 1950

Status: Deceased — August 10, 1995

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Our Lady of Victories, Paterson
- Chaplain U.S. Navy

- Assumption, Morristown
  - Chaplain, St. Joseph Hospital, Paterson
  - St. Nicholas, Passaic
  - St. Vincent DePaul, Stirling
  - St. Therese, Paterson
  - St. Pius X, Montville
  - St. Thomas, Ogdensburg
  - St. Christopher, Parsippany
  - Immaculate Conception, Franklin
  - Our Lady Queen of Peace Cathedral, Honolulu, Hawaii
  - Chaplain, Wayne General Hospital and Chilton Hospital, Wayne
- 

Name: John Derricks

Born: August 5, 1916

Ordained: June 7, 1941

Status: Deceased — November 17, 2010

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Joseph, Paterson
  - Holy Spirit, Pequannock
  - Assumption, Morristown
- 

Name: Stanislaus Durka

Born: October 23, 1914

Ordained: June 25, 1939

Status: Deceased — June 21, 1983

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Virgil, Morris Plains
  - St. Joseph, Passaic
  - St. Stephen, Paterson
  - St. Joseph, Passaic
  - St. Thomas, Ogdensburg
-



Name: Patrick Erwin

Born: January 10, 1943

Ordained: December 21, 1967

Status: Removed from Ministry — November 15, 2004

Deceased — December 8, 2017

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Gerard Majella, Paterson
  - St. Joseph, Paterson
  - Director, Catholic Community Center
  - Social Action Department (in residence – Our Lady of Victories, Paterson)
  - Director, Office for Pastoral Planning
  - Service outside the Diocese
  - Our Lady of Fatima, Highland Lakes
  - St. Mary, Paterson
  - Service outside the Diocese
- 

Name: Carlos Guzman

Born: December 6, 1946

Ordained: 1981

Status: Removed from Ministry — October 20, 1981

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. John Cathedral, Paterson
- 

Name: James Hanley

Born: August 26, 1936

Ordained: May 26, 1962

Status: Removed from Ministry — February 1986

Laicized — February 7, 2003

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Andrew, Clifton
  - Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pompton Plains
  - St. Christopher, Parsippany
  - St. Joseph, Mendham
  - Immaculate Heart of Mary, Wayne
  - In service, Diocese of Albany
- 

Name: John Heekin

Born: September 19, 1937

Ordained: 1963

Status: Removed from Ministry — November 17, 2011

Deceased - July 1, 2018

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Mary, Paterson
  - St. Pius X, Montville
  - St. Therese, Paterson
  - Faculty, Bayley-Ellard High School, Madison
  - Faculty, Pope Pius XII High School, Passaic
  - Immaculate Conception, Franklin
  - Holy Cross, Wayne
- 

Name: John Hewetson

Born: January 9, 1904

Ordained: June 8, 1930

Status: Deceased – February 12, 1987

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Our Lady of Victories, Paterson
- St. Cecilia, Rockaway
- St. Joseph, Paterson
- Western Sussex Missions, Lafayette
- St. Joseph, Lincoln Park
- St. Joseph, Newton
- St. George, Paterson
- St. Vincent de Paul, Stirling
- St. Joseph, Mendham

- St. Michael, Netcong
  - St. Paul, Clifton
- 

Name: Jose Lopez

Born: January 14, 1979

Ordained: May 28, 2011

Status: Removed from Ministry -July 9, 2013

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Passaic
- 

Name: Peter McBride

Born: May 30, 1935

Ordained: June 11, 1960

Status: Removed from Ministry — October 1, 1994

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Virgil, Morris Plains
  - St. Clare, Clifton
  - St. Peter, Parsippany
  - St. Andrew, Clifton
- 

Name: William Mockus

Born: June 24, 1945

Ordained: May 4, 1974

Status: Removed from Ministry — 1995

Deceased — July 24, 2014

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- Our Lady of the Valley, Wayne

- Our Lady of Mercy, Whippany
- 

Name: Joseph Molloy

Born: 1927

Ordained: 1953

Status: Deceased - June 25, 2000

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Nicholas, Passaic
- 

Name: Marcin Nurek

Born: March 16, 1979

Ordained: July 1, 2017

Status: Removed from Ministry — August 3, 2017

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Catherine of Siena, Mountain Lakes
- 

Name: John Pisarcik

Born: March 18, 1944

Ordained: May 30, 1970

Status: Removed from Ministry — October 8, 1991

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Teacher, Morris Catholic High School, Denville – Residence at St. Pius X, Montville
- St. Cecelia, Rockaway
- Principal, Neumann Prep, Wayne
- Principal, Morris Catholic High School, Denville
- St. Cecelia, Rockaway
- Faculty, Christ the King Seminary, E. Aurora, NY
- Vice Principal, Bayley-Ellard High School, Madison

- Chaplain, St. Francis Health Resort Complex, Denville
  - Sacred Heart, Rockaway
- 

Name: Walter Pruschowitz

Born: December 13, 1928

Ordained: May 27, 1961

Status: Deceased — February 21, 2004

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Holy Trinity, Passaic
  - Immaculate Conception, Franklin
  - Holy Trinity Passaic
- 

Name: James Scott

Born: November 20, 1948

Ordained: May 4, 1974

Status: Removed from Ministry - 1995

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- Faculty, Paul VI High School, Clifton
  - Our Lady Star of the Sea, Lake Hopatcong
  - Faculty, Pope John High School, Sparta
  - Faculty, DePaul High School, Wayne
- 

Name: James A.D. Smith

Born: February 21, 1931

Ordained: May 26, 1956

Status: Deceased — January 27, 2015

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Anthony, Hawthorne

- Holy Family, Florham Park
  - Chaplain, St. Joseph Hospital
  - St. Monica, Sussex (summer assistant)
  - Our Lady of Victories, Paterson
  - St. Monica, Sussex
  - St. Christopher, Parsippany
  - St. Rose of Lima, East Hanover
  - St. Patrick, Chatham
  - St. George, Paterson
  - St. Therese, Succasunna
- 

Name: Ralph Sodano

Born: March 13, 1941

Ordained: May 27, 1967

Status: Removed from Ministry — April 20, 2002

Deceased — October 22, 2008

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Brendan, Clifton
  - Diocesan Director of Catholic Scouting
  - Teacher, Pope Pius XII High School, Passaic
  - St. Rose of Lima, East Hanover
  - Chaplain, United States Navy
  - Sacred Heart, Dover
  - Our Lady of the Mountain, Long Valley
- 

Name: Allen Stepien

Born: December 28, 1936

Ordained: May 29, 1965

Status: Removed from Ministry — April 20, 2002

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- St. Rose of Lima, East Hanover
- Assumption, Morristown
- St. Anthony, Hawthorne
- St. Philip, Clifton
- St. Mark, Long Valley

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Name: John Sutton

Born: November 25, 1943

Ordained: 1970

Status: Deceased — 2000

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Andrew, Clifton
- St. Agnes, Paterson
- Chaplain, St. Joseph :Hospital
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Swartswood
- St. Patrick, Chatham
- Excardinated/Incardinated Diocese of Palm Beach

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Name: Ronald Tully

Born: May 19, 1937

Ordained: November 19, 1966

Status: Removed from Ministry —May 12, 2004

Laicized — January 22, 2016

Deceased — November 29, 2018

Accusations: Multiple

Assignments:

- Faculty, Pope Pius High School, Passaic
- Director, Pope Pius High School, Passaic
- Vice Principal/Teacher, Pope Pius High School, Passaic
- Co Principal, Pope Pius High School, Passaic
- St. Rose of Lima, East Hanover
- Immaculate Conception, Franklin
- St. Joseph, Lincoln Park
- Sacred Heart, Dover

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Name: John Wall

Born: Aptil 29, 1929

Ordained: 1954

Status: Deceased 1983

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- St. Virgil, Morris Plains
  - Chaplain, St. Mary Hospital, Passaic
  - Our Lady Queen of Peace, Branchville
- 

Name: Gregory White

Born: August 3, 1969

Ordained: November 30, 1996

Status: Deceased — May 10, 2002

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- Blessed Kateri, Sparta
  - St. Anthony, Hawthorne
- 

Name: William Winston

Born: December 14, 1954

Ordained: December 13, 1986

Status: Removed from Ministry — November 4, 2004

Laicized — August 2007

Accusations: One

Assignments:

- Corpus Christi, Chatham
- St. Patrick, Chatham
- Assumption, Morristown
- St. Virgil, Morris Plains