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Diocese releases names of credibly accused priests

By Caleb Bauer South Bend Tribune Sep 18, 2018

These are the priests

SOUTH BEND — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend released the names of _____ credibly accused of sexually abusing children on Tuesday, joining 44 other diocese who have taken the step to be transparent about the extent of priest sex abuse.

The Most Rev. Kevin Rhoades, the bishop of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, announced last month that he would release the names. The announcement followed the August release of a Pennsylvania Grand Jury report which detailed allegations against more than 300 priests and chronicled Rhoades handling of two cases in the Harrisburg Diocese where he formerly was bishop.

In those cases, Rhoades contacted authorities and advocated for defrocking one of the priests, both of whom were retired at the time new allegations were brought to Rhoades. But he also warned church officials in letters against releasing the names of the priests publicly, warning against “scandal” within the diocese as a result.

Rhoades said last month that he hopes the release of the full list can help victims “finally begin the process of healing.”

In 2003, John D'Arcy, then-bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said 16 priests had been credibly accused of abusing 33 children, but he did not release the full list of names.

The fallout from grand jury report has spread far beyond the state of Pennsylvania, and is accompanied by accusations of abuse by high-ranking former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. At the same time, other Catholic leaders have resigned as details of their efforts to cover-up the widespread sex abuse have come to light, including West Virginia Bishop Michael J. Bransfield and Australian archbishop Philip Edward Wilson.

The following list includes the names of both diocesan priests and members of religious orders who have been credibly accused of abuse by the diocese, after the cases were vetted by the diocesan review board.

James Blume

A former priest at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and school in New Haven, James Blume was accused in 1991 and 1992 lawsuits, one accusing him molesting a 14-year-old boy in 1982 on a weekend trip to Mishawaka and continuing a sexual relationship with the boy until he was age 17, and another claiming sexual abuse by Blume from 1985 through 1987 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Blume resigned from the priesthood in 1989, but details of a settlement in the first case were never released. Later convicted in Wisconsin for sexual assault against two boys in 1979 and 1984, and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

James Burtchaell

A Notre Dame professor, head of the theology department, and former provost, Burtchaell was accused of sexual misconduct while counseling male students. He resigned his tenured position in 1991, and had his priestly faculties removed. He died in 2015.

William Ehrman

Accused in 2002 of molesting a girl for two or three years beginning in 1954 at the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in New Haven. The woman's son reported the abuse in 1998 but diocesan officials said they didn't receive the report. Another woman said that Ehrman exposed himself to her when she was 19 years old in 1968. Bishop John D'Arcy told New Haven parishioners in 2002 that the accusations against their former priest were credible. He retired in 1970 and died in 1983.

Paul LeBrun

A Holy Cross Priest who served at Little Flower Catholic Church in South Bend in the 1980s and 1990s was arrested in 2002 after Phoenix, Arizona and South Bend area men came forward allegations that he sexually abused them as boys. In 2005, he was convicted on six counts of sexual abuse of boys in Arizona and

sentenced to over 100 years in prison.

Thomas Lombardi

Priest at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish in Fort Wayne who was anonymously accused in 2011 of misconduct with a minor which didn't include physical contact.

Ralph Luczak

Luczak was the former assistant pastor at Christ the King Catholic Church in South Bend and was accused in 2003 of sexually abusing a 10-year-old girl while at Congregation of Holy Cross-owned property on Lake Michigan in 1969. Luczak died in 1970 of a heart attack.

Robert Mahoney

Mahoney formerly served at Our Lady of Hungary in South Bend and St. Bavo Catholic School in Mishawaka. A pair of 1992 and 1993 lawsuits accused him of sexually abusing and raping children in the 1970s and 1980s. Both lawsuits were dismissed, without reason being provided at the time for why they were dismissed.

Elden Miller

The former pastor at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Mishawaka and later at Queen of Peace, the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese said Miller has been credibly accused by four different victims, including abusing one girl for more than five years beginning at the age of six. Miller died in 2008.

Cornelius Ryan

Accused in 2014 and removed as administrator of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel after allegations of sexual abuse of children in Africa twenty years earlier that was deemed credible by the diocese. When confronted by diocesan officials, Ryan admitted to sexually abusing a child.

James F. Seculoff

Accused in 2014 and resigned as pastor of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Walkerton for abuse while is alleged to have occurred around the time Seculoff was elevated from principal at the former Huntington Catholic High School to superintendent of diocesan schools in the 1970s.

Richard Stieglitz

After adopting four Haitian boys, Stieglitz was asked to resign his post as pastor at Queen of Angels Catholic Church in 1992. Then in 1994 he was accused of sexual abuse of a child from while he was a priest at St. Judge Catholic School in the early 1980s.

Possible:

Martin Horvath**Joseph Horvath****William Presley**

A priest who was primarily assigned to the Diocese of Erie, Penn., Presley was accused in 2002 of inappropriately touching a 20-year-old while he was on temporary assignment at the University of Notre Dame in the 1970s. He was dismissed from the clergy and is now dead according to the Diocese of Erie.

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Priest with ties to Mishawaka among two added to 'credibly accused' list by local diocese



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