

Lansing diocese: 4 priests who served in Battle Creek accused of sexually abusing minors

[Megan Banta](#), Lansing State Journal Published 2:34 p.m. ET Sept. 27, 2019

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LANSING — The Diocese of Lansing has released a list of 17 priests credibly accused of sexually abusing minors since the diocese was created in 1937, four of whom served churches in Battle Creek and Coldwater.

Bishop Earl Boyea's office, which oversees 74 parishes in 10 counties, [made the list public Friday](#). All 17 priests are either dead, have been removed from active ministry or are defrocked.

"The primary intended audience of this list are victims of abuse: to encourage presently unknown victims to come forward; to help victims expose their abusers; and to assist victims in finding healing – it is also hoped that this information will assist all to ensure that such abuse never happens again," Boyea said in a statement.

According to the diocese's statement, it has received 155 allegations of priests sexually abusing minors since 1937. Nearly all of those allegations are from the 1960s to the mid-1990s, with one allegation of abuse after 2000 that ended up being a false report, according to the statement.

That includes 73 allegations against the 17 priests credibly accused of abusing a total of 66 boys, four girls and three children whose gender was not reported.

The priests who served in Battle Creek were:

- **Rev. Joseph Aubin:** Removed from public ministry in 2018. Served at St. Philip in Battle Creek. Last served as pastor at St. Mary in Durand.

- **Rev. John Martin:** Died in 1968. Served at St. Philip in Battle Creek. Last served as pastor at St. Isidore in Laingsburg.
- **Rev. John Slowey:** Died in 1983. Served at Percy Jones Army Hospital in Battle Creek and at St. Charles in Coldwater. Last served as pastor at St. Mary in Niles.
- **Rev. Darius Wyszynski:** Died in 2013. Served at St. Philip in Battle Creek. Last served as pastor in St. Stanislaus Kostka in Jackson.

Battle Creek was part of the Lansing diocese from 1937 to 1971.

The total number of allegations also includes cases where there was insufficient evidence, often because the accused priest was already deceased. In total, 69 clergy were accused of sexually abusing minors. That's a fraction of the 1,654 priests — 471 incardinated in the diocese, 518 religious order priests and 665 from other dioceses who resided in the area at one point — who have served within the diocese since 1937.

The Diocesan Review Board also is currently considering several allegations received over the last year, according to the release.

Will Bloomfield, the diocese's general counsel, said all of those allegations were forwarded to the Attorney General and local prosecutors and law enforcement when appropriate.

AG still investigating

The diocese released the list in the middle of Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel's investigation into sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

That state investigation halted plans for an external review of the Lansing diocese announced in September 2018 after the AG's office served a search warrant for the Lansing diocese's offices in October 2018 and took possession of all its clergy files.

Bloomfield said diocesan leaders still intend to solicit an external review once the diocese gets those files back.

The AG's office praised the diocese's move to release the list, calling it "an important step."

"We welcome this transparency by the Diocese and will continue to work on our own efforts to pursue justice for the victims of clergy abuse," AG spokeswoman Kelly Rossman-McKinney said in a Friday morning email.

Boyea has emphasized throughout the investigation that the diocese "welcomes a review of our handling of abuse cases by Michigan's Attorney General."

He's said in previous news releases that the diocese is confident in its process, which includes reaching out the law enforcement and prosecutors.

He added Friday that because of clerics' spiritual calling, they "should be prodded more" and accept being held to a higher standard.

"We want to be the best that we can be," Boyea told reporters during a press conference.

'Culture of transparency'

Boyea added the diocese also wants to support any victims of clerical abuse.

Eileen Craig, a survivor of sexual abuse who now counsels fellow victims through [Grief to Grace](#), said the diocese's actions Friday represent a move in the right direction.

Craig said the diocese is moving away from a "culture of not really responding to the victims" to a "culture of transparency."

"We are open to the victims," Craig said. "We love them. We want them to move forward."



Eileen Craig speaks Friday, Sept. 27, 2019, during a press conference at the Catholic Diocese of Lansing's main office. Craig is a survivor of sexual abuse and provides counseling for fellow survivors with Grief to Grace. Also pictured is Will Bloomfield, general counsel to the Diocese of Lansing. (Photo: Matthew Dae Smith/Lansing State Journal)

Bloomfield said though some of the credible allegations have resulted in settlements, a lump sum payment isn't the diocese's preferred way to help victims.

"It's our preference to try to assist them on an ongoing basis," he said Friday after a press conference.

Craig emphasized those who participate in retreats the diocese holds for survivors come away with a support system.

How to report abuse

The diocese is not aware of any priest actively ministering at any diocesan parish who has abused a child, according to the release.

It encourages people to report abuse, no matter when it happened, to the AG's investigation hotline at 844-324-3374.

There's also support available if people contact the diocese's victim assistance coordinator at 888-308-6252 or vac@dioceseoflansing.org.

The diocese has a zero-tolerance policy. It removes any member of church ministry credibly accused of having sexually abused a minor or vulnerable adult.

Where did the priests serve?

The 17 priests served at dozens of parishes over more than six decades.

Rev. Joseph Aubin was ordained in 1961 and retired in 2002 before being removed from public ministry in 2018. He served at:

- St. Paul in Owosso
- St. Leo in Flint
- St. Philip in Battle Creek
- Michigan Boys Training School
- St. Isidore in Laingsburg
- St. John the Evangelist in Davison
- St. Mary in Durand

Timothy Crowley was incardinated into the diocese in 1982 and left the diocese for Alaska before being defrocked in 2015. He served at:

- St. Patrick in Brighton
- Holy Rosary in Flint
- St. Mary Star of the Sea in Jackson
- St. Anthony of Padua in Hillsdale
- St. Thomas the Apostle in Ann Arbor

Rev. Vincent DeLorenzo was ordained in 1965 and removed from ministry in 2002. He served at:

- St. Thomas Aquinas in East Lansing
- St. Joseph in Kalamazoo
- St. Augustine in Kalamazoo
- St. Casimir in Lansing
- St. Pius X in Flint
- St. Robert Bellarmine in Flushing
- Holy Redeemer in Burton

Paul Guoan was ordained in 1987 and removed from ministry in 2002 before being defrocked in 2015. He served at:

- St. Pius X in Flint
- St. Robert Bellarmine in Flushing
- St. Gerard in Lansing
- SS Charles and Helena in Clio
- Queen of the Miraculous Medal while a hospital chaplain in the Jackson area
- St. Mary Star of the Sea while a prison chaplain in the Jackson area
- St. Joseph Home in Jackson

Terrence Healy was incardinated in 1985 and removed from ministry before being defrocked in 1992. He served at:

- Holy Family in Grand Blanc
- St. Francis of Assisi in Ann Arbor
- St. Joseph in St. Johns
- Holy Family in Ovid
- St. John the Baptist in Howell

Michael Kelly was ordained in 1976 and left active ministry in 1983 before being defrocked in 1992. He served at:

- St. Thomas the Apostle in Ann Arbor
- St. Michael in Flint
- Holy Family in Grand Blanc
- St. Therese in Lansing
- St. Casimir in Lansing
- St. Mary Cathedral in Lansing

Rev. James Novak was ordained in 1957 and removed from ministry in 2002. He served at:

- St. John the Evangelist in Jackson
- St. Luke in Flint
- St. John in Benton Harbor
- St. Ann in Cassopolis
- Lansing Catholic Central High School
- St. Agnes in Fowlerville
- St. Joseph in Owosso

- St. Therese in Lansing
- St. Mary in Westphalia

Rev. James Lee was ordained in 1948 and received senior priest status in 1984 before he died in 1992. He served at:

- St. John in Benton Harbor
- Resurrection in Lansing
- St. John the Evangelist in Jackson
- St. James in Mason
- Our Lady of the Pines in Nevis, Minnesota
- St. Alice in Plainview, Texas
- St. Dominic in Clinton
- Holy Family in Grand Blanc
- St. Joseph in Ypsilanti
- St. Peter in Blissfield

Rev. Marian Lesniak was ordained in 1950 and received senior priest status in 2002. He died in 2011. He served at:

- All Saints in Flint
- St. Stanislaus Kostka in Jackson
- St. Joseph the Worker in Jackson

Rev. John Martin was ordained in 1918 and received senior priest status in 1966. He died in 1968. He served at:

- St. Vincent in Detroit
- Sacred Heart in Yale
- St. Philip in Battle Creek
- St. Mary in Morrice
- St. Isidore in Langsburg

Rev. John Slowey was ordained in 1940 and died in 1983. He served at:

- Holy Maternity in Dowagiac
- St. Michael in Flint
- Percy Jones Army Hospital in Battle Creek
- St. Charles in Coldwater
- St. Casimir in Lansing

- St. Vincent Home for Children as director
- St. Mary in Niles

Rev. Chester Tomaszewski was ordained in 1959 and died in 1987. He served at:

- Holy Redeemer in Burton
- St. Joseph in Watervliet
- St. Mary in Paw Paw
- St. John the Evangelist in Davison
- Our Lady of Fatima Michigan Center
- St. Mary in Bronson
- St. Ann in Cassopolis
- St. Stanislaus in Detroit
- St. Paul in Owosso
- St. Stanislaus in Bay City
- SS Charles and Helena in Clio
- St. Anthony of Padua in Hillsdale
- St. Dominic in Clinton
- St. Joseph in Ypsilanti

Rev. Darius Wyszynski was incardinated in 1970 and received senior preist status in 2007. He died in 2013. He served at:

- St. Stanislaus in Wyandotte
- St. Mary in Green Bay, Wisconsin
- Immaculate Conception in Three Rivers
- St. John the Evangelist in Jackson
- St. Philip in Battle Creek
- St. Michael in Flint
- St. Leo in Flint
- St. Joseph in Ypsilanti
- St. Stanislaus Kostka in Jackson

Jason Sigler, a former priest for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, served the Diocese of Lansing from 1968 to 1970 and in 1974 at St. John the Evangelist in Jackson and St. Robert in Flushing. He was defrocked in 1999.

Rev. Alphonse Boardway, a religious order priest once assigned to Holy Cross in Lansing. He died in 1997.

Rev. Joseph McHugh, a religious order priest who was in residence at St. Gerard in Lansing from 1974 to 1976. He died in 2007.

James Rapp, a defrocked former religious order priest who served at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson from 1981 to 1986.