



from the

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DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

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News Release

Diocese of Kalamazoo responds to release of the Attorney General Report

KALAMAZOO, Mich.: (May 22, 2024): Today the Michigan Attorney General released the third report on the investigation into the handling of clergy sexual abuse cases for the seven Catholic dioceses in the state of Michigan. The Attorney General's office first launched the investigation on September 21, 2018. Previously released reports include the Diocese of Marquette, October 27, 2022 and the Diocese of Gaylord, January 8, 2024.

Today's release covers the Diocese of Kalamazoo's handling of clergy sexual abuse cases. The Attorney General states in its report that "*the allegations are summarized here, and their inclusion does not reflect a determination by the Department that the allegations are credible or otherwise substantiated nor indicative of a crime.*"

The report names a total of 19 priests, 12 of whom are priests for the Diocese of Kalamazoo – meaning those ordained for or incardinated in the Diocese – and 7 are priests from other dioceses or religious orders who ministered in the Diocese. Of the 19 listed, 12 are accused of abusing minors, 5 of misconduct with adults, and 2 of misconduct with both minors and adults. Regarding the sexual abuse of minors, 10 of those named are alleged to have done so within the nine counties of the Diocese of Kalamazoo; and the remaining four are alleged to have done so outside the diocese.

In his remarks during a news conference earlier today Bishop Edward M. Lohse began by acknowledging the victim-survivors of clergy sexual abuse:

“Today we are confronted with a disturbing truth. The sexual abuse of minors by priests here in the nine counties of the Diocese of Kalamazoo is an historical reality. It is tragic, appalling, and inexcusable. No one knows this better than you who are the victim-survivors of that abuse. You were entrusted to our care, and we failed to protect you. There is no other way to put it. For that failure, I am deeply sorry.”

Bishop Lohse encouraged anyone affected by abuse to call the crisis hotline operated by Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo 800-873-8336. Anyone with any information regarding an allegation of child abuse may contact the Attorney General Office through the dedicated hotline: 844-324-3374 or email: aginvestigations@michigan.gov.

“Our policies for protecting children and youth are some of the best that are out there, but that does not erase what happened in the past,” added Bishop Lohse. “We continue to strengthen our efforts to protect children and youth and to educate people to recognize signs of behavior that put youth at risk. Later this summer, we will unveil an updated diocesan policy for the protection of children and youth.”

On April 18, 2024, the Diocese of Kalamazoo announced the release of a list of individuals who are disqualified and prohibited from working or volunteering with children in any parish, school, agency, institution, or any other Catholic entity located within the Diocese of Kalamazoo. Individuals appear on the list because, *in the judgment of the Diocese of Kalamazoo*, they have been credibly accused of actions that disqualify and prohibit them from working or volunteering with children or youth. The individuals named in the Attorney General’s report are also posted on the same page of the diocesan website.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo offers a number of resources for those dealing with childhood trauma and abuse. For those who are victim-survivors of sexual abuse by those ministering for the Diocese of Kalamazoo, the diocese offers financial support to cover professional counseling costs. Additionally, the diocese recognizes the lifelong impact of any childhood trauma, abuse or neglect and offers free of charge *The Trauma Recovery Program*. This 10-week program is open to all people dealing with the impact

of childhood trauma. More than 600 people locally have participated in this program since its launch in 2003.

“We need to recognize that the harm inflicted by the sexual misconduct of priests, and especially the abuse of minors, affects not only the victim survivors but also their families,” said Bishop Lohse. “In truth, clergy sexual abuse has affected the entire community of believers. It affects those who work with survivors trying to provide some measure of healing, and it has taken a toll on those priests themselves who have never abused anyone, who have remained faithful to their calling, and who have been deeply betrayed by those whom they had called their brothers. As a diocese, we must minister to all of these people, but I want to be clear: *none hold a greater importance for us than the victim-survivors themselves.*”

In its efforts to create safe environments for all its children and youth, the Diocese requires all staff and volunteers at parishes, Catholic schools, diocesan offices and Catholic apostolates (such as Catholic Charities) to complete extensive background checks and undergo training in recognizing predatory behavior and safeguarding children and youth.

Anyone who is aware of child sexual abuse should report the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The Diocese of Kalamazoo welcomes any additional information that may shed light on any past or present cases of disqualifying and prohibiting actions and will update the list of those disqualified from working with children and youth in the future as necessary based on any new information or investigations.

Additional information, including the list itself and a video of the news conference, may be found at www.diokzoo.org/protect.