

A message to Catholics in the Archdiocese of Omaha

[Video message from Archbishop George J. Lucas

<https://app.vidgrid.com/embed/GoBfxMBfl6sP>]

List of Substantiated Claims of Clergy Sexual Abuse of or Sexual Misconduct with a Minor

From a review of personnel files from 1978-2018

Site updated: 3/1/2019

Names with updated information are marked with an asterisk (*).

[Note from BishopAccountability.org: As this list was posted by the Archdiocese of Omaha, only one priest's record in each section could be expanded and read at any one time. We have cached each record individually, so that this file displays all the priest records at the same time.]

Glossary

For the purposes of information on this website

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190413180401/https://report.archomaha.org/>

Terms used in the list below

- **Affiliation:** The diocese or religious community to which a cleric belongs
- **Description:** Type of behavior

- **Extern:** A priest of a religious order or a diocese other than the Archdiocese of Omaha
- **Laicized:** Permanently removed from the clerical state by the authority of the Holy See
- **LE:** Law enforcement
- **Minor:** Person under 19 years of age
- **Posthumous:** A claim received after the death of the alleged perpetrator
- **Removed:** Faculties for public ministry were withdrawn
- **Report:** A communication of a claim to archdiocesan officials and/or law enforcement
- **Sexual Abuse:** Unwanted sexual contact, including any of the following: touching over and/or under clothing, penetration, sexual communication
- **Status:** Eventual outcome of ministry
- **Substantiated:** A claim supported by sufficient evidence and/or information so that the Archdiocese believes it is true

Abbreviations for Religious Orders

- **OAR:** Order of Augustinian Recollects (Augustinians)
- **SJ:** Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
- **SOLT:** Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity
- **SSC:** Society of St. Columban (Columbans)
- **SSP:** Society of St. Paul (Paulists)

Note:

This list does not include any claims currently under review by law enforcement or pending internal investigation. Internal investigations only commence after law enforcement has been contacted.

In addition to the names on the list below, there are:

- seven deceased priests of the Archdiocese of Omaha against whom allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor have been made posthumously. It has not been possible to substantiate those claims. This does not mean, however, that those making allegations are not credible;
- five former seminarians who were dismissed for substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Some religious orders may produce their own reports.

As those are made available and if they include a religious cleric who served in the Archdiocese of Omaha, they will be linked here:

- Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

Section 1.

Substantiated allegations of misconduct with and/or the abuse of a minor which took place after the implementation of Safe Environment standards in 2002

Fiala, John (SOLT)

Affiliation: Omaha, on leave to SOLT

Date of Act(s): 2008

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2014

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha for religious order, 1996. Deceased, 2017. Incarcerated in Texas for sexual abuse at time of death.

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims

Parish assignments:

- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

Jordan, Deacon Emilio Morales

Affiliation: Extern, Diocese of Zacapa (Guatemala)

Date of Act(s): 2000-2002

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2003

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 2003. Whereabouts unknown.

Description: Concerns about misconduct rose to level for referral to LE. **Parish assignments:**

- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Schuyler, St. Augustine

Nigli, Francis

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 2013

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2013

Status: Removed from public ministry in June 2018 for additional misconduct with a young adult, subsequent to this allegation.

Description: Concerns of misconduct rose to level for referral to LE. After professional assessment, was not prohibited from ministry.

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Vincent de Paul
- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- O'Neill, St. Patrick; Amelia, St. Joseph
- Omaha, St. Wenceslaus

Syring, Andrew

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 2013 and early 2014

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2009, 2014

Status: Left priestly ministry by resignation in October 2018

Description: Disputed; Rose to level for LE referral regarding concerns of misconduct. Multiple allegations. After professional assessment, was not prohibited from ministry.

Parish assignments:

- Schuyler, Divine Mercy
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. Wenceslaus
- West Point, St. Mary; Monterey, St. Boniface; Aloys, St. Aloysius; St. Charles, St. Anthony

Thome, Deacon Duane

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 2016-2018

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2018

Status: Removed in June 2018

Description: Disputed; Rose to level for LE referral regarding concerns of misconduct.

Section 2.

Substantiated allegations of the abuse of a minor which took place prior to 2002

Activity while serving in the Archdiocese of Omaha

Allgaier, Robert

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): Prior to 2001

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2001

Status: Removed, 2001

Description: Child pornography

Parish assignments:

- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Ralston, St. Gerald

Arkfeld, Richard

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1980s and prior

Reports: Diocese: 1980s, 2010, 2014, 2018. No LE report was made, as no individual minor was named. However, the unnamed reports are consistent and the claims of abuse are considered to be substantiated.

Status: Retired and deceased, 1996

Description: Sexual abuse. The total number of victims is unknown.

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Rose
- Atkinson, St. Joseph
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Clyde, St. Patrick
- Lynch, Assumption; Niobrara, St. William
- Ewing, St. Peter of Alcantara
- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- St. Charles, St. Anthony
- Coleridge, St. Michael; Belden, St. Mary
- Newcastle, St. Peter; Ponca, St. Joseph

Buckson, John

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): Prior to 1994

Reports: Diocese: 1994

Status: Resigned, 2002

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi
- Omaha, St. Agnes
- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Schuyler, St. Augustine

* Cleary, Donald

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): ca. 1980, ca. 1987

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2018, 2019

Status: Removed in 2018

Description: Sexual abuse, multiple victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Patrick
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- Fordyce, St. John; Constance, St. Joseph
- Wayne, St. Mary
- Fullerton, St. Peter; Clarks, St. Peter
- North Bend, St. Charles Borromeo; Snyder, St. Leo the Great
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Dvorak, Franklin

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1970-1972

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2012

Status: Removed in 2012; Living life of prayer and penance

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Cleridge, St. Michael; Mission of Belden
- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Omaha, St. Wencesalus
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Feeney, John (Extern)

Affiliation: Extern, Diocese of Green Bay

Date of Act(s): 1962-1963

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2012

Status: Removed from ministry by Diocese of Green Bay, 1986. Laicized, 2005.

Description: Sexual abuse

No parish assignment(s)

Fiala, John (SOLT)

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1984-1986

Reports: Diocese: 2002, 2010, 2011

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha for religious order, 1996. Deceased, 2017. Incarcerated in Texas for sexual abuse at time of death.

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims

Parish assignments:

- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

Finch, Joseph

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): Several years, beginning in 1971

Reports: Diocese: 1996; LE: 2002, 2010

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 1963 for military chaplaincy. In 1969, relocated to the Diocese of Phoenix. In 1992, given permission by the Bishop of Albany to serve as chaplain to cloistered convent. Left the convent in early 2018. Whereabouts unknown.

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Our Lady of Lourdes
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Archdiocese of the Military Services
- Diocese of Albany

Gaughan, James (Extern)

Affiliation: Extern, Diocese of Mandeville

Date of Act(s): Uncertain

Reports: Diocese: 2003

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha for the Diocese of Mandeville, 1999. Deceased, 2009

Description: Sexual abuse. This case was referred to the Diocese of Mandeville.

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Bellevue, St. Bernadette
- Omaha, St. Thomas More
- Duncan, St. Stanislaus
- Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica

Gill, Edward

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1962, 1963-1964

Reports: Diocese: 2004

Status: Retired, 1999. Deceased, 2006

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Peter
- Coleridge, St. Michael
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Agnes
- Plainview, St. Paul
- Butte, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Madison, St. Leonard
- Atkinson, St. Joseph
- Central City, St. Michael
- Stanton, St. Peter
- Osmond, St. Mary of the Seven Dolors
- St. Edward, St. Edward

Glennon, Tom (SSC)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1980-1991

Reports: Diocese: 2018

Status: Retired; Left NE 2018

Description: Sexual abuse

No parish assignment(s)

Henry, Joseph (OAR)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1961-1962

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2012

Status: Deceased

Description: Posthumous; Sexual abuse

Herek, Daniel

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1970s through 1990s

Reports: Diocese and LE: Multiple

Status: Removed, 1998; Prison, 1998; Laicized, 2006

Description: Child pornography and sexual abuse; Number of victims is unknown.

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Assumption
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, Mary Our Queen
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Coleridge, St. Michael; Belden, St. Mary
- Beemer, Holy Cross
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Omaha, St. Richard

* Ho, Joseph Hiepvan (Extern)

Affiliation: Extern, Archdiocese of Sydney

Date of Act(s): 1979-1980

Reports: Diocese: 1990, 2010; Archdiocese of Sydney notified in 2010, 2018

Status: Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 1992. As of December 2018, no longer engaged in public ministry.

Description: 1990: Boundary violation; 2010: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul

Kelly, Michael

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1956-1996

Reports: Diocese: 1998; LE: 2004

Status: Retired, 1995; Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2003

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Elgin, St. Boniface
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- Battle Creek, St. Patrick
- Neligh, St. Francis of Assisi; Clearwater, St. Theresa of Avila
- Laurel, St. Mary
- Genoa, St. Rose of lima
- Lyons, St. Joseph

* Kenney, Daniel (SJ)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1985-1987

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2012

Status: Removed, 2002

Description: Sexual abuse, multiple victims. This case was overseen by the former Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus.

Kruse, Jay

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 2004

Reports: Diocese and LE : 2004

Status: Removed, 2004; Laicized, 2006

Description: Child pornography

Parish assignments:

- Fremont, St. Patrick
- Roncalli High School
- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Wynot, Sacred Heart; St. James, St. Philip & James
- Cedar Catholic High School
- Ewing, St. Peter of Alcantara; Deloit Township, St. John
- Pope John XXIII High School
- Verdigre, St. Wenceslaus; Niobrara, St. William
- O'Neill, St. Patrick; Amelia, St. Joseph

Kulangara, Larry Toms (SSP)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1995-2000

Reports: Diocese: 2000; LE: 2004 and 2017

Status: Served in Archdiocese of Omaha from 1997-2000. Returned to his community in 2000. Presumed to be active in the Nigeria-India Province of the SSP. This matter was referred to the Holy See in 2017.

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Holy Ghost
- Omaha, St. Stephen the Martyr
- Norfolk, Immaculata Monastery
- Omaha, Holy Cross

* Lukes, Duane

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1964-1990s

Reports: Diocese: 1985, 2004, 2005, 2019; LE: 2015, 2019

Status: Deceased, 1998

Description: Sexual abuse, multiple victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus
- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Lindsay, Holy Family
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Niobrara, St. William
- St. Edward, St. Edward
- Osmond, St. Mary of the Seven Dolors
- Norfolk, Immaculata Monastery

* **McMahon, Aloysius**

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): Late 1970s

Reports: Diocese: 1998, 2019; LE: 2004, 2019

Status: Retired, 1997; Deceased, 2011

Description: Disputed; Sexual abuse, two victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Wencesalus
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Mission Work in Chile
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Rummel High School
- Pierce, St. Joseph
- Mission Work in Peru
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Omaha, St. Frances Cabrini
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Mission Work in Ecuador

Merkel, Mark

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1999

Reports: Diocese and LE: 1999 and 2004

Status: Removed, 2004; Laicized, 2006

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Fremont, St. Patrick
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- West Point Central Catholic School
- Beemer, Holy Cross

Palmese, Anthony (OAR)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1984-1985

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2013

Status: Deceased, 2012

Description: Posthumous; Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Holy Ghost

Peschel, Roland

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1967

Reports: Diocese: 1993 and 2010; LE: 2010

Status: Retired and removed, 2010

Description: 1993: Disputed; Sexual abuse.

2010: Admitted; Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Omaha, St. Mary
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. James
- Omaha, St. Margaret Mary
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- O'Neill, St. Patick; Amelisa, St. Joseph; Emmett, Epiphany
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. Bernardette
- Fremont, St. Patrick
- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus; Olean, Sacred Heart
- Ralston, St. Gerald

Petrusic, Anthony

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1970s

Reports: Diocese: 2002

Status: Retired, 1994; Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2010

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Ryan High School
- Omaha, St. Catherine Hospital
- Omaha, Notre Dame Convent
- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- Croatia Catholic Union of US & Canada

Purnell, Deacon Tom

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): Pre-1991

Reports: Diocese and LE: 1991

Status: Presumed deceased

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims

Rizzo, John

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1962, 1972

Reports: Diocese: 1993, 2002, 2010

Status: Removed, 2002; Retired, 2003

Description: Sexual abuse, two victims. 1972 allegation disputed.

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Ann
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Mission Work in Chile
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception
- Dixon, St. Anne
- Genoa, St. Rose
- Ponca, St. Joseph; Waterbury, Immaculate Conception
- Menominee, St. Boniface
- Stanton, St. Peter
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Clarks, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Ann

Robinson, Perry (SJ)

Affiliation: Extern

Date of Act(s): 1980s

Reports: Diocese: Late 2011; LE: Unknown—Conduct alleged to have occurred in Milwaukee

Status: Removed in early 2012

Description: Sexual abuse. This case was overseen by the former Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus.

Parish assignments:

- Ralston, St. Gerald

Salanitro, Al

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1990-1994

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2011, 2012

Status: Removed, 2012; Laicized, 2013

Description: Sexual abuse, three victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Laurel, St. Mary; Dixon, St. Anne
- Blair, St. Francis Borgia
- Bellevue, St. Bernadette

* Sellentin, Thomas

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1968-1989

Reports: Diocese: 1968-present; LE: 2018, 2019

Status: Removed, 2002

Description: Sexual abuse, 20 to 38 victims

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Elgin, St. Boniface
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- West Point, St. Mary
- Lindsay, Holy Family
- Omaha, Blessed Sacrament
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Fullerton, St. Peter
- Menominee, St. Boniface
- Howells, Sts. Peter & Paul and St. John
- North Bend, St. Charles Borromeo; Snyder, St. Leo the Great

Starostka, John

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1972-1974, 2000

Reports: Diocese: 2001, 2002; LE: 2004

Status: Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2012

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Omaha, St. Philip Neri
- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Platte Center, St. Joseph
- Newcastle, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- Cedar Rapids, St. Anthony
- Primrose, St. Mary
- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi

*** Steinhausen, Robert****Affiliation:** Omaha**Date of Act(s):** 1982-1986**Reports:** Diocese: 2008, 2019; LE: 2019**Status:** Deceased, 1993**Description:** Sexual abuse, multiple victims**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Holy Cross
- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Papillion, St. Columbkille

Section 3.

Activity after leaving the Archdiocese of Omaha or after leaving ministry

Henry, Patrick

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1970s-1980s

Reports: Diocese of Cleveland: ca. 2008

Status: Transferred to the Diocese of Cleveland, 1997

Description: Sexual abuse. This case was overseen by the Diocese of Cleveland.

Parish assignments:

- St. Columbkille, Papillion
- Maryknoll Missions
- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Maryknoll Missions
- Diocese of Cleveland

Section 4.

Activity Before Entering Formation or Seminary

Pickett, Deacon Robert

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1978

Reports: Diocese: 2016; LE: 1978

Status: Removed, 2016

Description: Sexual abuse

Zyla, Jeff

Affiliation: Omaha

Date of Act(s): 1978-1981

Reports: Diocese and LE: 2003

Status: Removed, 2003

Description: Sexual abuse

Parish assignments:

- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Omaha, St. Leo
- Petersburg, St. John the Baptist; Raeville, St. Bonaventure
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- West Point Central Catholic High School
- Aloys, St. Aloysius