

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



## Archdiocese of Chicago Document Release January 15, 2014

### Frequently Asked Questions

- Q1 Why is the Archdiocese of Chicago releasing documents of allegations of sexual abuse by Archdiocese of Chicago priests?**  
The Archdiocese and claimants entered into a mediation agreement that included a process for the release of priest documents related to 30 Archdiocesan priests who have been accused of abusing minors at various times during the last half century. All the priests are out of ministry and 14 are deceased.
- Q2 Why were these documents not released before?**  
The documents contain information contributed by or pertaining to victims, their families and other innocent parties. The Archdiocese believes these stories belong to the survivors. Even with careful redaction, the possibility exists that individuals can be identified from fact patterns or other descriptions of events. The documents also contain medical and other private information. Respecting the privacy of victim stories and such information was an important reason for keeping the documents confidential.
- Q3 Why did it take so long to release these documents?**  
These documents are being released as part of mediation agreement entered into in 2006 to resolve the claims of people who were abused. The primary goal was the resolution of those claims so that the people could receive the assistance they needed to go on with their lives. The documents were produced as part of that effort. When the claimants' attorney indicated a plan to publish those documents that prompted a careful effort to make sure the privacy of innocent parties was protected.
- Q4 What are the most important things to know about this release of documents?**  
The most important things to know in regards to this document release are:
- All of the documents relate to cases that date back many years, in some cases, decades. Ninety-five percent of the incidents in these cases occurred prior to 1988.
  - These cases were reported to civil authorities and the Archdiocese did not hide abuse or protect abusers.
  - No priest with even one substantiated accusation of sexual abuse of a minor serves in ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago today.

**Q5 Which documents are being released?**

Documents regarding the following priests are being released:

- Robert Becker\*
- Joseph Bennett
- Kenneth Brigham\*
- William Cloutier\*
- Robert Craig
- John William Curran\*
- Joseph Fitzharris
- James Hagan
- Daniel Holihan
- Thomas Job
- Thomas Kelly\*
- Joseph Kissane\*
- Norbert Maday
- Robert Mayer
- Vincent McCaffrey
- William O'Brien
- Joseph Owens
- Emmanuel Pallakunnen\*
- Russell Romano
- Kenneth Ruge\*
- Raymond Skriba\*
- Marion Snieg\*
- James Steel
- Victor Stewart\*
- Ralph Strand\*
- Thomas Swade
- Henry Swider\*
- Walter Turlo
- Donald Ulatowski\*
- Michael Weston

*\*Deceased*

**Q6 Who decides what information is released? How is this decision made?**

The 2006 mediation agreement created a process to determine which documents would be made public.

The Archdiocese's concern is for the rights of everyone involved, which both the Archdiocese and claimants acknowledge require careful consideration. There are legal restrictions against publishing mental health and medical information. There are privacy concerns, particularly for third parties who may be mentioned in the documents but not involved in the abuse. Some portions of the documents are redacted to comply with legal restrictions about privacy of medical and mental health information and to protect the innocent. Nothing is redacted to conceal the identity of abusers.

**Q7 Where do the documents being released come from?**

The documents are taken directly from sources within the Archdiocese.

**Q8 Is this the first time these documents have been made available?**

The Archdiocese has reported all allegations of abuse of minors to civil authorities, who were provided access to these documents.

**Q9 How can the Archdiocese of Chicago be sure that abuse survivors' identities will be protected?**

Protecting the identity of abuse survivors has been an important concern throughout this process. The only way to do so is to redact carefully the names of the abuse survivors, their family members, their therapists and others, as well as other potentially identifying information. Claimants' attorneys and the Archdiocese agreed on the types of information to be redacted from the documents. Any disagreements were referred to a retired judge for his recommendation, which the parties accepted as binding.

**Q10 What is the Archdiocese's process for dealing with cases of abuse?**

All reports of sexual abuse are referred promptly to civil authorities. The archbishop and other appropriate Archdiocesan officials are notified. Regardless of whether civil authorities pursue an investigation of the allegation, the Archdiocese's Office of Child Abuse and Review conducts its own investigation, which takes into account the rights of all parties.

The Archdiocese's independent Review Board examines the findings of all investigations of priests in active ministry and makes recommendations to the archbishop regarding fitness for ministry and safety of children. Throughout this process, the Office of Assistance Ministry is available for support to victims and their families.

**Q11 What is the Archdiocese doing to prevent sexual abuse?**

The Archdiocese has implemented a comprehensive training program for all personnel and students in parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese. All personnel receive regular training in recognizing and reporting child abuse, as well as in the Archdiocesan Code of Ethics. Those who work with children, whether paid or unpaid, must undergo a criminal background check.

All clergy and school personnel are mandated reporters of child abuse. Consultation and assistance regarding mandated reporting requirements and procedures are provided for personnel.

All students in Catholic programs receive age-appropriate education in recognizing, resisting and reporting sexual abuse.

**Q12 What is the Archdiocese's Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY)? What does it do?**

The Archdiocese's Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY) provides support to abuse survivors and their families, trains adults and children on how to recognize and prevent abuse and conducts annual audits to ensure all Church organizations comply with Archdiocesan policies concerning abuse. Since 2003 the Archdiocese of Chicago has trained more than 160,000 priests, deacons, religious, lay employees and volunteers to recognize and prevent abuse and more than 200,000 children to protect themselves from sexual predators. The Archdiocese has done this in more than 3,000 training sessions, conducted by 280 facilitators. The OPCY is a widely recognized leader in child protection services and is committed to making situations better for abuse survivors.

For more information regarding the Archdiocese's Office for the Protection of Children and Youth visit [www.protectandhealchicago.org](http://www.protectandhealchicago.org).