

November 30, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past summer, Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson requested the investigative files on Church personnel accused of criminal sexual misconduct in Nebraska's three Catholic dioceses since 1978.

The attorney general's request followed the Pennsylvania grand jury report on decades of clergy sexual abuse of minors in six of that state's eight dioceses. I immediately pledged my full cooperation and began a review of our files. On November 30, we submitted to the Nebraska attorney general the final results of our internal review.

The documents included information on 24 archdiocesan priests with substantiated allegations of the abuse of minors or misconduct with minors. In all, documentation on 38 clergy were given to the attorney general for alleged abuse of minors or misconduct with minors as far back as 1956 but reported to the archdiocese between 1978-2018.

I acknowledge this report with sorrow, and know that it will cause a great deal of pain. I'm deeply saddened to know that so many innocent minors and young adults were harmed by the Church's ministers. To victims and their families, I am sorry for the pain, betrayal and suffering you have experienced in the Church.

Of the 38 clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of minors or misconduct with minors since 1978:

- 34 offended before 2002 and the establishment of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People;
- 24 were archdiocesan priests;
- 10 were priests from another state/country/religious order ministering in the archdiocese;
- four were deacons.

The complete list of clergy is available online at [report.archomaha.org](http://report.archomaha.org). The report will be updated if the archdiocese receives future substantiated allegations or after the conclusion of an upcoming forensic audit of our historic clergy files.

It is important to assure you that there is no one currently serving in ministry – 132 active priests and 215 active deacons in the Archdiocese of Omaha – who has had one substantiated allegation of sexual abuse against a young person.

When I see these numbers that go back many decades, I can see that there was a pattern of failure – both on the part of those who misused their office to abuse minors and vulnerable adults, and on the part of those who refused to listen to victims in a compassionate, just and forthright way.

In recent listening sessions with rural and urban parishioners, as well as in numerous individual conversations, I have promised that clergy will be held to a high standard of conduct as they perform their pastoral and sacred responsibilities.

I also promised a greater transparency in the resolution of cases of misconduct involving a member of the clergy.

The higher standards of conduct and greater transparency are seen as essential in restoring the trust that has been compromised by the misconduct of a few, as well as to do all that is reasonably possible to protect vulnerable youth and adults from harm.

In recent years, the archdiocese has followed standards which reflected best practices to determine whether a priest could continue in ministry, after having committed an act or acts of misconduct.

People are insisting that it is not enough to say that no criminal charges have been filed against a priest, when a violation of his pastoral responsibility or the moral law have clearly taken place, when judging his fitness for ministry.

I am committed to look at the placement of all of our clergy, to ensure that we are meeting the rightful expectations of the Church and of society. In the assignment of clergy in the Archdiocese of Omaha, I will consistently follow the provisions of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and of civil and canon law.

We have to acknowledge the ugly truth of past abuse so that we can repent, but also so that all in the archdiocese can be resolute in our commitment to ensure that no one is hurt going forward.

I see this as a moment of grace. The acknowledgement of this painful part of our past allows us to better experience the healing and peace that Jesus desires for the Church.

Please continue to pray for healing for the victims of abuse and for their families.

Please pray for me and our clergy in the days and weeks ahead, and be assured of my continued prayers for you. Pray, too, that in every way, we may become more clearly the Church that the Lord invites us to be.

With best wishes and prayers, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George J. Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive style and is preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend George J. Lucas  
Archbishop of Omaha