



Catholic Diocese of Evansville

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List of credible allegations against clergy

EVANSVILLE – In late September 2018, in response to the request of clergy abuse victims and their families, Bishop Joseph M. Siegel announced that the Diocese of Evansville would collect and release the names of priests who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors. The Diocese’s hope is that the listing of these priests will help in the process of healing for those who have been affected by clergy sexual abuse and help to keep minors safe.

Along with compiling the names that have been published in *The Message* in previous years, the Diocese contracted a private investigator (Mark C. Mabrey & Associates, Inc. of Evansville) to review records dating to its founding in 1944. The record review began in early October and ended in mid-December 2018. In August 2018, the auditors that oversee diocesan compliance with the guidelines of the U.S. Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* recommended the record review.

The following list of clergy is based on the review of records and the recommendations of current and previous Diocesan Review Board members. The current Review Board consists of six lay persons and one priest. Current and past members of the Board hold or have held positions in mental health counseling, clinical psychology, the practice of law, the medical field, and law enforcement, including specialty in areas of child physical and sexual abuse.

A credible claim is one for which, following a review of information, the Review Board determined as believable and plausible, and the Bishop accepted as credible; or the priest admitted to or acknowledged.

Finally, every allegation of child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services, an agency of Indiana state government. Local law enforcement may also be contacted. In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor (a person under 18) by any diocesan personnel, report the allegation to authorities, and inform the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the diocese (Toll-free: 866-200-3004; Local: 812-490-9565). Sexual abuse of a person who habitually has only the imperfect use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

These diocesan priests have allegations determined to be credible of at least one act of sexual abuse of a minor or person who habitually has only the imperfect use of reason, which the U.S. Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* considers equivalent to a minor: Michael Allen, John Breidenbach, Joseph Clauss, James Clements, Wilfred Englert, Mark Kurzenoerfer, Arthur Mergen, Othmar Schroeder, Richard Wildeman. A credible claim is one for which, following a review of

available information, the Review Board determined as believable and plausible, and the Bishop accepted as credible; or the priest admitted to or acknowledged. Here are additional details:

Michael Allen

Year of birth: 1944

Date of priestly ordination: June 5, 1971

Number of credible allegations: 1; Admitted

Action taken: Not in public ministry, July 2002

Places Served:

- Associate Pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Haubstadt, June 29, 1971
- Summer Ministry Program Director, December 6, 1972
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Princeton, June 14, 1974
- Associate Pastor, St. John the Baptist Church, Vincennes, August 21, 1975
- Teacher, Rivet High School, Vincennes, August 21, 1975
- Administrator, St. Patrick, Corning, January 13, 1976
- Administrator, All Saints, Cannelburg, January 13, 1976
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, August 1, 1979
- Associate Pastor, St. Simon Church, Washington, July 29, 1980
- Pastor, St. Mary Church, Washington, August 10, 1981
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, August 3, 1982
- Military service, Assigned outside the diocese, September 21, 1984
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, June 5, 1995
- Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Evansville, March 3, 1999
- Pastor, St. Theresa Church, Evansville, March 3, 1999
- Pastor, St. Celestine Church, Celestine, June 27, 2001
- Not in public ministry, July 2002

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

John Breidenbach

Year of birth: 1959

Date of priestly ordination: August 21, 1987

Number of credible allegations: 1; This diocesan priest admitted and self-disclosed sexual abuse of minors that occurred prior to his ordination as a deacon.

Action taken: Not in public ministry, March 14, 2014

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, St. John the Baptist Church, Vincennes, September 4, 1987
- Associate Pastor, Holy Family Church, Jasper, June 27, 1990
- Diocesan Vocation Team, February 26, 1992
- Associate Pastor, Resurrection Church, Evansville, September 23, 1992
- Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Evansville, August 11, 1993
- Pastor, Corpus Christi Church, Evansville, November 10, 1993
- Sacramental Minister, Holy Trinity Church, Evansville, November 11, 1998
- Associate Pastor, Holy Rosary Church, Evansville, August 18, 1999 with residence at Villa Maria on Lincoln Avenue next to Memorial High School
- Associate Pastor, St. John Church, Newburgh, June 18, 2003
- Pastor, Precious Blood Church, Jasper, June 9, 2004
- Sacramental Minister, St. Mary Church, Ireland, January 27, 2010
- Sacramental Minister, Resurrection Church, Evansville, May 28, 2010
- Sacramental Minister, St. Theresa Church, Evansville, September 8, 2010

- Not in public ministry, March 14, 2014

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Joseph Clauss

Year of birth: 1930

Date of priestly ordination: May 26, 1956

Number of credible allegations: 10; Admitted to at least one allegation

Action taken: Removed from public ministry, July 6, 1992; deceased October 11, 2003

Places Served:

- Associate Pastor, St. Mary Church, Washington, June 8, 1956
- Associate Pastor, Holy Spirit Church, Evansville, August 18, 1959
- Teacher, Memorial High School, Evansville, August 18, 1959
- Residence at St. Joseph Church, Vanderburgh County, August 21, 1964
- Residence at St. Boniface Church, Evansville, August 13, 1965
- Residence at Good Shepherd Church, Evansville, February 19, 1966
- Pastor, St. Patrick Church, Corning, August 18, 1966
- Superintendent, St. John High School, Loogootee, August 25, 1967
- Pastor, St. Mary – Barr Township; also St. Michael Mission, August 25, 1967
- Superintendent, Washington Catholic High School, June 6, 1969
- Administrator, St. Patrick, Corning, June 27, 1969
- Pastor, Resurrection Church, Evansville, June 3, 1975
- Pastor, St. Peter Church, Montgomery; also St. Patrick and St. Michael Missions, November 3, 1986
- Administrative Leave, December 29, 1990
- Removed from public ministry, July 6, 1992
- Deceased October 11, 2003

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

James Clements

Year of birth: 1928

Date of priestly ordination: June 12, 1954

Number of credible allegations: 1; Admitted

Action taken: Dispensed from the clerical state, April 18, 1977; deceased, December 21, 1996

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, St. Wendel Church, St. Wendel, August 20, 1954
- Associate Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Vincennes, July 29, 1955
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Evansville, August 18, 1959
- Associate Pastor, St. Mary Church, Washington, August 17, 1962
- Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Church, Oakland City, May 29, 1964
- Associate Pastor, Good Shepherd Church, July 13, 1972
- Medical leave, April 18, 1974
- Dispensed from the clerical state, April 18, 1977
- Deceased, December 21, 1996

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Wilfred Englert

Year of birth: 1952

Date of priestly ordination: May 9, 1986

Number of credible allegations: 1; Admitted

Action taken: Removed from public ministry, July 26, 2005; convicted of sexual battery, October 3, 2006; served prison sentence; released from incarceration, January 15, 2008; dispensed from the clerical state, October 1, 2009

Places Served:

- Associate Pastor, St. John the Baptist, Vincennes, June 20, 1986
- Associate Pastor, Holy Family Church, Jasper, July 14, 1987
- Associate Pastor, St. John Church, Newburgh, June 27, 1990
- Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Evansville, November 10, 1993
- Associate Pastor, Holy Rosary Church, Evansville, November 1, 1999
- Associate Pastor, St. Agnes Church, Evansville, April 6, 2000
- Pastor, St. Raphael Church, June 21, 2000
- Administrator, St. Celestine Church, August 28, 2002
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, January 28, 2004
- Removed from public ministry, July 26, 2005
- Convicted of sexual battery, October 3, 2006; served prison sentence; released from incarceration, January 15, 2008
- Dispensed from the clerical state, October 1, 2009

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Mark Kurzendoerfer

Year of birth: 1955

Date of priestly ordination: May 8, 1981

Number of credible allegations: 4; Admitted to two allegations

Action taken: Removed from public ministry, July 2, 2002; dispensed from the clerical state, November 1, 2009

Places Served:

- Administrator, St. Mary Church, Sullivan, June 1, 1981
- Associate Pastor, St. Simon Church, Washington, July 1, 1981
- Teacher, Washington Catholic, Washington, July 1, 1981
- Residence, Faculty House on Lincoln Ave., Evansville, June 11, 1984
- Teacher, Mater Dei High School, Evansville, June 11, 1984
- Administrator, Holy Angels Church, New Harmony, July 1, 1986
- Diocesan Vocation Board, December 10, 1989
- Diocesan Vocation Team, February 26, 1992
- Sacramental Minister, St. Thomas Church, Vincennes, October 1, 1995
- Associate Pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Haubstadt, and assisting at St. Joseph, Princeton, Blessed Sacrament, Oakland City, July 16, 1999
- Removed from public ministry, July 2, 2002
- Dispensed from the clerical state, November 1, 2009

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Arthur Mergen

Year of birth: 1941

Date of priestly ordination: June 4, 1976

Number of credible allegations: 2

Action taken: In 1988, left the Diocese of Evansville without the Bishop's permission; deceased, December 14, 1994

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Vincennes, June 24, 1976

- Associate Pastor, St. John the Baptist Church, Vincennes, July 1, 1977
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, July 1, 1981
- Pastor, St. Peter Church, Montgomery; Administrator, St. Michael's, Daviess County, September 1, 1981
- Administrator, St. Patrick, Corning, July 1, 1984
- Pastor, Holy Cross Church, Fort Branch, July 1, 1986
- Pastor, St. Mary Church, Washington, June 16, 1988; Relieved of duties on August 17, 1988 and took up residence at St. Francis Xavier, Vincennes
- In 1988, left the Diocese of Evansville without the Bishop's permission
- Deceased December 14, 1994

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Othmar Schroeder

Year of birth: 1914

Date of priestly ordination: June 7, 1938 for the Diocese of Indianapolis

Number of credible allegations: 18

Action taken: Priest deceased on February 16, 1988, before abuse was reported

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, St. Lawrence Church, Lawrenceburg, September 3, 1938
- Associate Pastor, St. Clement Church, Boonville, June 12, 1940
- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, June 18, 1942
- Incardinated into the Diocese of Evansville upon its establishment, 1944
- Ministry to Boy Scouts, 1940s-1960s
- Pastor, Holy Family Church, Jasper, May 29, 1947
- Committee on Discipline, Magister Noster School, Evansville, August 23, 1965
- Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Schnellville, June 17, 1975
- Deceased February 16, 1988

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Richard Wildeman

Year of birth: 1951

Date of priestly ordination: May 13, 1977

Number of credible allegations: 1; Admitted

Action taken: Left active ministry, May 28, 2002; dispensed from the clerical state, August 17, 2007

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Jasper, June 15, 1977
- Associate Pastor, St. John Church, Newburgh, September 1, 1977
- Associate Pastor, St. Matthew Church, Mt. Vernon, July 6, 1979
- Chaplain, Boy Scouts, August 22, 1979
- Residence, Faculty House on Lincoln Avenue, Evansville, June 1, 1980
- Diocesan Director, Youth Ministry, June 1, 1980
- Weekend assistance, Corpus Christi Church, Evansville, June 1, 1980
- Weekend assistance, St. Clement Church, Boonville, August 10, 1981
- Associate Pastor, Holy Family Church, Jasper, August 3, 1982
- Pastor, St. Mary Church, Sullivan, June 1, 1987
- Administrator, St. Joan of Arc Church, Jasonville, June 1, 1987
- Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Vanderburgh County, July 10, 1991
- Granted permission for ministry in Haiti, June 1, 2000
- Left active ministry, May 28, 2002

- Dispensed from the clerical state , August 17, 2007

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

This diocesan priest pled guilty to receiving child pornography: Jean Vogler. Here are additional details:

Jean Vogler

Year of birth: 1945

Date of priestly ordination: February 28, 1970

Action taken: This priest was charged and convicted in 1996 in the U.S. District Court for Southern Indiana of Receiving Child Pornography and sentenced to 366 days in federal prison. The priest was reinstated to active ministry in 1999 and retired on September 2, 2011. Not in public ministry, February 19, 2019

Places served:

- Associate Pastor, St. Theresa Church, Evansville, August 22, 1970
- Associate Pastor, Christ the King Church, Evansville, August 1, 1972
- Teacher, Reitz Memorial High School, Evansville, September 1, 1975
- Weekend Assistance, St. James Church, Haubstadt, September 1, 1975
- Pastor, Holy Redeemer Church, Evansville, July 15, 1980
- Pastor, St. Mary Church, Sullivan, July 18, 1986
- Administrator, St. Joan of Arc Church, Jasonville, July 18, 1986
- Pastor, St. Boniface Church, Evansville, June 1, 1987
- Pastor, Holy Rosary Church, Evansville, June 27, 1990
- Residence at Villa Maria on Lincoln Avenue next to Memorial High School, 1998
- Appointed as chaplain of St. Mary’s Medical Center, Evansville, June 3, 1998 (appointment withdrawn before it became effective)
- Associate Pastor, Holy Trinity Church, Evansville, April 28, 1999
- Residence at Villa Maria on Lincoln Avenue next to Memorial High School, September 2004
- Sacramental Minister, St. Joseph Church, Evansville, September 5, 2007
- Retired September 2, 2011
- Not in public ministry, February 19, 2019

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

These religious order priests that performed ministry in the Diocese of Evansville have allegations determined to be credible of at least one act of sexual abuse of a minor that occurred when the priests were serving in the Diocese of Evansville: Warren Heitz, O.S.B., Robert Woerdeman, O.S.B. Here are additional details:

Warren Heitz, O.S. B.

Year of birth: 1940

Date of priestly ordination: May 1, 1966

Religious order: Benedictine monk, O.S.B.

Number of credible allegations: 2. One allegation first reported to St. Meinrad Archabbey; allegations determined credible by the St. Meinrad Archabbey Review Board

Action taken: St. Meinrad Archabbey has informed the diocese that this priest was removed from public ministry in 2002

Places served in the Diocese of Evansville:

- Associate Pastor, St. Mary Church, Huntingburg, January 10, 1973
- Associate Pastor, St. Benedict Church, Evansville, August 23, 1977
- Administrator, St. John Chrysostom Church, New Boston, July 8, 1987
- St. Meinrad Archabbey has informed the diocese that this priest was removed from public ministry in 2002

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

Robert Woerdeman, O.S.B.

Year of birth: 1928

Date of priestly ordination: May 3, 1954

Religious order: Benedictine monk, O.S.B.

Number of credible allegations: 1. Allegation first reported to St. Meinrad Archabbey; determined credible by the St. Meinrad Archabbey Review Board

Action taken: St. Meinrad Archabbey has informed the diocese that this priest was dispensed from his vows and laicized in 1975 and died in 2005

Places served in the Diocese of Evansville:

- St. Benedict Church, Evansville, August 1960
- St. Meinrad Archabbey has informed the diocese that this priest was dispensed from his vows and laicized in 1975 and died in 2005

Date posted as part of this list: February 22, 2019

The list above will be updated if new credible claims of sexual abuse of a minor are determined.

2/22/19: Last revised