

29 More Catholic Bishops Served in Unprecedented Child Molestation Lawsuit

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Bishops Served in AK, AZ, CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, IA, IL, KS, LA, MD, MT, NH, NJ, NM, PA, TN, TX, VA, and WA

Lawsuit Seeks Names of Accused Abusive Clergy Kept Secret by Church Officials

ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct 11 /PRNewswire/ -- 178 Catholic Bishops have been named as defendants in an unprecedented civil child sex abuse lawsuit brought by the family of a murdered Wisconsin man. The following Bishops and Archbishops have recently been served with the lawsuit by a county sheriff:

Michael Warfel, Diocese of Juneau (AK)
Thomas Olmsted, Diocese of Phoenix (AZ)
Stephen Blaire, Diocese of Stockton (CA)
Henry Mansell, Diocese of Hartford (CT)
William Lori, Diocese of Bridgeport (CT)
Michael Cote, Diocese of Norwich (CT)
Michael Saltarelli, Diocese of Wilmington (DE)
John Nevins, Diocese of Venice (FL)
Robert Lynch, Diocese of St. Petersburg (FL)
Thomas Wenski, Diocese of Orlando (FL)
Victor Benito Galeone, Diocese of St. Augustine (FL)
Kevin Boland, Diocese of Savannah (GA)
George Lucas, Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
Michael Jackels, Diocese of Wichita (KS)
R. Walker Nickless, Diocese of Sioux City (IA)
Sam Jacobs, Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux (LA)
William Cardinal Keeler, Archdiocese of Baltimore (MD)
George Thomas, Diocese of Helena (MT)
John McCormack, Diocese of Manchester (NH)
Joseph Galante, Diocese of Camden (NJ)
Arthur Serratelli, Diocese of Patterson (NJ)
John Smith, Diocese of Trenton (NJ)
Paul Bootkoski, Diocese of Metuchen (NJ)
Douglas Pelotte, Diocese of Gallup (NM)
Justin Cardinal Regali, Archdiocese of Philadelphia (PA)
David Choby, Diocese of Nashville (TN)
Michael Pfeifer, Diocese of San Angelo (TX)
Francis DiLorenzo, Diocese of Richmond (VA)
Alexander Brunett, Archdiocese of Seattle (WA)

The lawsuit, which seeks no monetary damages, was filed in August in St. Croix County Circuit Court, Wisconsin (Court File No.06CV581). The lawsuit asks a state judge to force all of America's Catholic bishops and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to disclose the names of roughly 5,000 proven, admitted and credibly accused abusive priests in the US. The suit is being brought by the family of Dan O'Connell of Wisconsin, who, along with a co-worker, was shot and killed in February 2002 by a suspected pedophile priest who also owned guns and pornography. After a two year police investigation a judicial hearing determined that the crimes were committed by Father Ryan Erickson of the Diocese of Superior (WI). O'Connell had uncovered information about the priest molesting children. After police interrogated him about the murders, Erickson committed suicide in December 2004. Further investigation revealed that Superior church officials had been aware of Erickson's erratic and questionable behavior and ordained him anyway.

The O'Connell family vowed to "make something good" come from the double murders and push for a five point reform plan to prevent future abuse. But in numerous attempts to work with the Catholic leaders the O'Connells have found little support or response, and they reluctantly filed this suit. After considerable research and meeting with experts and victims across the country, the family believes church officials have made only minimal reforms and aren't abiding by their own policies on abuse.

They have also created a website, <http://www.crusadeagainstclergyabuse.com> , to further educate the public about the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

SOURCE Jeff Anderson & Associates
