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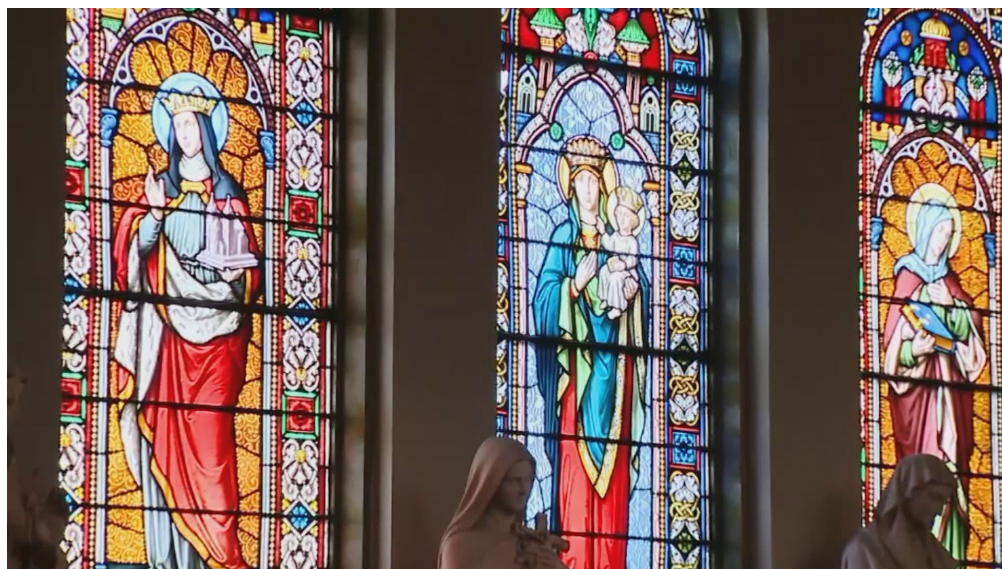


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VIRGINIA

Virginia dioceses name 50 priests 'credibly accused' of sexual abuse of minors

Priests were active between 1974 and 2007 in Arlington and Richmond dioceses



Author: Jordan Fischer
Published: 7:14 PM EST February 13, 2019
Updated: 7:44 PM EST February 13, 2019



WASHINGTON — The bishops of the Catholic dioceses overseeing the state of Virginia released the names of dozens of priests Wednesday who they say were credibly accused of sexually abusing minors.

The lists include the names of 50 priests who served in either the Richmond or Arlington dioceses going back to at least 1974 and serving as recently as 2007. Eight of the priests are named in both dioceses' lists.

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Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, who previously served as bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh before being moved to the Arlington diocese by Pope Francis in 2016, said in a letter released Wednesday that the names were being published “after a full review of all clergy filed by experienced and independent examiners (former FBI personnel).” The bishop said the examiners were given full access to “all information and files” from the history of the Diocese of Arlington since its founding in 1974.

Today I am fulfilling a commitment I made to publish a list of all clergy credibly accused of clergy sexual abuse in the Diocese of Arlington. I made this commitment in the hope that providing such a list might help some victims and survivors of clergy sexual abuse to find further healing and consolation.

The publishing of this list will bring a range of emotions for all of us. Embarrassment, frustration, anger and hurt are all natural emotions to experience in a time such as this. I share those emotions.

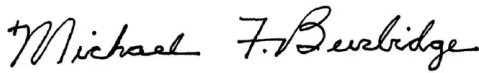
Today I also renew my commitment to continue to implement our policies and protocols, established in accord with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' 2002 *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. These have proven to be effective in preventing abuse, standardizing reporting procedures to legal authorities and investigating allegations of sexual abuse of minors. Please know that I remain actively engaged in addressing these issues and pursuing ways to improve our existing efforts.

For victims and survivors of sexual abuse by members of the clergy, I remain open to meeting with you and hearing your stories. Having met with numerous victims and survivors of sexual abuse, both in group settings and in individual meetings, I continue to be inspired by your strength and your resolve.

I am deeply sorry for what has happened to you. You can be assured and confident of my ongoing pastoral care.


Through the mercy of God, may all who have suffered in the Diocese of Arlington as a result of clergy sexual abuse receive healing. May Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us that we go forward under God's guidance toward a future in which all of God's children are safe and secure.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Priests Credibly Accused of Sexual Abuse of a Minor
(Spanish version coming soon)

1 of 6 

Burbidge's letter names 16 priests from the Arlington diocese accused of sexually abusing minors. The most recent was Christopher M. Buckner, who served in the diocese from 1980 through 2007, when he was removed from public ministry after being accused of the sexual

abuse of a minor. According to the diocese, Buckner retired in 2018 “without faculties to exercise priestly ministry.”

RELATED: [Archbishop of Washington Cardinal Wuerl asked to resign by local deacon](#)

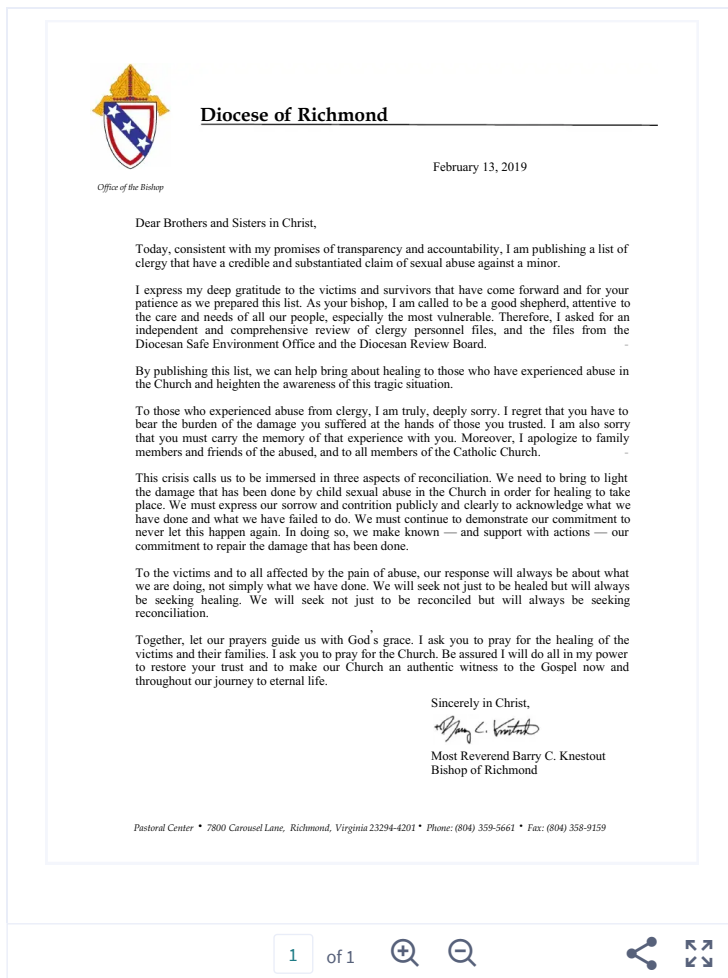
Of the 16 Arlington priests accused, none are active in public ministry. Three are deceased and two others have been dismissed from being priests. One, Tran Dinh Nhi, remains removed from public ministry pending a final determination of his canonical status following allegations of sexual abuse in 2006.

“The publishing of this list will bring a range of emotions for all of us. Embarrassment, frustration, anger and hurt are all natural emotions to experience in a time such as this,” Burbidge wrote in his letter. “I share those emotions.”

“I am deeply sorry for what has happened to you,” Burbidge continued. “You can be assured and confident of my ongoing pastoral care.”

Bishop Barry C. Knestout, who was appointed to head the Diocese of Richmond in December 2017, wrote in his own letter that he hoped publication of the list of priests would “help bring about healing” to those who have experienced abuse in the church.

“This crisis calls us to be immersed in three aspects of reconciliation,” Knestout wrote. “We need to bring to light the damage that has been done by child sexual abuse in the Church in order for healing to take place. We must express our sorrow and contrition publicly and clearly to acknowledge what we have done and what we have failed to do. We must continue to demonstrate our commitment to never let this happen again. In doing so, we make known — and support with actions — our commitment to repair the damage that has been done.”



The Archdiocese of Richmond named 42 priests who were accused of sexually abusing minors either in the diocese or while working for the diocese. Of those named, 22 are reported to be deceased. Six were convicted of unspecified charges. None are believed to currently be serving in public ministry.

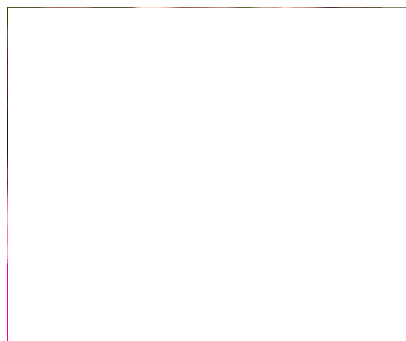
The dioceses' letters also note that an additional priest, Father Terry **Specht**, was accused of sexual abuse of a minor in 2011. The letter says the Arlington Diocesan Review Board was not able to come to a decision "as to the credibility of the accusations against Father **Specht**." **Specht** was granted a medical retirement shortly after being placed on leave.

The Virginia dioceses are the latest to release lists of former priests accused of sexually assaulting minors. In October, the Archdiocese of Washington released its own list of 31 priests going back to 1948.

RELATED: [Washington Catholic Archdiocese releases names of 31 priests accused of abuse](#)

In November, a parochial vicar at the Shrine of the Sacred heart in Northeast, D.C., [Urbano Vazquez](#), was arrested and charged with second degree child sexual abuse. Police said Vazquez was accused of having sexual contact with a child in 2015.

Another D.C.-area priest, [Father Ronald S. Escalante](#) of the Saint Francis de Sales Church in Purcellville, Virginia, was placed on leave in December following an allegation of "inappropriate contact." The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office reported in December [that Escalante would not face charges](#) in connection with that allegation.



In addition to the Virginia lists, dioceses in New Jersey also disclosed the names Wednesday of more than 180 priests they say were credibly accused of sexual assault in the state.

Below, find a list of all 53 priests named by the Arlington and Richmond dioceses Wednesday (priests marked with an * are named in both lists):

DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

- Robert C. Brooks (Retired)
- Christopher M. Buckner (Retired)
- Curtis L. Clark (Laicized)
- William J. Erbacher (Directed to live life of prayer & penance)
- Andrew W. Krafcik (Dismissed from clerical state)*
- John J. Munley (Deceased)*
- Tran Dinh Nhi (Removed, pending final determination)
- William T. Reinecke (Deceased)*
- Stephen A. Roszel (Deceased)
- Scott A. Asalone (Dismissed from religious order)
- Richard P. Baird (Deceased)
- Harris M. Findlay (Deceased)*
- Paul J. Kamerdze (Deceased)*
- Robert L. Nudd (Deceased)*
- John W. Rea (Deceased)*
- Austin L. Ryder (Deceased)*

DIOCESE OF RICHMOND

- Fredrick James Beardsley (Deceased)
- John Paul Blankenship (Convicted)
- John Raymond Bostwick (Removed)
- Francis R. Bourbon (Unknown)
- Martin D. Brady (Deceased)
- Gordian Burkhardt (Laicized)
- Charles Jeffries Burton (Deceased)
- John Robert Butler (Laicized)
- Carrol T. Dozier (Deceased)
- Bernardine George Dyer (Deceased)
- Richard Earley (Deceased)
- James Fedor (Laicized)
- Harris Markam Findlay (Deceased)