

# **A message to Catholics in the Archdiocese of Omaha**

**[Video message from Archbishop George J. Lucas**

**<https://app.vidgrid.com/embed/GoBfxMBf16sP> ]**

## **List of Substantiated Claims of Clergy Sexual Abuse of or Sexual Misconduct with a Minor**

**<https://report.archomaha.org/>**

From a review of personnel files from 1978-2018

Site updated: 6/1/2019

Records marked with \* have been updated since initial publication of this list in Nov. 2018.

[Note from BishopAccountability.org: In the format that the Archdiocese of Omaha chose for this list, only one priest's record in each section could be expanded and read at any one time. We have cached each record individually, so that this file displays all the priest records at the same time.]

## Glossary

For the purposes of information on this website

### Terms used in the list below

- **Affiliation:** The diocese or religious community to which a cleric belongs
- **Description:** Type of behavior
- **Extern:** A priest of a religious order or a diocese other than the Archdiocese of Omaha
- **Laicized:** Permanently removed from the clerical state by the authority of the Holy See
- **LE:** Law enforcement
- **Minor:** Person under 19 years of age
- **Posthumous:** A claim received after the death of the alleged perpetrator
- **Removed:** Faculties for public ministry were withdrawn
- **Report:** A communication of a claim to archdiocesan officials and/or law enforcement
- **Sexual Abuse:** Unwanted sexual contact, including any of the following: touching over and/or under clothing, penetration, sexual communication
- **Status:** Eventual outcome of ministry
- **Substantiated:** A claim supported by sufficient evidence and/or information so that the Archdiocese believes it is true

### Abbreviations for Religious Orders

- **OAR:** Order of Augustinian Recollects (Augustinians)
- **SJ:** Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
- **SOLT:** Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity
- **SSC:** Society of St. Columban (Columbans)
- **SSP:** Society of St. Paul (Paulists)

**Note:**

This list does not include any claims currently under review by law enforcement or pending internal investigation. Internal investigations only commence after law enforcement has been contacted.

**In addition to the names on the list below, there are:**

- seven deceased priests of the Archdiocese of Omaha against whom allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor have been made posthumously. It has not been possible to substantiate those claims. This does not mean, however, that those making allegations are not credible;
- five former seminarians who were dismissed for substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

**Some religious orders may produce their own reports.**

As those are made available and if they include a religious cleric who served in the Archdiocese of Omaha, they will be linked here:

- **Society of Jesus (Jesuits)**

# Section 1.

Substantiated allegations of misconduct with and/or the abuse of a minor which took place after the implementation of Safe Environment standards in 2002

## Fiala, John (SOLT)

**Affiliation:** Omaha, on leave to SOLT

**Date of Act(s):** 2008

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2014

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha for religious order, 1996. Deceased, 2017. Incarcerated in Texas for sexual abuse at time of death.

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

## Jordan, Deacon Emilio Morales

**Affiliation:** Extern, Diocese of Zacapa (Guatemala)

**Date of Act(s):** 2000-2002

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2003

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 2003. Whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Concerns about misconduct rose to level for referral to LE. **Parish assignments:**

- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Schuyler, St. Augustine

## Nigli, Francis

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 2013

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2013

**Status:** Removed from public ministry in June 2018 for additional misconduct with a young adult, subsequent to this allegation.

**Description:** Concerns of misconduct rose to level for referral to LE. After professional assessment, was not prohibited from ministry.

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Vincent de Paul
- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- O'Neill, St. Patrick; Amelia, St. Joseph
- Omaha, St. Wenceslaus

## Syring, Andrew

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 2013 and early 2014

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2009, 2014

**Status:** Left priestly ministry by resignation in October 2018

**Description:** Disputed; Rose to level for LE referral regarding concerns of misconduct. Multiple allegations. After professional assessment, was not prohibited from ministry.

**Parish assignments:**

- Schuyler, Divine Mercy
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. Wenceslaus
- West Point, St. Mary; Monterey, St. Boniface; Aloys, St. Aloysius; St. Charles, St. Anthony

## Thome, Deacon Duane

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 2016-2018

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2018

**Status:** Removed in June 2018

**Description:** Disputed; Rose to level for LE referral regarding concerns of misconduct.

## Section 2.

### Substantiated allegations of the abuse of a minor which took place prior to 2002

Activity while serving in the Archdiocese of Omaha

#### Allgaier, Robert

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** Prior to 2001

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2001

**Status:** Removed, 2001

**Description:** Child pornography

**Parish assignments:**

- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Ralston, St. Gerald

#### Arkfeld, Richard

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1980s and prior

**Reports:** Diocese: 1980s, 2010, 2014, 2018. No LE report was made, as no individual minor was named.

However, the unnamed reports are consistent and the claims of abuse are considered to be substantiated.

**Status:** Retired and deceased, 1996

**Description:** Sexual abuse. The total number of victims is unknown.

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Rose
- Atkinson, St. Joseph
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Clyde, St. Patrick
- Lynch, Assumption; Niobrara, St. William
- Ewing, St. Peter of Alcantara
- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- St. Charles, St. Anthony
- Coleridge, St. Michael; Belden, St. Mary
- Newcastle, St. Peter; Ponca, St. Joseph

## Buckson, John

**Affiliation:** Omaha**Date of Act(s):** Prior to 1994**Reports:** Diocese: 1994**Status:** Resigned, 2002**Description:** Sexual abuse**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi
- Omaha, St. Agnes
- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Schuyler, St. Augustine



## \* Cleary, Donald

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** ca. 1980, ca. 1987

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2018, 2019

**Status:** Removed, 2018

**Description:** Sexual abuse, multiple victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Patrick
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- Fordyce, St. John; Constance, St. Joseph
- Wayne, St. Mary
- Fullerton, St. Peter; Clarks, St. Peter
- North Bend, St. Charles Borromeo; Snyder, St. Leo the Great
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

## Dvorak, Franklin

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1970-1972

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2012

**Status:** Removed in 2012; Living life of prayer and penance

**Description:** Sexual abuse



**Parish assignments:**

- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Cleridge, St. Michael; Mission of Belden
- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Omaha, St. Wencesalus
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

**Feeney, John (Extern)**

**Affiliation:** Extern, Diocese of Green Bay

**Date of Act(s):** 1962-1963

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2012

**Status:** Removed from ministry by Diocese of Green Bay, 1986. Laicized, 2005.

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**No parish assignment(s)**

**Fiala, John (SOLT)**

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1984-1986

**Reports:** Diocese: 2002, 2010, 2011

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha for religious order, 1996. Deceased, 2017. Incarcerated in Texas for sexual abuse at time of death.

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Papillion, St. Columbkille
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

## Finch, Joseph

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** Several years, beginning in 1971

**Reports:** Diocese: 1996; LE: 2002, 2010

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 1963 for military chaplaincy. In 1969, relocated to the Diocese of Phoenix. In 1992, given permission by the Bishop of Albany to serve as chaplain to cloistered convent. Left the convent in early 2018. Whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Our Lady of Lourdes
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Archdiocese of the Military Services
- Diocese of Albany

## Gaughan, James (Extern)

**Affiliation:** Extern, Diocese of Mandeville

**Date of Act(s):** Uncertain

**Reports:** Diocese: 2003

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha for the Diocese of Mandeville, 1999. Deceased, 2009

**Description:** Sexual abuse. This case was referred to the Diocese of Mandeville.

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Bellevue, St. Bernadette
- Omaha, St. Thomas More
- Duncan, St. Stanislaus
- Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica

## Gill, Edward

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1962, 1963-1964

**Reports:** Diocese: 2004

**Status:** Retired, 1999. Deceased, 2006

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Peter
- Coleridge, St. Michael
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Omaha, St. Agnes
- Plainview, St. Paul
- Butte, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Madison, St. Leonard
- Atkinson, St. Joseph
- Central City, St. Michael
- Stanton, St. Peter
- Osmond, St. Mary of the Seven Dolors
- St. Edward, St. Edward

## Glennon, Tom (SSC)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1980-1991

**Reports:** Diocese: 2018

**Status:** Retired; Left NE 2018

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**No parish assignment(s)**

## Henry, Joseph (OAR)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1961-1962

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2012

**Status:** Deceased

**Description:** Posthumous; Sexual abuse

## Herek, Daniel

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1970s through 1990s

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: Multiple

**Status:** Removed, 1998; Prison, 1998; Laicized, 2006

**Description:** Child pornography and sexual abuse; Number of victims is unknown.

### Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Assumption
- Omaha, Christ the King
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, Mary Our Queen
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Coleridge, St. Michael; Belden, St. Mary
- Beemer, Holy Cross
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Omaha, St. Richard

## \* Ho, Joseph Hiepvan (Extern)

**Affiliation:** Extern, Archdiocese of Sydney

**Date of Act(s):** 1979-1980

**Reports:** Diocese: 1990, 2010; Archdiocese of Sydney notified in 2010, 2018

**Status:** Left Archdiocese of Omaha in 1992. As of December 2018, no longer engaged in public ministry.

**Description:** 1990: Boundary violation; 2010: Sexual abuse

### Parish assignments:

- Hartington, Holy Trinity
- Omaha, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul

## Kelly, Michael

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1956-1996

**Reports:** Diocese: 1998; LE: 2004

**Status:** Retired, 1995; Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2003

**Description:** Sexual abuse

### Parish assignments:

- Elgin, St. Boniface
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- Battle Creek, St. Patrick
- Neligh, St. Francis of Assisi; Clearwater, St. Theresa of Avila
- Laurel, St. Mary
- Genoa, St. Rose of Lima
- Lyons, St. Joseph



## \* Kenney, Daniel (SJ)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1985-1987

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2012, 2019

**Status:** Removed, 2002

**Description:** Sexual abuse, multiple victims. This case was overseen by the former Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus. New claims received in 2019, reported to law enforcement, and overseen by the Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus.

## Kruse, Jay

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 2004

**Reports:** Diocese and LE : 2004

**Status:** Removed, 2004; Laicized, 2006

**Description:** Child pornography

### Parish assignments:

- Fremont. St. Patrick
- Roncalli High School
- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Wynot, Sacred Heart; St. James, St. Philip & James
- Cedar Catholic High School
- Ewing, St. Peter of Alcantara; Deloit Township, St. John
- Pope John XXIII High School
- Verdigre, St. Wenceslaus; Niobrara, St. William
- O'Neill, St. Patrick; Amelia, St. Joseph

## Kulangara, Larry Toms (SSP)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1995-2000

**Reports:** Diocese: 2000; LE: 2004 and 2017

**Status:** Served in Archdiocese of Omaha from 1997-2000. Returned to his community in 2000. Presumed to be active in the Nigeria-India Province of the SSP. This matter was referred to the Holy See in 2017.

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims

### Parish assignments:

- Omaha, Holy Ghost
- Omaha, St. Stephen the Martyr
- Norfolk, Immaculata Monastery
- Omaha, Holy Cross

## \* Lukes, Duane

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1964-1990s

**Reports:** Diocese: 1985, 2004, 2005, 2019; LE: 2015, 2019

**Status:** Deceased, 1998

**Description:** Sexual abuse, multiple victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus
- Omaha, St. Pius X
- Lindsay, Holy Family
- Omaha, St. Ann
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Niobrara, St. William
- St. Edward, St. Edward
- Osmond, St. Mary of the Seven Dolors
- Norfolk, Immaculata Monastery

**\* McMahan, Aloysius****Affiliation:** Omaha**Date of Act(s):** Late 1970s**Reports:** Diocese: 1998, 2019; LE: 2004, 2019**Status:** Retired, 1997; Deceased, 2011**Description:** Disputed; Sexual abuse, two victims**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Wencesalus
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Mission Work in Chile
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception (Dowd Chapel)
- Rummel High School
- Pierce, St. Joseph
- Mission Work in Peru

- Wisner, St. Joseph
- Omaha, St. Frances Cabrini
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Mission Work in Ecuador

## Merkel, Mark

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1999

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 1999 and 2004

**Status:** Removed, 2004; Laicized, 2006

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Fremont, St. Patrick
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- O'Neill, St. Patrick
- West Point Central Catholic School
- Beemer, Holy Cross

## Palmese, Anthony (OAR)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1984-1985

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2013

**Status:** Deceased, 2012

**Description:** Posthumous; Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Holy Ghost

## Peschel, Roland

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1967

**Reports:** Diocese: 1993 and 2010; LE: 2010

**Status:** Retired and removed, 2010

**Description:** 1993: Disputed; Sexual abuse.

2010: Admitted; Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Omaha, St. Mary
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. James
- Omaha, St. Margaret Mary
- Omaha, St. Bernard

- Randolph, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- O'Neill, St. Patick; Amelisa, St. Joseph; Emmett, Epiphany
- Omaha, St. Bernard
- Omaha, St. Bernardette
- Fremont, St. Patrick
- Dodge, St. Wenceslaus; Olean, Sacred Heart
- Ralston, St. Gerald

## Petrusic, Anthony

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1970s

**Reports:** Diocese: 2002

**Status:** Retired, 1994; Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2010

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Ryan High School
- Omaha, St. Catherine Hospital
- Omaha, Notre Dame Convent
- Omaha, Sts. Peter & Paul
- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- Croation Catholic Union of US & Canada

## Purnell, Deacon Tom

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** Pre-1991

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 1991

**Status:** Presumed deceased

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims

## Rizzo, John

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1962, 1972

**Reports:** Diocese: 1993, 2002, 2010

**Status:** Removed, 2002; Retired, 2003

**Description:** Sexual abuse, two victims. 1972 allegation disputed.

### Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Ann
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Mission Work in Chile
- Boys Town, Immaculate Conception
- Dixon, St. Anne
- Genoa, St. Rose
- Ponca, St. Joseph; Waterbury, Immaculate Conception
- Menominee, St. Boniface
- Stanton, St. Peter
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Clarks, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Ann

## Robinson, Perry (SJ)

**Affiliation:** Extern

**Date of Act(s):** 1980s

**Reports:** Diocese: Late 2011; LE: Unknown—Conduct alleged to have occurred in Milwaukee

**Status:** Removed in early 2012

**Description:** Sexual abuse. This case was overseen by the former Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus.

**Parish assignments:**

- Ralston, St. Gerald

## Salanitro, Al

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1990-1994

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2011, 2012

**Status:** Removed, 2012; Laicized, 2013

**Description:** Sexual abuse, three victims

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- Omaha, Holy Cross
- Laurel, St. Mary; Dixon, St. Anne
- Blair, St. Francis Borgia
- Bellevue, St. Bernadette



## \* Sellentin, Thomas

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1968-1989

**Reports:** Diocese: 1968-present; LE: 2018, 2019

**Status:** Removed, 2002

**Description:** Sexual abuse, 20 to 38 victims

### Parish assignments:

- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Elgin, St. Boniface
- Omaha, St. Joan of Arc
- West Point, St. Mary
- Lindsay, Holy Family
- Omaha, Blessed Sacrament
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Fullerton, St. Peter
- Menominee, St. Boniface
- Howells, Sts. Peter & Paul and St. John
- North Bend, St. Charles Borromeo; Snyder, St. Leo the Great

## Starostka, John

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1972-1974, 2000

**Reports:** Diocese: 2001, 2002; LE: 2004

**Status:** Removed, 2002; Deceased, 2012

**Description:** Sexual abuse

**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi
- Creighton, St. Ludger
- Omaha, St. Philip Neri
- Omaha, St. Stanislaus
- Platte Center, St. Joseph
- Newcastle, St. Peter
- Omaha, St. Cecilia Cathedral
- Cedar Rapids, St. Anthony
- Primrose, St. Mary
- Omaha, St. Francis of Assisi

**\* Steinhausen, Robert****Affiliation:** Omaha**Date of Act(s):** 1982-1986**Reports:** Diocese: 2008, 2019; LE: 2019**Status:** Deceased, 1993**Description:** Sexual abuse, multiple victims**Parish assignments:**

- Omaha, Holy Cross
- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Spencer, St. Mary
- Norfolk, Sacred Heart
- Papillion, St. Columbkille

## Section 3.

Activity after leaving the Archdiocese of Omaha or after leaving ministry

### Henry, Patrick

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1970s-1980s

**Reports:** Diocese of Cleveland: ca. 2008

**Status:** Transferred to the Diocese of Cleveland, 1997

**Description:** Sexual abuse. This case was overseen by the Diocese of Cleveland.

**Parish assignments:**

- St. Columbkille, Papillion
- Maryknoll Missions
- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Maryknoll Missions
- Diocese of Cleveland

## Section 4.

### Activity Before Entering Formation or Seminary

#### Pickett, Deacon Robert

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1978

**Reports:** Diocese: 2016; LE: 1978

**Status:** Removed, 2016

**Description:** Sexual abuse

#### \* Zyla, Jeff

**Affiliation:** Omaha

**Date of Act(s):** 1978-1981, ca. 1996

**Reports:** Diocese and LE: 2003, 2018

**Status:** Removed, 2003

**Description:** Sexual abuse. Allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor was received in 2018, occurring ca. 1996, after ordination to the priesthood. Referral to law enforcement was made December of 2018. To our knowledge, law enforcement declined to investigate.

**Parish assignments:**

- South Sioux City, St. Michael
- Omaha, St. Leo
- Petersburg, St. John the Baptist; Raeville, St. Bonaventure
- Wisner, St. Joseph
- West Point Central Catholic High School
- Aloys, St. Aloysius