

December 12, 2019

Dear Parishioners,

Last month WCPO I-Team aired a series of reports on the handling of clergy abuse by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (AoC) and the Diocese of Covington. There were a number of errors in the report concerning the AoC's handling of issues. Because the handling of abuse cases by clergy and church personnel must be taken seriously, and because people are shaken in their faith by what has happened, and in the name of fairness, I feel it is important to clarify inaccuracies and falsities in their report. The Archdiocese has issued the following to correct the report. (I could not find these corrections on the WCPO website.) I urge you to hand this information on to others who are affected by the report. I in no way condone the mishandling of abuse issues but also feel that when the church is inaccurately or false accused of a matter, it needs to be corrected.

May the Lord bring healing and peace to all who affected by the abuse of ministers or anyone.

Sincerely,

Fr. Jeff Kemper

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/communication-office/>

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION & MISSION PROMOTION

Regarding the handling of clerical abuse as reported by WCPO

- **There are no archdiocesan priests in active ministry who have had a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.**
- The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is committed to doing everything possible to eliminate this horrific evil from our parishes and schools. Please report any suspected abuse on the part of any agent of the archdiocese to the appropriate civil authorities, as well as to the Coordinator of Ministry to Survivors of Abuse in the archdiocese. This can be done by calling 513.263.6623 or 1.800.686.2724 ext. 6623 or by submitting a report online [<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/20989/index.html>] which is linked on the homepage of our website.
- **All employees of the archdiocese, including priests, are background checked** and must stay current on Virtus.
- **For more than a decade** the archdiocese has posted on its website the names of those diocesan priests removed from ministry due to substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor.
- The archdiocese has also posted the names of religious order priests who have ministered in the archdiocese who have been identified by their respective communities as having been removed from ministry for reasons of abuse. [<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/protecting-children/resources-and-publications/status-report-on-clerics-accused-of-child-abuse/>]

Updated Dec. 2, 2019

- After repeated requests, WCPO has changed the language of their web article implying that all the men on their list belonged on the Archdiocese of Cincinnati list of credibly accused. It had read, “The archdiocese listed 33 credibly accused priests on its website – which is 59 fewer than the 92 accused priests and brothers that WCPO discovered and compiled for its list.” The line now reads, “The archdiocese listed 33 credibly accused priests on its website – which is about one third of the 92 accused priests and brothers throughout the Tri-State that WCPO discovered and compiled for its list.” This clarification was made on the WCPO website, Nov. 27th.

[COMMENT BY FR. KEMPER: Dioceses and religious orders are administratively autonomous from one another; they do not have access to each other’s information.]

Updated Nov. 27, 2019

- WCPO has updated the title language of the database at our request. The database now lists priests and brothers from the “Cincinnati area” instead of “Cincinnati”, as stated previously. We have asked why they are not using the term “Tri-State” consistent with the language in the articles and more identifying of the two dioceses in their viewing area, in Ohio and Kentucky.

Updated Nov. 22, 2019

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati made more requests to correct information in WCPO’s online web articles.

Nov. 20, 2019 Points of Clarification on WCPO coverage:

- **Keith Albrecht was never assigned to St. Jude Parish in Bridgetown as implied by WCPO.** In the chart “Where they worked” WCPO reports that at St. Jude Parish in Bridgetown, two accused priests were “**assigned**” there, and the video report states that Fr. Albrecht was at St. Jude Parish at the same time that Mr. Geoff Drew was a music minister at the Parish (1984-1999).

During that time period, Fr. Albrecht was the associate pastor at Holy Trinity in Coldwater, OH. He began that assignment in 1984. He was then appointed pastor at the parish in 1987. He remained in the parish until being placed on administrative leave in 1993. His residency while on administrative leave is being researched by the Archdiocese. According to the Official Catholic Directory, Fr. Albrecht is listed at St. Jude Parish in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 while on administrative leave. Fr. Albrecht was laicized in 2005 and died in 2019.
- As noted in the web article, there is a more than 25-year gap between Fr. Albrecht being assigned to St. Luke Parish in Beavercreek in 1977 and Fr. Geoff Drew being assigned there in 2004. The assignment of these two men to that parish were made decades apart by separate Archbishops.
- **A “cloak of secrecy” does not exist in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.** Information is readily available on our website and the Department of Communications has worked with WCPO for several months to answer questions pertaining to the I-Team investigation.
- As of September 2019, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati does not use the term “credibly accused” on our website. The list on our website consists of men with “substantiated allegations” of child sexual abuse. The definition of substantiated allegation that was provided to WCPO and is available on our website is, “For purposes of the list below, a substantiated allegation is one which, based upon investigation and a review of the available facts and circumstances, is more likely than not to be true.” This definition was misstated in the WCPO coverage on Nov. 19.

- It was stated in the video coverage Nov. 18 that the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is, “still refusing to answer questions about allegations about why more information isn’t available.” We are not refusing to answer questions. **Over the last several months, the Archdiocese has answered dozens of questions from WCPO. We have provided answers, pointed them to information on our website, confirmed information and provided statements when appropriate.** A spokeswoman for the Archdiocese has returned more than 30 emails to WCPO in addition to appearing on *The Week in Cincinnati* on WCPO on Aug. 23 to discuss the Archdiocese’s handling of the Fr. Geoff Drew matter.

It was stated in the video coverage on Nov. 18 that the AoC, “repeatedly declined to answer any questions about Dan Pater.” **This is false.** WCPO sent one email with questions about Dan Pater on Oct. 27. In a response on Oct. 31 to several emails worth of questions we wrote, “Daniel Pater has been permanently removed from priestly ministry at the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican. He is prohibited from wearing clerical clothing and publicly presenting himself as a priest. He is leading a life of prayer and penance.” This information has also been publicly available on the Archdiocese website for several years.

- Brother Frank Russell is a member of the Marianist order. The Marianist order has not released a list of men with credible allegations of abuse. We do include names of religious order priests with credible allegations of abuse who have ministered in our Archdiocese on our website when they have been identified by their respective communities.
- On its website, WCPO asks, “Does the Catholic Church move priests with credible abuse claims to keep them hidden?” The answer for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is unequivocally no. **There are zero Archdiocesan priests in active ministry who have had a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.** In 2002, the U.S. Bishops adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Appended to the Charter was a set of norms for dealing with cases of sex abuse of minors by priests. These norms provided that any priest who had offended at any time, even once and in the distant past, would be permanently removed from priestly ministry. This is how the Archdiocese of Cincinnati operates. **There is, therefore, no pattern or practice of assigning priests to a new parish or school after they have been accused of abusing a minor.**
- The article states that in October more than 1,300 local Catholics signed a petition asking the Vatican to investigate how the Archdiocese handled the Fr. Drew matter. The article failed to mention that the Archdiocese sent a comprehensive report to the Apostolic Nuncio and the Vatican in late August regarding this matter.
- The article states that St. Maximilian Kolbe parishioners complained to the Archdiocese about Fr. Drew in 2013 and 2015. The Archdiocese previously addressed these complaints in a press conference and a published timeline of information that is available online. None of these complaints alleged that Fr. Drew sexually abused anyone. In fact, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has never received an allegation that Fr. Drew sexually abused anyone during his tenure as a priest.
- The article stated, “The Archdiocese of Cincinnati declined to answer questions about how it places priests.” **This is false.** In an Oct. 31 email we responded, “The assignment of priests is overseen by the Priest Personnel Board. This process involves publicizing open positions to every priest, accepting applications from priests for assignments, assignment recommendations by the Board to the Archbishop, and then final approval by the Archbishop.”

Updated Nov. 18, 2019

Points of Clarification on WCPO coverage:

- **The archdiocese has not added any names to its list of credibly accused priests as a result of WCPO inquiries.** Most recently, we added the names of credibly accused Jesuit and Glenmary priests. This was the result of the Glenmary community publishing their own list, and additional information being provided to the Archdiocese by local Jesuit institutions. We made this clear to WCPO reporters in our following responses:

“We also want to make WCPO aware that, although we have listed clerics in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with substantiated allegations of child abuse on our website for more than a decade, adding non-incardinated [*incardinated*: the formal acceptance by a diocese of a clergyman from another diocese] men to the list began in late 2018. This list includes men who have ministered in the AoC who were not incardinated here and who have a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse. As individual religious orders began to release their own lists we felt it important to provide that information as well. This is an ongoing process that we are working through as we review our files and as additional religious orders release their lists.”

“Recent information received from the Glenmary community and information provided by local Jesuit institutions account for the eleven men [recently added to] our website.”

- The Archdiocese previously asked each religious community to inform us when they release a list of credibly accused priests and to alert us to any subsequent updates to that list. We will reflect this information on our website as it is made available to us.
- WCPO coverage references certain members of the Franciscan order. To date, the Franciscan order has not published a list of priests/brothers with credible allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Fr. Clarence Heis was placed on administrative leave in the summer of 2019, not 2016 as indicated in today’s WCPO article.
- “Special assignment” applies to a variety of ministries, including chaplaincy or advanced studies. Being on “special assignment” is not indicative of sexual or other misconduct.

[COMMENT BY FR. KEMPER: *When a priest is laicized, he is no longer under the authority of diocese. Some have argued that a diocese should not release the priest but should detain and keep track of him. This is unrealistic since the priest is not enslaved to a diocese, but by civil law is free to come and go and cannot be locked away without the priest allowing it. It is a naïve assumption that a priest who has committed a crime will obey a bishop. No other group (e.g., school boards, athletic associations) are expected to keep track of abusers once they have been dismissed from service.*]