

MICHAEL C. BARBER, S.J.
BISHOP OF OAKLAND



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October 2, 2018
Feast of The
Holy Guardian Angels

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In the wake of recent reports of scandal in the Catholic Church, I have decided the Diocese of Oakland will release the names of all clergy – diocesan, religious order and extern priests – who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor. This is the latest step in the ongoing commitment of the Diocese of Oakland to stop the scourge of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. This public accountability will allow you and others in our community to see we are keeping our promises. We have nothing to hide. It is the right thing to do.

Since 2002, the “No More Secrets Group”, a mutual support group for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, has been meeting with the full support and encouragement of the Diocese of Oakland. Indeed, our support for survivors of clergy sexual abuse predates the national Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People of 2002. In 1987 the Oakland Diocesan Senate of Priests issued our first set of guidelines on how to respond to allegations of abuse. My predecessors, Bishop John Cummins and Bishop Allen Vigneron both conducted services of healing for survivors.

Over the years we have been continually revising and improving our accountability process, reinforcing our commitment to protect children, utilizing background checks and mandatory safe environment training for all church employees and volunteers. We are regularly audited by an outside firm to ensure all our Catholic Parishes and Schools are in compliance.

I anticipate the list of those credibly accused will be ready for publication in approximately 45 days. With the large number of international and religious order clergy who have served in our Diocese in the past, it will take some time to verify certain information. I have instructed my staff to prioritize this work while also recognizing the importance of making the list as accurate as possible.

Anyone wishing to report any allegation of sexual misconduct by any clergy or diocesan employee should contact the local civil authority, i.e. police or sheriff's department. Mr. Stephen A. Wilcox, our Chancellor, who serves as the Victims Assistance Coordinator in our diocese can also assist in processing allegations of sexual misconduct and is a mandatory reporter. He can be reached at swilcox@oakdiocese.org or 510.267.8334. Survivors of clergy sexual abuse may also want to avail themselves of the Survivor Advocacy Network, at 510.267.8373 or survivors@oakdiocese.org. We have contracted with a medical professional who is trained in sexual trauma healing as an additional resource for survivors and their families.

For the greater glory of God

A former FBI official who is well-known as an advocate for justice in clergy sexual abuse, Dr. Kathleen McChesney, will assist in our review of clergy files and the audit of our processes. After the completion of our process review and the publication of our credibly accused list, Dr. McChesney and her team will do a full review of our files to ensure our list is as accurate as possible. This second review will be completed after the first of the year.

I realize other victims may step forward with new information. Any accusation will be fully investigated by our independent Diocesan Review Board. We intend to update our list as we receive new information.

I hope and pray the publication of these names will help the innocent survivors and their families in their journey to wholeness and healing. The Diocese of Oakland is committed to protecting children entrusted to our care.

With the assurance of my prayers and blessing, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Michael Barber S.J." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, S.J.
Bishop of Oakland