



Financial Accountability Report

**Sexual Abuse Settlements
and
Support for Priests on Administrative Leave or Laicized**

**Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport**

**Update for the period
November 1, 2018 - December 31, 2019**

INTRODUCTION

On October 31, 2018 the Diocese of Bridgeport (“Diocese”) published the [Financial Accountability Report](#) (“Accountability Report”). In the Accountability Report, the Diocese committed to provide annual updates to the report. This first update to the Accountability Report covers the period from November 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019. The original Accountability Report can be found on the Pledge to Protect section of the diocesan [website](#).

The [Accountability Report](#) also announced that the Diocese had commissioned retired Judge Robert Holzberg to investigate the sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Diocese of Bridgeport along with the response of Church leadership to that abuse. The results of that investigation were released in October 2019 as the Report on the Investigation into the History of Clergy Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport and the Diocese’s Response to that Abuse, 1953 to the Present (“Judge’s Report”). The Judge’s Report can be accessed on the Pledge to Protect section of the [diocesan website](#). Key financial details on this year-long investigation into the history of sexual abuse of minors in the Diocese are included in this update.

By way of background, the purpose of the Accountability Report was twofold: (1) to report on settlement amounts for past claims of clergy sexual abuse of minors from the establishment of the Diocese to date, including the sources from which the money was obtained to settle those claims; and (2) to provide a verified account of the financial support currently provided by the Diocese, and the source of that support, to any priest who has been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor, all of whom are either on administrative leave or have been laicized. This update provides information regarding settlements that were completed over the past year as well as modifications in the financial assistance to credibly accused priests.

Finally, we provide an update on our ongoing prevention and training efforts and our survivor support and outreach.

I. The Holzberg Investigation – Financial Information

Beginning in October 2018 and continuing through the publication of the investigation on October 1, 2019, retired Judge Robert Holzberg and his team conducted an in-depth investigation into sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Diocese of Bridgeport from the inception of the Diocese to present as well as the Diocesan response to this abuse. The results of this investigation were publicly announced and released on the diocesan website on October 1, 2019.

This investigation, conducted by Judge Holzberg and his team, involved the review and analysis of all available diocesan clergy records relating to sexual abuse and clergy. This comprehensive work also included numerous interviews of former and current personnel, outside experts and advocates, victims and interested diocesan individuals. The compilation of the resulting report involved a total of 4,643 attorney, paralegal and consultant hours resulting in legal fees totaling \$1,233,588. The Diocese received specifically designated contributions from several donors

totaling \$250,000, which defrayed a portion of the cost of the Judge's Report. In addition, in the course of the review of relevant documents as a part of the Judge's Report, the Diocese invested in significant services associated with digitizing and electronically analyzing these critical records with imbedded search capabilities to allow for future access and use. Costs associated with this investment in digitization of records were \$78,946. Other miscellaneous fees and expenses associated with the Judge's Report totaled \$14,338. It is worth noting that throughout the country, several dioceses are currently under involuntary records reviews by their Attorneys General. These dioceses are presumably expending significant amounts in legal fees to defend and protect their clients' confidential information in these investigations. The voluntary and transparent effort undertaken by the Diocese of Bridgeport, while costly, has enabled us to present a full report and accounting on this issue to the people of the Diocese.

II. Sexual Abuse Settlements

The following summarizes Diocesan settlements of matters related to sexual abuse of minors for the period November 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019.

- Total settlement amounts paid during the period November 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019 were \$4,492,000.
- Of the \$4,492,000 paid, \$2,192,562 was paid from sale of diocesan properties, \$2,199,438 was paid from insurance recoveries; and \$100,000 was from other contributors (i.e., religious orders or eparchy).
- All of the settlements paid on behalf of priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport during the period relate to claims of abuse that occurred *before 1983*.¹
- The \$4,492,000 total settlement payments represent 10 settled claims with the average of the settlement payments being \$449,200.
- In addition to the settlement payments, the legal fees associated with these settlements that were not paid for directly by insurers or reimbursed by insurers were \$50,491.

III. Current Financial Support for those Credibly Accused and on Administrative Leave or Laicized

Three credibly accused priests who are still alive are receiving between \$1,319-\$1,466 per month in support, which comes from proceeds from the past sale of Diocesan properties.

- As of January 1, 2019, all financial assistance to 4 credibly accused priests ended.
- One priest stopped receiving financial assistance in June 2019. His support during the period totaled \$11,728.
- The support of another credibly accused priest will be determined by a canonical penal process. The Diocese is awaiting the results of that trial, which is likely to

¹ The Diocese of Bridgeport was named in a lawsuit in 2017 regarding an allegation of abuse against a priest of the Maronite Catholic Church who never worked for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The priest's parish is located in the Diocese of Bridgeport. The diocese, in cooperation with the joint insurer of both named parties, contributed \$50,000 to the settlement of this matter; the remainder of the settlement was covered by the Maronite Catholic Church and the joint insurer.

be resolved within 30 days from the publication of this report. Should there be a verdict of guilty in that trial, all support of the accused priest will cease. Currently, the priest is receiving \$1,466 monthly. Financial support of this priest during the period was \$20,524.

- Five credibly accused priests are now receiving a pension benefit ranging from \$1077 to \$2,000 per month.
- During the period, two living priests were accused of sexual abuse of a minor. One of these priests was retired and receiving a pension of \$2,000 per month. He continues to receive a pension currently, funded out of the trust for priest pensions. The other priest was put on Administrative Leave in December 2018 and continues to receive a monthly stipend of \$2,698 per month, which will continue until his criminal case is concluded.
- Total support paid during the period November 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019 for these credibly accused priests (after the date found credible, where applicable), not including pension payments, was \$57,001.
- All of the financial support for credibly accused priests comes from the diocesan sale of assets account or the priest pension fund.

IV. Training and Survivor Support and Outreach

During the period November 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019, the Diocese of Bridgeport facilitated 269 live VIRTUS classes for adults and provided Safe Environment training to 7,601 Catholic School students. 5,278 adults attended live training or completed an online renewal of both training and background checks.

The Diocese also provided healing opportunities and hosted eight meetings for survivors of abuse as minors, which included both open sessions for any survivor of abuse and meetings specifically for survivors of sexual abuse as minors by clergy.

Two Masses of Hope and Healing were planned by the Survivors together with Bishop Caggiano and took place on November 19, 2018 at St. Francis of Assisi in Weston CT and April 7, 2019 at St. Joseph Church in Danbury, CT.

Looking ahead, in 2020, more than 20,000 adults will renew training and a background check online through the VIRTUS database. In addition, another Hope and Healing Mass will be held on March 22, 2020 at Fairfield University.

CONCLUSION

This update details the funds paid out by the Diocese for the Judge's Report, settlements and support for credibly accused priests over the past year. The Diocese is committed to updating this financial information on settlements and other related costs on a regular basis. In addition, the Diocese will report on our efforts and resources dedicated to Diocesan work with victims/survivors and keeping children safe through our Safe Environments Program. By continuing to provide a full and transparent report of the financial impact of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy, the Diocese of Bridgeport hopes to further the process

of healing and reconciliation. It remains the work of the Church to support and help to heal all those affected by abuse and to move forward in the solidarity of faith, a spirit of transparency and commitment to absolute accountability that will renew the Church.