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December 19, 2018

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN PROVIDES UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION INTO CATHOLIC CHURCH

Preliminary Findings Show Illinois Dioceses Have Received At Least 500 Allegations of Clergy Sexual Assault & Abuse Against Children the Church Has Never Made Public

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today released preliminary findings of her ongoing investigation into the Catholic Church. While the six dioceses in Illinois have now publicly identified 185 clergy members as having been “credibly” accused of child sexual abuse, Madigan’s investigation has found that the dioceses have received allegations of sexual abuse of at least 500 additional priests and clergy members in Illinois.

“Because I know that the Church has too often ignored survivors of clergy sexual assault, I want to share the initial findings from our work,” Madigan said. “While the findings are preliminary, they demonstrate the need for and importance of continuing this investigation.”

Madigan began her investigation in August following the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report describing the scope of clergy child sexual abuse in that state. Since then, Madigan and her office have spoken or met with bishops, lawyers and diocesan representatives from all six dioceses in Illinois: the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the dioceses of Belleville, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield. Madigan’s office also has reviewed thousands of pages of documents and files from each diocese, including diocesan procedures for receiving and investigating allegations of abuse.

At the outset of the investigation, only two of the dioceses had published a list of clergy whom the diocese had determined were “credibly” accused of sexually abusing children. As a result of the investigation, the four other Illinois dioceses have compiled and published similar lists. Also as a result of Madigan’s office reviewing diocese files, over the past four months, the dioceses have added 45 clergy to the lists of those who have been “credibly” accused, resulting in a total of 185 clergy members who have been publicly identified by the dioceses. Madigan anticipates additional names will be disclosed as her office’s investigation continues.

Based on the preliminary review of the dioceses’ files, Madigan’s office has found that there are at least another 500 clergy that the Illinois dioceses have received allegations about. The investigation has revealed that allegations frequently have not been adequately investigated by the dioceses or not investigated at all. In many cases, the Church failed to notify law enforcement authorities or Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) of allegations of child sexual abuse. Among the common reasons the dioceses have provided for not investigating an allegation is that the priest or clergy member was deceased or had already resigned at the time the allegation of child sexual abuse was first reported to the diocese.

“By choosing not to thoroughly investigate allegations, the Catholic Church has failed in its moral obligation to provide survivors, parishioners and the public a complete and accurate accounting of all sexually inappropriate behavior involving priests in Illinois,” Madigan said. “The failure to investigate also means that the Catholic Church has never made an effort to determine whether the conduct of the accused priests was ignored or covered up by superiors.”

While Madigan’s investigation is ongoing, the findings also provide a critical document for discussion as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops plan to meet for a week-long retreat in Mundelein in January.

“The preliminary stages of this investigation have already demonstrated that the Catholic Church cannot police itself,” Madigan said. “Allegations of sexual abuse of minors, even if they stem from conduct that occurred many years ago, cannot be treated as internal personnel matters.”

Also in August, Madigan launched a Clergy Abuse Hotline for anyone to report allegations of sexual abuse by clergy members. To date, Madigan’s office has received over 300 communications via phone, email, and mail.

Madigan continues to urge Illinois residents to call her Clergy Abuse Hotline at 1-888-414-7678 with any information on allegations of sexual assault and abuse. The hotline is answered by trained staff in Madigan's office during business hours. Messages left on the hotline are returned if contact information is provided. People can also send emails to clergyabuse@atg.state.il.us. Madigan's office will refer allegations to Illinois states' attorneys' offices as appropriate.

A copy of [Madigan's status report can be found here](#).

Published lists of credibly accused priests and clergy can be found here: [Archdiocese of Chicago](#), the [Diocese of Belleville](#), [the Diocese of Joliet](#), [the Diocese of Peoria](#), [the Diocese of Rockford](#) and the [Diocese of Springfield](#).

Assistant Attorneys General Erik Jones, Thomas Verticchio, Caitlyn McEllis, Matthew Chimienti, Darren Kinkead, Stefanie Steines and Aaron Chait are handling the investigation for Madigan's Special Litigation Bureau. Assistant Attorney General Jessica O'Leary and Senior Policy Advisor Wendy Cohen are also working on the investigation.

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