

proper legal authorities. The safety and well-being of our children is too important not to take immediate and definitive action.”

Last week, the Diocese of Harrisburg released a list of clergy and seminarians accused of sexual abuse of minors. This list is available on our new website, www.youthprotectionhbg.com. The Diocese emphasize that this is a list of accusations; we made no assessments of credibility or guilt in creating this list. We update the list of accusations as calls have been reported over the previous week. Those new accusations that have been made are included on the updated list.

The Diocese has also released a document outlining the years of service and assignment locations, within the Diocese, for all individuals on the list. As with all new allegations, each was reported directly to law enforcement immediately.

Additionally, last week Bishop Gainer announced that those who have been accused of sexual misconduct, and appear on our list, will have their names removed from any position of honor throughout the Diocese. Bishop Gainer has directed that the name of every Bishop since 1947, the beginning date of the Grand Jury’s investigation, be removed from any building, facility, or room in the Diocese. Because there are no records of these matters during the tenure of Bishop McDevitt, and since the investigation extended back to 1947, twelve years after his death, there will be no change to the naming of Bishop McDevitt High School.

Also announced last week, the Diocese of Harrisburg reviewed its historical files and learned that prior to 2002, the Diocese from time-to-time entered into settlement agreements with survivors of child sexual abuse and that some of those settlement agreements contained confidentiality provisions. Though it has been the Diocese’s policy for some time not to enforce those confidentiality provisions, Bishop Gainer learned that some survivors still feel constrained by them. Accordingly, on behalf of the Diocese, Bishop Gainer waived any remaining confidentiality rights the Diocese has in those confidentiality provisions, while retaining all other rights the Diocese has under these agreements.

The Church’s new website, www.youthprotectionhbg.com, also contains information on how to report child sexual abuse, contact information for the Victim Assistance Office and detailed information on how our Church has confronted this issue.

The Diocese of Harrisburg takes the protection of youth in all Church related activities and programs very seriously. We have an aggressive Safe Environment Program with a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy, employees or volunteers and give guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse.

Youth Protection efforts in the Diocese of Harrisburg include:

- **We are aggressive in rooting out abusers** in ministry or employment within the Diocese. If anyone has even one proven allegation, they are barred permanently from ministry or employment.
- **We report every allegation we receive** to the District Attorney of the county involved.
- **We help survivors to heal.** We have a Victims Assistance Coordinator for survivors and families.
- **We screen all employees and volunteers** with multiple background certifications and abusers are ineligible for hire and not permitted to volunteer in any capacity.
- **We train people to recognize and report abuse.** We require that all clergy, every employee and every volunteer successfully complete a state approved online training program on how to recognize and report child abuse.
- **We teach students how to stay safe.** Students receive instruction in age-appropriate child abuse awareness programs.
- **We provide ID badges for all persons** who have completed the requirement of our Diocesan Youth Protection Program.
- **We execute a prudent and prompt** inquiry and reporting of each accusation. If law enforcement declines to act, the Diocese contracts with professional investigators, not clergy or Church employees, to conduct an independent and thorough investigation.
- **We openly communicate with all involved** and support due process.
- **We comply with national standards for youth protection** and are audited annually in an independent audit.

There are **TWO** steps to make a complaint:

1. We encourage anyone who suspects abuse of a minor to call the toll-free PA Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313.
2. To report suspected abuse of a minor by a church official, employee or volunteer, also please call the Diocesan toll-free hotline at 1-800-626-1608 or email:ReportAbuse@hbgdiocese.org. It is critical the Church be made aware of any complaints immediately so we can take appropriate action.

###