

PENNSYLVANIA REAL-TIME NEWS

# Report puts spotlight on child sex abuse involving Harrisburg Diocese clergy

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg on Tuesday was in the news amid a report regarding child sex abuse within its ranks.

A report by [The York Daily Record](#) indicated that the diocese named 15 priests who have been accused of sexually abusing children and who had worked in the 15-county diocese.

The YDR report specifically names the Rev. Raymond Prybis, who once served at St. Joseph's in Dallastown. Prybis was accused of abuse during his time at a Boston-area parish before he was transferred to York County. The



report cites a personnel file released by the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis in January 2015. Prybis did not have a credible allegation of abuse against him while at St. Joseph's, the YDR reported.

Many of the clergy members' names cited in the YDR report have appeared in reports by PennLive and The Patriot-News, both of which have over the years published reports regarding allegations of sexual abuse against priests from the diocese - as well as the respective response from the diocese to those allegations.

Those reports include accounts involving:

- Guy Marsico, a former priest assigned to St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Rohrerstown, Lancaster County. (No criminal charges were ever leveled against Marsico).
- The 2004 report from the diocese confirming it had received credible reports of sexual abuse of 64 minors by 22 priests since 1950 and had spent \$1.9 million in settlements, legal fees and counseling. None of the 22 priests were in active ministry at the time.
- In April 2002 the diocese received a "credible allegation" of sexual misconduct with a minor against John Allen, senior pastor at St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Church in Penbrook. The allegation stemmed from an incident more than 20 years earlier. Allen resigned from the priesthood within 12 hours. Prosecution was not possible because the statute of limitations had expired.



- The 1996 coverage of the Rev. John R. Bostwick, a former priest in Harrisburg. The then 55 Bostwick was placed on administrative leave in Richmond, Va., after the bishop there was notified by Harrisburg diocesan officials that a 28-year-old man had accused the priest of molesting him 15 years prior. Bostwick had assisted at various intervals between the late 1970s and 1992 at three parishes: St. Catherine Laboure in Swatara Twp., St. Leo the Great in Lancaster and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lebanon. Bostwick also worked at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md., in the 1980s.
- The story that broke in December 1994 involving the Rev. Augustine Giella, who spent nearly seven years as pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Swatara Twp., as well as serving at a parish in Hanover in southern York Count. Giella was arrested at his retirement home in Manchester, N.J., and charged with molesting the 14-year-old daughter of a Dauphin County couple whom he had befriended through the church. He died awaiting trial. The Diocese of Harrisburg paid more than \$900,000 to the girl's family to settle a civil suit by her parents.
- In 1994, the diocese paid out \$950,000 to settle nine confirmed cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests. That same year, then-Bishop Nicholas Dattilo appointed a nine-member board of lay persons and clergy to review the diocese's investigative practices and policies regarding sexual misconduct by priests and to



encourage victims to come forward with any allegations. The nine confirmed cases of sexual abuse of minors dated back to 1950.

In addition, amid the wake of the grand jury reports out of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PennLive in 2011 published a comprehensive report on then-Bishop Joseph McFadden, who told PennLive that he had no knowledge of the abuse in Philadelphia.

McFadden was in 2004 appointed auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese. Although McFadden was not named in any of the grand jury reports into widespread and systemic clergy sex abuse in the archdiocese, he spent 11 years as secretary to Cardinal John Krol, who along with Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua, featured prominently in the reports' findings.



The late Bishop Joseph McFadden in 2011 told PennLive that he had not known about the widespread clergy sex abuse and cover-up in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. McFadden spent years serving in the



archdiocese as a top  
administrative official.

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McFadden said his duties in the cardinal's office had been strictly administrative.

The YDR noted that the March grand jury report into widespread clergy sex abuse in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown had spurred its own report on the Harrisburg Diocese. Among the priests mentioned in the YDR'S report are:

- Gerald Bugge who served at St. Anthony of Padua in Lancaster from August 1986 to April 1988. The diocese responded it had no record of a credible allegation against the late Bugge.
- William Geiger , who spent time at Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Ephrata from July 1987 to August 1993 and from August 1999 to June 2007; and was at St. Anthony of Padua between April 1994 and August 1999. The diocese has no record of a credible allegation against the late priest, the report stated.



- Thomas F. Lawler, who was assigned to churches in the Harrisburg diocese for more than two decades from the 1960s to the 1980s.
- James E. Noel, born in York, was the subject abuse allegations after his death, the Harrisburg diocese said. It said there were no allegations against him while he was alive.
- James Shaughnessey, who was assigned to Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary in Lebanon and St. Joan of Arc in Hershey in the 1930s and '40s. He is named among accused priests by the Boston archdiocese on its website.
- Frederick Vaughn, who served at St. Joseph's in York, St. Peter's in Elizabethtown; St. Mark the Evangelist in Franklin County; and St. James in Dauphin County The Harrisburg Diocese said it received allegations of abuse against Vaughn after his death but not while he was alive, according to The YDR.

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