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Little Rock, Ark. — September 14, 2018
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The Diocese of Little Rock released a list of clergy who had assignments in Arkansas and against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were filed.

Released Sept. 10, the list was gathered through an internal review of diocesan files, the diocese said. The list contains the name of one former priest who was previously identified and 11 former priests who were identified for the first time.

Little Rock Bishop Anthony Taylor in a statement accompanying the announcement apologized to the people who had been sexually abused by a priest, deacon or other church representative as well as "for the way that church leadership has sometimes failed you in the past."

"I am committed to doing everything in my power to ensure that this never happens again," he said.

He said the church must be "a safe place where those who have been abused in the past can find understanding, healing and hope."

He also offered any assistance the diocese could provide to the people who have been abused.

Releasing the list of clergy accused of abuse "is simply the right thing to do," Taylor said.

"The list is being published in the interest of transparency and to bring the truth into light. It is my hope that these disclosures might bring healing to the victims and their families and encourage as-yet unknown victims to come forward," he said in the statement.

The list of clergy was posted on the diocesan website at dolr.org/clergy-disclosure-list. It included background information on each cleric.

Although the list of clergy was made public, diocesan officials continued to examine files and "conduct additional investigations," the statement said.

The diocese hired the investigative firm of Kinsale Management Consulting to conduct the investigation.

The review will examine how bishops and other religious superiors in Arkansas handled abuse allegations that were received. Taylor said he hope the review and its findings would be made public in December.

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Diocesan officials planned to update information on the website after the investigation is completed.

Taylor urged in his statement that new reports of abuse could be made through the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline first and then to the diocese.

The diocese also contacted Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, Taylor said. "We plan to cooperate fully with any investigation that she might request," he said.

"As we consider this list of names and experience the shock of knowing that these priests preyed on so many victims, we need also to honor the courage of those who have come forward to share the most painful experiences of their entire life," the bishop said.

He acknowledged that it often takes years for trauma victims to "come to terms with the abuse they have suffered and ask for help."

"It takes much courage to make this admission and it takes trust. And trust is something that gets twisted and manipulated by the abuser, as well as by the

institutions that helped protect the abuser," the bishop said. "So stepping forward is that much more difficult and will not occur until the victim feels safe and is confident that he or she will be heard."

Taylor noted that during the past 70 years, about 700 priests have served in Arkansas and that of the total, 12 had been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of a minor, with nine of those abusing minors while serving in Arkansas.

"While it is no excuse, it is important for our faithful to know that none of these offenses occurred later than the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in 2002," he added.

The bishop also said that during the past 70 years, other priests have left ministry for personal reasons or were dismissed for misconduct with adults or other concerns. Other "imprudent acts" that did not amount to sexual abuse also have been investigated, he said.