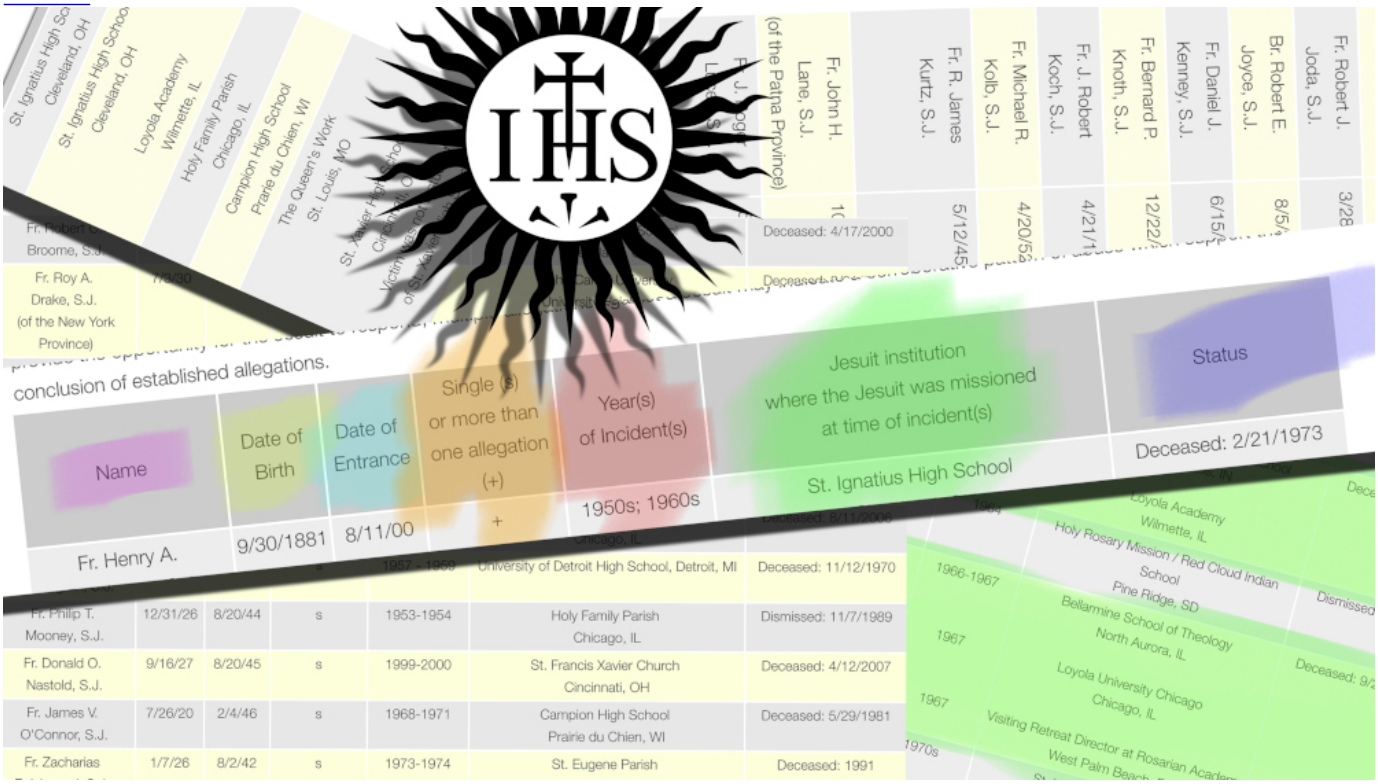
[News]



All U.S.-based Jesuit provinces have released the names of clerics they say are credibly accused of child sex abuse. RNS illustration by Kit Doyle

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The Northeast province of the Society of Jesus has released the names of 50 men it says have been credibly accused of child sex abuse since 1950.

With the report's release Jan. 15, following others from the Catholic order's U.S. provinces in recent months, all Jesuit provinces in the United States have now unveiled lists of priests accused of abuse, joining dozens of Catholic dioceses that have done the same since the August 2018 release of a bombshell grand jury report in Pennsylvania that detailed decades of alleged abuse by priests in the state.

The Northeast province's list details the Jesuits' past assignments, current status and the form of allegation deemed credible. Many of the clerics were listed as deceased, some were described as having left the order, and one was listed as incarcerated on charges of child pornography.

The Rev. John J. Cecero, provincial of the Northeast province, published a letter apologizing for Jesuits who have committed abuse and promising to "work to provide safe environments for all to whom we minister." He said the order has put in place safeguards since 2002 to protect children and others.

"The list I publish today notes criminal and sinful failures in the pastoral care of children," he wrote. After noting that "the majority of these allegations were made years or even decades after abuse occurred," Cecero said in his letter that "any living Jesuit with a credible allegation of abuse is removed from ministry and assigned to a community that does not serve minors where he lives under a closely monitored safety plan. … Jesuits who have offended can no longer offend."

The Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and prominent author who is part of the Northeast province, expressed dismay on Twitter after the list was released.

"This is … my home province and this list fills me with both shame and anger," Martin said. "Though I had no authority over any of these men, the crimes and sins of my brother Jesuits shame and anger me intensely."

He added: "Today's Gospel speaks of Jesus healing a man with an 'unclean spirit' in the midst of the synagogue (Mk 1:21-28). Today we ask Jesus to help us heal the evil that we encounter in the church today."

As Jesuits and other church leaders embrace greater transparency by posting the names, the efforts may not be enough to stifle criticism.

After several Jesuit provinces released names late last year, journalists noted that some of the accused are living in a Baltimore home within a mile of several schools. Advocates at SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, subsequently called on the Jesuits to provide the surrounding community “with an explanation of their safety protocols and practices,” according to news website ThinkProgress.

In other cases, efforts by Catholic officials to publicly identify accused priests have been called into question. In December, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced that her state’s recent investigation into the Catholic abuse crisis uncovered more than 500 accused priests who had not yet been publicly identified by the church. The announcement stressed that the findings were preliminary and did not clarify how many of the allegations against priests were credible.

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