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Bishop Robert Vasa of Santa Rosa said he hopes the public release of a comprehensive list of clerical sexual abuse allegations will give all abuse survivors "the assurance that they have been heard and that the church is very much concerned for their well-being and healing."

"In the name of the church, I want, first of all to express my sincere sorrow that so many have been subjected to the evil actions of priests and bishops," he said in a statement. "Thus, I apologize again, especially for any who have been subjected to injury at the hands of the clergy named (in the list)."

An open letter to the people of the Santa Rosa Diocese and the complete list of accused priests and deacons can be found online in the January issue of the diocesan paper, the North Coast Catholic, at https://bit.ly/2QRUKwG.

"While the church has taken some very significant actions over the past 20 years, those actions are significant in terms of the present and future protection of children," Vasa said in his statement. "However, they do not touch the very real trauma which the evil actions of deacons, priests and bishops have caused in the lives of thousands of young people in our nation."

"It is my deepest prayer and hope that this release of names in a consolidated fashion says to any of you who are victims, we have heard you, we believe you, we affirm you in your trauma and we want to help with a healing process," he said.

He said that the diocese "sadly ... has had sexual abuse events as late as 2006 and 2008 and I find that most troubling."

"However, the vast majority of the abuses occurred decades ago," Vasa said. "This is not complete proof that the church is making progress in eliminating this great tragedy, but I find this to be a sign of hope."

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There are 39 names on the list. The dates during which an individual served in the Diocese of Santa Rosa and the person's present status, "when known," also are provided, he said.

Vasa divided the list into four different sets identified by the numbers in brackets:

-- (1) Indicates those whose names were released officially by the Diocese in January 2004.

-- (2) Designates those priests whose names have become a part of a public record, "mostly by way of public expressions in the media or on the internet."

-- (3) Identifies those, not otherwise named, whose accusations are deemed by the Diocesan Review Board to be well founded and credible.

-- (4) Designates the names of accused priests who had varying degrees of connection with the Diocese of Santa Rosa and who had claims brought against them in other places.

Seventeen named on the list "have no known allegations against them during the time of their service or presence in the Diocese of Santa Rosa," he added.

Vasa also said that there are members of the clergy against whom allegations have been made "but which lack sufficient substantiation to justify a release or which, in the judgment of the Diocesan Review Board, may not be released without a court order authorizing the diocese to do so."

In three of those cases, explained, the proper authorities investigated and found the allegations were not substantiated, he said. "One of these remains in ministry.

"In two cases, the allegations came to the diocese or religious community to which the accused belonged, and those entities have not yet determined the suitability of releasing the names," Vasa added. "In one case the nature of the event described does not indicate that abuse occurred."

"Bringing difficult things to light is painful," Vasa said. "It is painful for victims of childhood sexual abuse, for the people of God, for our priests, and for me. I know of no other way to bring light to this distressing moment in the church."