

The NEWS FROM Inland See

August 24–30, 2019

FOR THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

The sins of the past

The Diocese of Burlington this week published a report listing the names of diocesan clergy who, since 1950, have had a credible and substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor made against them. With one exception, all of these acts occurred more than 20 years ago. None of these priests are in ministry; most of them are deceased. While most of these allegations took place at least a generation ago, the numbers are still staggering; the victims of these priests are still bearing the wounds of what happened to them. Until now, the scope of all of this has been our “family secret.”

Family secrets can be toxic. Harmful past experiences — unspoken, unaddressed, and known only by a few — fester like neglected wounds. The innocent victims of the family secret are often made to feel ashamed about what happened as no one seems to listen to them or even, sadly at times, believe them. While these secrets remain hidden, those who have been hurt are often unable to find the healing they need, especially if those who harmed them are still “part” of the family, even if only in memory.

The Church is not immune to this reality. We often talk about the Church as a family, as a community of faith in which we are brothers and sisters in our love for God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are supposed to be a people of love, a place of hope, and a community of healing. But that is not always the case. This is especially true with the significant number of cases involving the sexual and physical abuse of children by clergy, not just here in Vermont, but in the entire Church. These “sins of the past” continue to haunt us. These shameful, sinful, and criminal acts have been our “family secret” for generations. While there has been significant action by the Church here in Vermont and in the United States to address the issue of

the sexual abuse of minors by clergy and the cover-up of those crimes by those in authority, the whole sordid tale of what happened in decades leading up to the U.S. bishops’ 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People has not been fully aired. That is why I have asked that this report be compiled and published.

When I arrived in Vermont four years ago as the 10th bishop of Burlington, I promised to continue the Diocese’s efforts to address past abuses of children by clergy, to work toward healing for those who have experienced abuse, to maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any individual with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse, and to be transparent about the prevention, handling, and response to the sexual abuse of minors. In order to do so, it is clear to me that we must be fully honest about these sins of our past. If only a list of priests with credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor had been released 15 years ago, perhaps we would be farther along our collective path of healing. But for many reasons, this was not able to happen.

In November 2018, as part of my personal commitment and that of the Diocese of Burlington to transparency regarding abuse by clergy, an independent, volunteer committee of four lay men and three lay women assembled to review clergy personnel files pertinent to any past allegation of abuse of a minor and to create a list of priests who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor. Working completely independent of the Diocese, the committee only met with me twice, in the beginning and at the end of the process. I am grateful to the individuals who served on the file review committee, volunteering more than eight months of their

Continued on other side.



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

To see more events or to submit your event to the diocesan calendar: vermontcatholic.org/events

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time to thoroughly review files and materials and to compile a report of their findings. As promised, I am publishing the committee's report as it was presented to me without any edits or changes. It can be viewed at vermont-catholic.org/promise.

In addition to confronting the sins of the past, we must remain vigilant in ensuring these sins do not occur in the future. I have listened to the stories of victims of clergy sexual abuse and will continue to do so. They need to hear over and over again that we believe them. They also need to know that we are doing everything we humanly can to make sure this does not happen again. The Church in the United States has put in place policies and procedures to make the Catholic Church one of the safest places for children today. In 2002, the Diocese of Burlington adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which requires: mandatory reporting of all abuse allegations to civil authorities; removal of credibly accused clerics from active ministry; background checks of all priests, staff and volunteers; training to recognize and prevent abuse; and many other proactive steps to ensure the safety of all members of our Church family. As a result of our rigorous efforts, since 2002 there has been only one credible and substantiated claim of abuse against a priest in the Diocese of Burlington. There are no priests in ministry in Vermont who have had a credible and substantiated allegation made against them.

As has been the case for the past 17 years, I, along with the clergy, staff and volunteers of the Diocese, are committed to supporting and caring for all victims of abuse and will continue to work to ensure safe environments for all God's people — especially children, youth and vulnerable individuals— in which no form of harassment, sexual or otherwise, is tolerated. If you have been abused or if you suspect a minor or vulnerable person has been abused, contact the proper authorities immediately, including local law enforcement and the Diocese's Victim Assistance Line at 866-485-2488.

Please visit vermontcatholic.org/promise for regular updates, frequently asked questions and more information regarding the Diocese's promise to protect children and vulnerable persons entrusted to our care.

The greater family of the Catholic Church is in much need of healing. Together, we can mend our family's discord and, by the grace of God, ensure that these sins do not happen again.



Sincerely Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington

UPCOMING EVENTS



08|28 WEDNESDAY
**St. Anne's Shrine
Summer Reflection Series**

St. Anne's Shrine, Isle LaMotte • 11:15 am - 1 pm

Begins with Mass at 11:15. Our final date is August 28, with Rev. Richard Berube, S.S.E., Surprising Conversions: Peter, Paul and the Woman at the Well.



09|05 THURSDAY
**Life of St. Br. André of St.
Joseph's Oratory**

Mary Queen of All Saints, Hardwick • 4 - 7 pm

Presentation on the life of St. Br. André, Eucharistic Adoration and Anointing of the Holy Spirit, Veneration of the Relic of St. Br. André, Blessing with St. Joseph's Oil, Healing Mass. Food provided by Catholic Daughters of the Americas.



09|05 THURSDAY
Surviving Divorce

St. Peter, Vergennes • 6:30 - 8 pm

This small group will meet over several weeks to cover topics such as shock and grief, anger and forgiveness, money issues, dealing with children and a former spouse, and annulment and remarriage. This program is based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. Participants will find answers to their questions, restore their hope, and begin authentic healing.

**FOR MORE INFO: and/or to register by September 5,
Sharon (802) 877-6585.**



09|07 SATURDAY
Our Lady of Fatima Devotions

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 - 9:30 am

Join us the first Saturday of every month

for Our Lady of Fatima Devotions. We begin with rosary and reconciliation at 8 am, followed by Mass at 8:30.



09|07 SATURDAY
**Chicken Pie Supper
by Maybelle Dumont**

Our Lady of the Angels, Randolph • 5 pm



09|08 SUNDAY
St. Luke Children's Carnival

St. Luke Fairfax • 11:30 am - 1 pm

Hosted by Knights of Columbus Council

10830. Event is open to Children of All Ages.



09|13, 14 FRIDAY-SATURDAY
Young Adult Retreat Dumaine

Dumaine Retreat Center, Jacksonville

Arrive 7 pm Friday, depart, 6 pm Saturday.

For Young Adults ages 18-39. Cost: \$65, includes meals and lodging. Led by Sisters from the Daughters of Saint Paul.



09|14 SATURDAY
Padre Pio Devotions

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 - 10 am

Rosary at 8 am followed by Mass, then

learning about Padre Pio's life, ministry and spiritual gifts will follow in the Holy Family Parish Hall after Mass.



09|20 FRIDAY
**Married Couples Date Night
for Empty Nesters**

Assumption of the BVM, Middlebury

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Add some more romance and intimacy to your marriage! Get out and have some fun!! Your date night includes appetizers, beverages, and time for the two of you for a minimal fee of \$20 per couple.

RSVP by Sept. 16 to: tmccormack@vermontcatholic.org or (802)658-6110 x1451



09|21 SATURDAY
**Living the Catholic Faith
to the Full**

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston

8 - 10:30 am

Knights of Columbus Men's Spiritual Development Workshop. Fr. Henry Furman will be the guest speaker. All men are invited to attend. Light Refreshments will be provided.