

**\*\*\*\*\* MEDIA RELEASE \*\*\*\*\***

**Catholic Diocese of Little Rock Settles with Five Men Who Were Sexually Abused as Children by a Priest at Holy Souls in Little Rock: The Pedophile Priest, Father John J. McDaniel, is believed to have many more victims throughout Little Rock and Arkansas.**

**June 26, 2018**

**Little Rock, Arkansas –**

The Catholic Diocese of Little Rock, after mediation in May of this year, agreed to settle claims made by five Little Rock men who were sexually abused by Father John J. McDaniel in the early 1970s. This is believed to be the first time the Catholic Diocese of Little Rock – which encompasses the entire state of Arkansas – has settled cases with child sex abuse victims of priests in Arkansas. Earlier this year, Bishop Anthony Taylor of the Diocese of Little Rock released a [list of priests](#) credibly accused of sexual abuse. Fr. John McDaniel was on that list along with a number of other priests.

“While this is far from the first or only time a priest in Arkansas has abused boys, we believe this is the first time the Diocese has agreed to pay monetary damages to compensate for the indescribable harm inflicted upon these men,” says Joshua Gillispie, of Little Rock, one of the attorneys for the victims. “We are very proud of our clients, who had the strength of heart and mind to come forward and hold the Diocese of Little Rock responsible for its long history of misdeeds.”

The pedophile priest in this case, Father John J. McDaniel, was ordained in 1955 after attending seminary in Little Rock. According to church records, McDaniel served as associate pastor at St. John the Baptist in Hot Springs in 1956 and 1957. He was transferred to Christ the King in Fort Smith in 1958, where records indicate he remained until 1961, when he was again transferred, this time to the Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in El Dorado. In 1964, Father McDaniel was transferred to Blytheville, where he served as associate pastor at Immaculate Conception. Father McDaniel was once again transferred in 1967, this time to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Malvern. And then in 1970, Father McDaniel was moved back to Little Rock, to serve as associate pastor at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church, in Hillcrest.

“Historically, diocese around the country employed a ‘geographical solution’ in dealing with this extremely widespread problem. In short, a diocese would receive an allegation against a priest,

but instead of contacting law enforcement or even removing the priest, the diocese would simply move the priest to a new parish and its unsuspecting parishioners,” explains California attorney Paul Mones, who assisted Mr. Gillispie. “And so, you get all these abusive priests, such as Fr. McDaniel, being shuffled from parish to parish every few years.”

All five of the victims who received settlements from the Diocese were students at Holy Souls when Father McDaniel was given access to them. They were all between the ages of 12 and 15 during the course of their abuse. The abuse that Fr. McDaniel visited upon these trusting, innocent boys was unusually horrific, even compared to other priest abuse cases. The majority of this sexual abuse was committed on the campus of Holy Souls, in the rectory. Sadly, witnesses report that McDaniel’s superior at Holy Souls, the late Monsignor Francis Allen, was even aware that McDaniel was taking boys into his room in the rectory.

Counsel for the victims is aware of other victims of McDaniel who have since passed away, from both Holy Souls and from his prior postings around the state, including in Hot Springs and Fort Smith.

“It is extremely likely that there are many, many more victims of McDaniel who have yet to come forward, almost certainly from every single one of the Arkansas towns where McDaniel served,” says Gillispie.

Unfortunately, due to a combination of embarrassment and shame, most victims of sexual abuse never reveal their abuse to anyone; and this problem is complicated by the Arkansas Statute of Limitations, which makes getting justice for sexual abuse victims a very steep uphill climb.

“The threat of a lawsuit, and the possibility of using fraud to toll the statute of limitations, provides some leverage for forcing the Diocese to do right by its victims, as we saw here. However, until Arkansas’ outdated statute of limitations for child sex abuse claims is changed, the Diocese of Little Rock will never be willing to truly provide fair compensation to the victims of its many pedophile priests. These cases need to be heard by juries, and that is not likely to happen until Arkansas joins the many other states around the country that have modified their statute of limitations for child sex abuse claims,” says Gillispie. “And you can expect the Diocese of Little Rock to do everything in its power to fight against that change in law, as other dioceses have around the country, spending enormous sums of money on lobbyists.”

The victims are represented by Joshua Gillispie of [Green & Gillispie, Attorneys at Law](#). Based in North Little Rock, Arkansas, Green & Gillispie is an established advocate for victims of sexual abuse in Arkansas. Over the years Joshua Gillispie has developed a unique Arkansas practice that litigates on behalf of sexual abuse victims against their abusers and also against the organizations and corporations who hide and enable their abusers.

Assisting Mr. Gillispie was Paul Mones, a California attorney specializing in representing victims of sexual abuse throughout the nation against institutions like the Boy Scouts, Catholic Church and schools.

Anyone who has questions about Fr. McDaniel or any other abusive priests is invited to contact the attorneys at this number: (501) 244-0700.

Victims are also encouraged to contact the Arkansas chapter of SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) for resources and support. <http://www.snapnetwork.org/>

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**For comment or interviews, please contact counsel as follows:**

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