The Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg released information Wednesday, Aug. 1, after an extensive internal investigation on child sex abuse.

“I want to take this opportunity to express my sadness that youth under the Church’s supervision were abused,” said Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. “Many of those victimized as children continue, as survivors, to suffer from the harm they experienced. In my own name, and in the name of the Diocesan Church of Harrisburg, I express our profound sorrow and apologize to the survivors of child sex abuse, the Catholic faithful and the general public for the abuses that took place and for those Church officials who failed to protect children.”

The Diocese felt it was critical this information be released to parishioners and the public.

“The Grand Jury investigation concluded and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordering a stay of the Office of Attorney General’s Grand Jury Report pending review, the Diocese of Harrisburg chose to release our own findings,” said Bishop Gainer. “The information we are releasing is the product of outside legal counsel and professional investigators, and is the result of a great deal of work and research.

“I read this list of clergy we released with great sadness, for once again we come face-to-face with the horror that innocent children were the victims of egregious acts committed against them. I am saddened because I know that behind every story is the face of a child precious in God’s sight; a child who has been wounded by the sins of those who should have known better.

“As I read this report, I acknowledge the sinfulness of those who have harmed these survivors, as well as the action and inaction of those in church leadership who failed to respond to you (the survivors) appropriately and justly.

“In my own name, and in the name of the Church of Harrisburg, I ask for your forgiveness.”

While Bishop Gainer apologized and made amends for the sins of our past and offered prayers and support to all victims of this crime, he stressed that we must continue working to enhance the positive changes that have been made, to ensure these types of atrocities never occur again. Since the turn of the century, the Church has created policies that take clear and decisive action to prevent future abuse.

“I want the children, parents, our parishioners, the students, the staff, clergy and the public to know that our Church and our schools are safe and there is nothing we take more seriously than the protection of those who walk through our doors for worship,” said Bishop Gainer. “During my tenure as Bishop of the Diocese, I have a zero-tolerance policy with respect to child sexual abuse. We send every and all complaints to the proper legal authorities, and we remove the subject of the complaint from active ministry, pending a law enforcement investigation. The safety and well-being of our children is too important not to take immediate and definitive action.”

As has been publicly reported, the Diocese previously intended to publish this report along with the list of clergy accused of sexual misconduct, yet the Office of Attorney General requested the Diocese delay that effort, in order to protect its then-ongoing investigation. The Diocese honored that request.

With the investigation at an end and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordering a stay, the Diocese has determined that this list should be made available. The list can be found online at www.youthprotectionhbg.com. The Diocese is continuing gathering information on the accused, including locations of service, and will update the website with this information as it is available.

“I have a zero-tolerance policy with respect to child sexual abuse. We send every and all complaints to the proper legal authorities, and we remove the subject of the complaint from active ministry, pending a law enforcement investigation. The safety and well-being of our children is too important not to take immediate and definitive action.”

“Bishop Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg"
Diocese Launches New Website, Develops Aggressive Youth Protection Practices

In light of the recently released names of those clergy accused of child sexual abuse, the Diocese of Harrisburg has launched a new website, www.youthprotectionhbg.com.

This new site provides transparency into the Diocese’s policies and practices to protect children and its response process when suspected abuse is reported. The website also contains information on how to report child sexual abuse, contact information for the Diocese’s Victim Assistance Office and detailed information on how the Church has confronted this issue.

The Diocese has also developed a new Youth Protection Program. The Diocese takes the protection of youth in all Church related activities and programs very seriously. This new aggressive safe environment program includes a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy, employees or volunteers, and gives guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse.

The youth protection efforts in the Diocese of Harrisburg include:

- **Aggressively rooting out abusers** in ministry or employment within the Diocese. If anyone has even one proven allegation, they are barred permanently from ministry or employment.

- **Reporting every allegation received** to the District Attorney of the county involved.

- **Helping survivors to heal.** The Diocese has a Victims Assistance Coordinator for survivors and families.

- **Screening all employees and volunteers** with multiple background certifications, to be sure abusers don’t have access to children.

- **Training people to recognize and report abuse.** The Diocese requires that employees and volunteers successfully complete a state approved online training program on how to recognize and report child abuse.

- **Teaching students how to stay safe.** Students receive instruction in age-appropriate child abuse awareness programs.

- **Providing ID badges for all persons** who have completed the requirements of our Diocesan Youth Protection Program.

- **Executing a prudent and prompt inquiry and reporting of each accusation.** If law enforcement declines to act, the Diocese contracts with professional investigators, not clergy or Church employees, to conduct an independent and thorough investigation.

- **Openly communicate with all involved** and support due process.

- **Complying with national standards for youth protection** and participate annually in an independent audit.

There are TWO steps to make a complaint of child sexual abuse in the Diocese:

Anyone who suspects abuse of a minor is encouraged to call the toll free PA Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313. To report suspected abuse of a minor by a Church official, employee or volunteer, also please call the diocesan toll-free hotline at 1-800-626-1608 or email: ReportAbuse@hbgDiocese.org. It is critical the Church be made aware of any complaints immediately so we can remove that person from active ministry or service.
Diocese Gives Voice to Survivors of Child Sex Abuse

After reviewing historical files, the Church has learned that prior to 2002, the Diocese of Harrisburg from time-to-time entered into settlement agreements with survivors of child sexual abuse and some of those settlement agreements contained confidentiality provisions.

Though it has been the Diocese’s policy for some time not to enforce those confidentiality provisions, Bishop Ronald Gainer learned that some survivors still feel constrained by them. Accordingly, on behalf of the Diocese, Bishop Gainer hereby waived any remaining confidentiality rights the Diocese has in those confidentiality provisions, while retaining all other rights the Diocese has under these agreements. I take this step about confidentiality so that the survivors can feel free to tell their stories to whomever and whenever they wish," said Bishop Gainer. "I hope that this step will further aid those survivors, and perhaps others, in their path to healing."

This statement on confidentiality provisions in the Diocese is available on www.youthprotectionhbg.com.

Bishop Makes Building Naming Policy Retroactive

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer announced on Wednesday, Aug. 1, that a new Building Naming Policy has been approved, effective immediately, for the Diocese of Harrisburg. Under the new policy, the name of every bishop since 1947 will be removed from any building, facility, room or other place of honor in the Diocese. This move is in response to the extensive investigation by the Diocese into reports of and inadequate response to allegations of child sexual abuse.

The investigation caused the Diocese to take a frank look at its past as well as its present. Part of that assessment was an evaluation of whether any lingering symbols of the sad history revealed in the investigation should remain. Bishop Gainer directed a “Committee on Names” be formed, to advise him on whether any of the persons criticized in the investigation should have their names removed from the Diocese’s facilities.

As a result of the investigation, it was clear the leadership of the Church did not in every case take adequate measures when handling matters related to offending clerics. This information was reviewed by the Diocese’s legal counsel and along with the unanimous recommendation of the “Committee on Naming,” the decision was made to approve the new policy. "I agree with the recommendations that I have received from my advisors on these matters and have instructed Diocesan Staff to begin efforts to change names, effective immediately," said Bishop Gainer.

Bishop McDevitt High School will not have its name changed because there are no records of these matters during the tenure of Bishop McDevitt and the list is no longer a private one.

Dear Friends in Christ,

With this letter it is my most unwelcome, yet necessary, duty to visit with you a very difficult chapter of the Church of Harrisburg’s history, the one concerning the sexual abuse of minors. As has been the subject of much public discussion, the Diocese has unfortunately, at times, been the home of men originally called to the service of God who, for reasons unknown and unfathomable, instead ignored that summons and turned to the pursuit of their own personal ends. That conduct has left a legacy of pain and sorrow that is still being felt. On behalf of the Diocese of Harrisburg, I apologize for these actions.

While these past harms cannot be undone, it is my hope that today I can do my part, as the present Chief Shepherd of the Diocese, to solve some of these historic wounds by the healing touch of transparency. To that end, shortly after I was installed as the Bishop of Harrisburg, I instructed my staff to gather the Diocese’s records and summarize them to create a list of clerics and seminarians who stood accused of sexual abuse of children. In early 2016, the Diocese was prepared to publish such a list, yet the Office of Attorney General requested, in order to protect its then-ongoing grand jury investigation, that the Diocese stand down on that effort. The Diocese honored that request.

Now, however, with the investigation at an end, I have directed that such a list again be made available. Accordingly, today the Diocese is releasing a list of clergy and seminarians who have been the subject of allegations of sexual abuse of children. This list will be available on the Diocese’s website for the foreseeable future and will be amended as necessary going forward.

With this said, I believe a few words about the mythology behind this list are in order. As a threshold matter, the list is composed of men who were the subject of accusations of sexual abuse of a child. The Diocese did not make an assessment of credibility of guilt about these allegations, or the underlying conduct, for a host of reasons. Chief among them was that, frankly, the Diocese’s historical investigations and record-keeping were inadequate in many cases to form a firm platform for the assessment of credibility or guilt. Thus, I elected to rely instead on allegations alone as the touchstone for the list construction. Despite this standard, not every man accused of abuse was included. In some cases, despite the Diocese receiving an allegation of abuse, additional evidence existed — generated by law enforcement, the Diocese, or both — showing the allegation was unsubstantiated. Cases in that realm were not committed to the list. I can assure you that they were few in number and I can also assure you that all allegations of abuse presented to the Diocese to date have been turned over to law enforcement. The past described in this letter and in the list is no longer a private one.

Further, I made a decision with this list that perhaps yield somewhat atypical results from other lists made public by other Dioceses. After much consideration, I decided to include the names of men who were only the subject of an allegation of sexual abuse of a child after they were deceased, and thus unable to respond to the allegation. While these names are not a risk to the public, I still felt compelled to release their names in an effort to cast light on those brave survivors who have come forward, and those who still have not, that we have heard their cries and taken them seriously. I hope that this leads to some healing, however small it may be.

In closing, while this list cannot undo that which has been done, it is my sincere hope that it can in some way bring relief to those who have unfortunately been harmed throughout our history. In the meantime, the Diocese will remain steadfast in its efforts to ensure that this chapter never repeats. I also recommit myself, my staff, all clergy, and every man and woman associated with the Diocese to eradicate abuse in our midst. Respectfully in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg

The full list of names is available at www.youthprotectionhbg.com. As more details are gathered on locations and years of service, the list will be updated.
An Op-Ed from Bishop Ronald Gainer

As many of you have read, the Diocese of Harrisburg has released information and policy changes regarding child sex abuse. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my great sadness at the horror that innocent children were the victims of egregious actions committed against them. Many of those victimized as children continue, as survivors, to suffer from the harm they experienced. In my own name, and in the name of the Diocesan Church of Harrisburg, I express our profound sorrow and apologize to the survivors of child sex abuse, the Catholic faithful and the general public for the abuses that took place and for those Church officials who failed to protect children.

As we willingly acknowledge our sinfulness, as we humbly seek the forgiveness of those who have been wronged, we pray that healing will come to the entire Church when we renew our commitment each day to respond to the call to holiness we all share and to the mission of our Church entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus himself.

While we seek forgiveness in the name of our Church, we encourage survivors to come forward so that their healing may begin.

As has been publicly reported, the Diocese previously intended to publish a list of clergy with allegations of sexual abuse against them in September 2016, yet the Office of Attorney General requested, in order to protect its then-ongoing investigation, that the Diocese stand down on that effort. The Diocese honored that request. Now, however, with the investigation at an end and the Supreme Court ordering a stay of the full report pending review, we have directed that a list again be made available at our new website at www.youthprotectionhbg.com.

This internal review has caused the Diocese to take a frank look at its past as well as its present. Part of that assessment was an evaluation by the Diocese of whether any lingering symbols of the sad history revealed in the Diocese's files remain. Specifically, the Diocese evaluated whether the names carried on certain buildings, rooms, and halls in the Diocese should remain. I have determined that anyone who has been accused of sexual misconduct and appears on our list will have his name removed from any place of honor throughout the Diocese.

As a result of a careful review of historical cases, it was also clear that the leadership of the Church did not in every case take adequate measures when handling matters related to offending clerics. With that reality, and after reviewing information with our legal counsel, along with the unanimous recommendation of the “Committee on Naming,” which was convened to advise me on these matters, I have directed that the name of every Bishop since 1947, the beginning date of the Grand Jury’s investigation, be removed from any building, facility, or room in the Diocese. I agree with the recommendations that I have received from my advisors on these matters and have instructed Diocesan Staff to begin efforts to change names, effective immediately. Because there are no records of these matters during the tenure of Bishop McDevitt, and since the investigation extended back to 1947, twelve years after his death, there will be no change to the naming of Bishop McDevitt High School.

During my time as Bishop, I can assure you that the Diocese, with the guidance of experts in child protection and law enforcement, has done everything in our power to put into place the safeguards necessary to provide for the well-being and protection of the children entrusted to our care. I can also ensure you that any accusation against any Diocesan Personnel is reported immediately to law enforcement. We are and have been committed to honesty, transparency and commitment to ensuring the safety of our children in all matters.

The Diocese has taken additional measures and continues to improve our efforts to protect children, including:

- Reporting any and all allegations of child sexual abuse to the local authorities immediately.
- Screening all employees and volunteers with multiple background certifications to ensure that those individuals with a record of abuse do not have access to children.
- Teaching students how to stay safe and provide instruction in age-appropriate child abuse awareness programs.
- Requiring that all clergy, every employee and volunteer successfully complete a state-approved online training program on how to recognize and report child abuse.
- Providing ID Badges for all individuals who have completed the required background certification and training for the Diocesan Youth Protection Program.

While we have discussed this dark chapter, I believe it is important that we recognize the positive work the Church does by acting as a spiritual center for our community and the work we do to help those in need.

In addition to being a place of worship for the Catholic community in our area, Catholic Charities offers a variety of services for the entire community. Last year, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg, Inc. spent $8.4 million dollars funding a variety of programs to help the needy. The Church fills a variety of critical support functions in the community helping those of all backgrounds, faiths and economic standing, and in particular our youth.

While we are talking about a sad chapter and some bad actors, I do want to acknowledge all of the faithful members of clergy who have been doing a tremendous amount of great work in a tough environment. As Bishop, I am proud to work with these dedicated priests and deacons who are an authentic presence of God’s love in their ministries in our Diocese.

In closing, I pray that the love of our God, whose tenderness and compassion endures in every age, will continue to restore those who are survivors of all abuse, physical, mental, emotional and sexual.

I pray that the loving heart of Jesus will form us more and more each day into a community that works for justice, protecting those who are most vulnerable in our society, especially our children.

I pray the Holy Spirit of Wisdom will guide those whose life work and ministry calls them to care for those who suffer violence and abuse.

### Youth Protection Efforts in the Diocese of Harrisburg

**Aggressively rooting out abusers in ministry or employment within the Diocese.** If anyone has even one proven allegation, they are barred permanently from ministry or employment.

**Reporting every allegation received** to the District Attorney of the county involved.

**Helping survivors to heal.** The Diocese has a Victims Assistance Coordinator for survivors and families.

**Screening all employees and volunteers** with multiple background certifications, to be sure abusers don’t have access to children.

**Training people to recognize and report abuse.** The Diocese requires that employees and volunteers successfully complete a state approved online training program on how to recognize and report child abuse.

**Teaching students how to stay safe.** Students receive instruction in age-appropriate child abuse awareness programs.

**Providing ID badges for all persons** who have completed the requirements of our Diocesan Youth Protection Program.

**Executing a prudent and prompt inquiry and reporting of each accusation.** If law enforcement declines to act, the Diocese contracts with professional investigators, not clergy or Church employees, to conduct an independent and thorough investigation.

**Openly communicate with all involved** and support due process.

**Complying with national standards for youth protection** and participate annually in an independent audit.