



Archdiocese of Seattle Settles Historical Case

SEATTLE, Dec. 23, 2024 – Today, the Archdiocese of Seattle announced a final settlement of approximately \$400,000 for a claim related to an allegation of sexual abuse by Father Barry Ashwell, who is now deceased.

The case involves an allegation of sexual abuse by Ashwell in approximately 1978-1979. Ashwell served as pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Oak Harbor from 1978 to 2000.

Commitment to transparency

Ashwell was included on the archdiocese's [List of Clergy and Religious Brothers and Sisters for Whom Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor Have Been Admitted, Establish or Determined to be Credible](#) when the list was originally published in January 2016.

This list was created with review from former FBI agent Dr. Kathleen McChesney and her firm, Kinsale Management Consulting. The names of those identified in this review were then provided to the external Archdiocesan Review Board and to Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, who approved the publication of the names.

Since then, the Archdiocese of Seattle has added names to the list and updated it with links to other public lists provided by religious orders that worked in the archdiocese as well as status updates related to people currently on the list.

Focused on Prevention

As part of its commitment to transparency, the Archdiocese of Seattle invites people to visit its [Protect and Heal website](#) to learn about the history of sexual abuse in the archdiocese, which peaked in 1975 and has since sharply declined. The website also outlines the focus on helping victim survivors and their families find healing, and how, since the early 1980s, the archdiocese has taken steps to prevent abuse and protect the community.

Today, the archdiocese enforces its [Safe Environment Program](#) with policies and procedures designed to prevent and recognize signs of sexual abuse of minors. To report any suspicion of abuse by any Catholic Church personnel, please contact local law enforcement. In addition, anyone who has knowledge of misconduct by a member of the clergy, an employee or a volunteer of the Archdiocese of Seattle is urged to call the archdiocesan hotline at 1-800-446-7762.

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 74 Catholic schools, 60 parish families with 174 pastoral locations in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses

celebrated in multiple languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster.

For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, please visit archseattle.org.

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