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Attorneys for Plaintiff

JA/GG DOE 70, representing one (1)
plaintiff,

Plaintiff,

v.

**DIOCESE OF METUCHEN a/k/a
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF METUCHEN a/k/a
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP
OF METUCHEN; DIOCESE OF
RICHMOND a/k/a CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF RICHMOND; ST.
JOHN VIANNEY; ST. JOHN
VIANNEY SCHOOL; ABC ENTITY,**
its priests, reverends, teachers, deacons,
directors, officers, employees, agents,
servants, representatives and/or
volunteers, is a fictitious name of an
entity believed to have employed Fr.
John Butler; and **JOHN DOES 1-5**,
individually, and in their capacity as a
former and/or current priest, reverend,
teacher, deacon, director, officer,
employee, agent, servant, representative
and/or volunteer of the defendants, are
persons whose identities are unknown to
Plaintiff,

Defendants.

: SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
: LAW DIVISION - MIDDLESEX COUNTY

: DOCKET NO.: _____

: CIVIL ACTION

: COMPLAINT, JURY DEMAND, AND
: DESIGNATION OF TRIAL COUNSEL

Plaintiff, JA/GG DOE 70, by and through Plaintiff's attorneys, by way of Complaint against the Defendants, states and alleges as follows:

PARTIES

1. At all times material to this Complaint, Plaintiff resided in the State of New Jersey. Plaintiff is proceeding under a pseudonym pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:61B-1(f).

2. At all times material, Defendant The Diocese of Metuchen a/k/a the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen a/k/a the Roman Catholic Bishop of Metuchen (hereinafter "Diocese of Metuchen") was and continues to be an organization or entity which includes, but is not limited to, civil corporations, decision making entities, officials, and employees, authorized to conduct business and conducting business in the State of New Jersey with its principal place of business at 146 Metlars Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

3. The Diocese of Metuchen was created and incorporated in approximately 1981 from the Diocese of Trenton. The Diocese of Metuchen operates its affairs as both a corporate entity and as an organization known as The Diocese of Metuchen. Both of these entities and all other corporations and entities controlled by the Bishop are included in this Complaint as being the "Diocese of Metuchen." The Bishop is the top official of the Diocese of Metuchen and is given authority over all matters within the Diocese of Metuchen as a result of his position. The Diocese of Metuchen functions as a business by engaging in numerous revenue producing activities and soliciting money from its members in exchange for its services.

4. The Diocese of Metuchen has several programs which seek out the participation of children in the Diocese of Metuchen's activities. The Diocese of Metuchen, through its officials, has control over those activities involving children. The Diocese of Metuchen has the power to appoint, supervise, monitor and terminate each person working with children within the Diocese

of Metuchen.

5. The Diocese of Metuchen is a resident of the State of New Jersey because its principal place of business is in the State.

6. At all times material, Defendant Diocese of Richmond a/k/a Catholic Diocese of Richmond (“Diocese of Richmond”) was and continues to be an organization or entity which includes, but is not limited to, civil corporations, decision making entities, officials, and employees, authorized to conduct business and conducting business in the State of Virginia with its principal place of business at 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294.

7. The Diocese of Richmond was created in approximately 1820. Later, the Diocese of Richmond created a corporation called the Catholic Diocese of Richmond to conduct some of its affairs. The Diocese of Richmond operates its affairs as both a corporate entity and as the organization known as the Diocese of Richmond. Both of these entities and all other affiliated corporations and entities controlled by the Bishop are included in this Complaint as the “Diocese of Richmond.” The Diocese of Richmond functions as a business by engaging in numerous revenue producing activities and soliciting money from its members in exchange for its services.

8. The Diocese of Richmond has several programs which seek out the participation of children in the Diocese of Richmond’s activities. The Diocese of Richmond, through its officials, has control over those activities involving children. The Diocese of Richmond has the power to appoint, supervise, monitor and terminate each person working with children within the Diocese of Richmond.

9. At all times material, Defendant St. John Vianney was and continues to be an organization authorized to conduct business and conducting business in the State of New Jersey, with its principal place of business at 420 Inman Avenue, Colonia, NJ 07067. St. John Vianney

includes, but is not limited to, St. John Vianney and any other organizations and/or entities operating under the same or similar name with the same or similar principal place of business.

10. At all times material, Defendant St. John Vianney School was and continues to be an organization authorized to conduct business and conducting business in the State of New Jersey, with its principal place of business at 420 Inman Avenue, Colonia, NJ 07067. St. John Vianney School includes, but is not limited to, St. John Vianney School and any other organizations and/or entities operating under the same or similar name with the same or similar principal place of business.

11. At all times material, St. John Vianney and St. John Vianney School (collectively “St. John Vianney”) were and continue to be under the direct authority, control, and province of Defendant Diocese of Metuchen and the Bishop of Defendant Diocese of Metuchen. Defendant St. John Vianney includes any school affiliated with St. John Vianney.

12. The Diocese of Metuchen, Diocese of Richmond, St. John Vianney and St. John Vianney School are collectively referred to as “Defendants” herein.

13. Whenever reference is made to any Defendant entity, such reference includes that entity, its parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, and successors. In addition, whenever reference is made to any act, deed, or transaction of any entity, the allegation means that the entity engaged in the act, deed, or transaction by or through its officers, directors, agents, employees, or representatives while they were actively engaged in the management, direction, control, or transaction of the entity’s business or affairs.

14. The Defendant ABC ENTITY, its priests, reverends, teachers, deacons, directors, officers, employees, agents, servants, representatives, and/or volunteers, is a fictitious name of an entity believed to have employed Fr. John Butler.

15. The Defendant JOHN DOES 1-5, individually, and in their capacity as a former and/or current priest, reverend, teacher, deacon, director, officer, employee, agent, servant, representative, and/or volunteer of the Defendant(s), are persons whose identities are unknown to Plaintiff.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

16. This Court has jurisdiction over this action as Defendants Diocese of Metuchen's and St. John Vianney's principal places of business are in New Jersey and because the unlawful conduct complained of herein occurred in New Jersey.

17. Venue is proper in this county pursuant to New Jersey Court Rule 4:3-2 because this County is the principal place of business of Defendant Diocese of Metuchen. In addition, events that are relevant to this action occurred within this County.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

18. At all times material, Father John Butler ("Fr. Butler") was a Roman Catholic cleric employed by the Diocese of Metuchen, Diocese of Richmond, and St. John Vianney. Fr. Butler remained under the direct supervision, employ, and control of Defendants.

19. Defendants placed Fr. Butler in positions where Fr. Butler had access to and worked with children as an integral part of his work.

20. Plaintiff was raised in a devout Roman Catholic family and attended St. John Vianney in Colonia in the Diocese. Plaintiff and Plaintiff's family came in contact with Fr. Butler as an agent and representative of Defendants, and at St. John Vianney.

21. Plaintiff participated in youth activities and/or church activities at St. John Vianney. Plaintiff, therefore, developed great admiration, trust, reverence, and respect for the Roman Catholic Church, including Defendants and their agents, including Fr. Butler.

22. During and through these activities, Plaintiff, as a minor and vulnerable child, was dependent on Defendants and Fr. Butler. Defendants had custody and/or supervision of Plaintiff and accepted the entrustment of Plaintiff and, therefore, had responsibility for Plaintiff and authority over Plaintiff.

23. From approximately 1995 to 1998, when Plaintiff was approximately 9 to 12 years old, Fr. Butler engaged in unpermitted sexual contact with Plaintiff.

24. The culture of the Catholic Church created pressure on Plaintiff not to report the abuse Plaintiff suffered.

25. Plaintiff's relationship to Defendants and Fr. Butler, as a vulnerable child, parishioner, altar server, student, and participant in church activities, was one in which Plaintiff was subject to the ongoing influence of Defendants and Fr. Butler.

26. By holding Fr. Butler out as safe to work with children, and by undertaking the custody, supervision of, and/or care of the minor Plaintiff, each Defendant entered into a fiduciary relationship with the minor Plaintiff. As a result of Plaintiff being a minor, and by Defendants undertaking the care and guidance of the then vulnerable minor Plaintiff, each Defendant held a position of empowerment over Plaintiff.

27. Further, Defendants, by holding themselves out as being able to provide a safe environment for children, solicited and/or accepted this position of empowerment. Defendants thus entered into a fiduciary relationship with Plaintiff. Defendants exploited their position of empowerment, putting Plaintiff at risk to be sexually assaulted.

28. Defendants knew or should have known that Fr. Butler was a danger to children before Fr. Butler sexually assaulted Plaintiff.

29. Prior to the sexual abuse of Plaintiff, Defendants learned or should have learned

that Fr. Butler was not fit to work with children. Defendants, by and through their agents, servants, and/or employees, became aware, or should have become aware of Fr. Butler's propensity to commit sexual abuse and of the risk to Plaintiff's safety. At the very least, Defendants knew or should have known that they did not have sufficient information about whether or not their leaders and people working at Catholic institutions within the Diocese of Metuchen were safe.

30. Defendants knew or should have known that there was a risk of child sex abuse for children participating in Catholic programs and activities within the Diocese of Metuchen. At the very least, Defendants knew or should have known that they did not have sufficient information about whether or not there was a risk of child sex abuse for children participating in Catholic programs and activities within the Diocese of Metuchen.

31. Defendants knew or should have known that Defendants had numerous agents who had sexually molested children. Defendants knew or should have known that child molesters have a high rate of recidivism. Defendants knew or should have known that some of the leaders and people working in Catholic institutions within the Diocese were not safe and that there was a specific danger of child sex abuse for children participating in their youth programs.

32. Instead, Defendants negligently deemed that Fr. Butler was fit to work with children and/or that any previous problems were fixed or cured and/or that Fr. Butler would not sexually assault children and/or that Fr. Butler would not injure children.

33. Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care because they had superior knowledge about the risk that Fr. Butler posed to Plaintiff, the risk of abuse in general in their programs, and/or the risks that their facilities posed to minor children.

34. Defendants owed a duty to Plaintiff to protect Plaintiff from harm because Defendants' actions created a foreseeable risk of harm to Plaintiff. As a vulnerable child

participating in the programs and activities Defendants offered to minors, Plaintiff was a foreseeable victim. As a vulnerable child who Fr. Butler had access to through Defendants' facilities and programs, Plaintiff was a foreseeable victim.

35. Defendants also breached their duty to Plaintiff by actively maintaining and employing Fr. Butler in a position of power and authority through which Fr. Butler had access to children, including Plaintiff, and power and control over children, including Plaintiff.

36. Each Defendant breached its duties to Plaintiff. Defendants failed to use ordinary care in determining whether their facilities were safe and/or determining whether they had sufficient information to represent their facilities as safe. Defendants' breach of their duties include, but are not limited to: failure to protect Plaintiff from a known danger, failure to have sufficient policies and procedures to prevent child sex abuse, failure to properly implement policies and procedures to prevent child sex abuse, failure to take reasonable measures to make sure that policies and procedures to prevent child sex abuse were working, failure to adequately inform families and children of the risks of child sex abuse, failure to investigate risks of child sex abuse, failure to properly train the employees at institutions and programs within Defendants' geographical confines, failure to train parishioners within Defendants' geographical confines about the risk of sexual abuse, failure to have any outside agency test their safety procedures, failure to protect the children in their programs from child sex abuse, failure to adhere to the applicable standard of care for child safety, failure to investigate the amount and type of information necessary to represent their institutions, programs, leaders, and people as safe, failure to train their employees properly to identify signs of child sexual abuse by fellow employees, failure by relying upon mental health professionals who claimed individuals were safe to work with children, and/or failure by relying on people who claimed that they could treat child molesters.

37. Defendants also breached their duty to Plaintiff by failing to warn Plaintiff and Plaintiff's family of the risk that Fr. Butler posed and the risks of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions. They also failed to warn them about any of the knowledge that Defendants had about child sexual abuse.

38. Defendants additionally violated a legal duty by failing to report known and/or suspected abuse of children by Fr. Butler and/or its other agents to the child protection agencies, police, and law enforcement.

39. Defendants were negligent and/or made representations to Plaintiff and Plaintiff's family during each and every year of Plaintiff's minority.

40. As a result of Defendants' negligence as described herein, Plaintiff has suffered, and will continue to suffer, great pain of mind and body, severe and permanent emotional distress, physical manifestations of emotional distress, embarrassment, loss of self-esteem, humiliation, and physical, personal, and psychological injuries. Plaintiff was prevented, and will continue to be prevented, from performing normal daily activities and obtaining the full enjoyment of life and/or has incurred and will continue to incur expenses for psychological treatment, therapy, and counseling, and, on information and belief, has and/or will incur loss of income and/or loss of earning capacity.

COUNT I: NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff incorporates all consistent paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth under this count.

41. Each Defendant owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care to protect the Plaintiff from injury.

42. Each Defendant owed Plaintiff a duty of care because each Defendant had a special

relationship with Plaintiff.

43. Defendants also had a duty arising from the special relationship that existed with Plaintiff, Plaintiff's parents, and other parents of young, innocent, vulnerable children, to properly train and supervise their clerics. This special relationship arose because of the high degree of vulnerability of the children entrusted to their care. As a result of this high degree of vulnerability and risk of sexual abuse inherent in such a special relationship, Defendants had a duty to establish measures of protection not necessary for persons who are older and better able to safeguard themselves.

44. Each Defendant owed Plaintiff a duty to protect Plaintiff from harm because each Defendant also had a special relationship with Fr. Butler.

45. Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care because they solicited youth and parents for participation in their youth programs; encouraged youth and parents to have the youth participate in their programs; undertook custody of minor children, including Plaintiff; promoted their facilities and programs as being safe for children; held their agents, including Fr. Butler, out as safe to work with children; encouraged parents and children to spend time with their agents; and/or encouraged their agents, including Fr. Butler, to spend time with, interact with, and recruit children.

46. By accepting custody and/or supervision of the minor Plaintiff, Defendants established an *in loco parentis* relationship with Plaintiff and, in so doing, owed Plaintiff a duty to protect Plaintiff from injury. Defendants, through its employees, exploited this power over Plaintiff and thereby put the minor Plaintiff at risk for sexual abuse.

47. By establishing and/or operating the Diocese of Metuchen and St. John Vianney, accepting the minor Plaintiff as a participant in their programs, holding their facilities and

programs out to be a safe environment for Plaintiff, accepting custody of the minor Plaintiff *in loco parentis*, and by establishing a fiduciary relationship with Plaintiff, Defendants entered into an express and/or implied duty to properly supervise Plaintiff and provide a reasonably safe environment for children who participated in their programs. Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty to properly supervise Plaintiff to prevent harm from foreseeable dangers. Defendants had a duty to exercise the same degree of care over minors under their control as a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

48. By establishing and operating the Diocese of Metuchen and St. John Vianney, which offered educational programs to children and which may have included a school, and by accepting the enrollment and participation of the minor Plaintiff as a participant in those educational programs, Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty to properly supervise Plaintiff to prevent harm from generally foreseeable dangers.

49. Defendants Diocese of Metuchen and St. John Vianney owed Plaintiff a duty to protect Plaintiff from harm because Defendants invited Plaintiff onto their property and Fr. Butler posed a dangerous condition on Defendants' property.

50. Each Defendant breached its duties to Plaintiff by failing to use reasonable care. Each Defendant's failures include, but are not limited to, failing to properly supervise Fr. Butler, failing to properly supervise Plaintiff, and failing to protect Plaintiff from a known danger.

51. As a direct result of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical, emotional, and psychological injuries, along with pain and suffering.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants, jointly and/or severally, for compensatory damages, together with interest and costs in an unspecified amount, plus costs, disbursements, reasonable attorneys' fees, interest, and such other and further relief as the Court

deems just and equitable.

COUNT II: NEGLIGENT TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Plaintiff incorporates all consistent paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth under this count.

52. At all times material, Fr. Butler was employed by Defendants and was under each Defendant's direct supervision, employ, and control when he committed the wrongful acts alleged herein. Fr. Butler engaged in the wrongful conduct while acting in the course and scope of his employment with Defendants and/or accomplished the sexual abuse by virtue of his job-created authority.

53. Defendants had a duty, arising from their employment of Fr. Butler, to ensure that Fr. Butler did not sexually molest children.

54. Further, Defendants owed a duty to train and educate employees and administrators and establish adequate and effective policies and procedures calculated to detect, prevent, and address inappropriate behavior and conduct between clerics and children. Defendants were negligent in the training, supervision, and instruction of their employees. Defendants failed to timely and properly educate, train, supervise, and/or monitor their agents or employees with regard to policies and procedures that should be followed when sexual abuse of a child is suspected or observed.

55. Defendants were additionally negligent in failing to supervise, monitor, chaperone, and/or investigate Fr. Butler and/or in failing to create, institute, and/or enforce rules, policies, procedures, and/or regulations to prevent Fr. Butler's sexual abuse of Plaintiff.

56. In failing to properly supervise Fr. Butler, and in failing to establish such training procedures for employees and administrators, Defendants failed to exercise the degree of care that

a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

57. As a direct and proximate result of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical, emotional, and psychological injuries, along with pain and suffering.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants, jointly and/or severally, for compensatory damages, together with interest and costs in an unspecified amount, plus costs, disbursements, reasonable attorneys' fees, interest, and such other and further relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

COUNT III: NEGLIGENT RETENTION

Plaintiff incorporates all consistent paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth under this count.

58. At all times material, Fr. Butler was employed by Defendants and was under each Defendant's direct supervision, employ, and control when he committed the wrongful acts alleged herein.

59. Defendants became aware or should have become aware of Fr. Butler's propensity for sexual abuse, and failed to take any action to remedy the problem and failed to investigate or remove Fr. Butler from working with children.

60. Defendants negligently retained Fr. Butler with knowledge of Fr. Butler's propensity for the type of behavior which resulted in Plaintiff's injuries in this action.

61. Defendants negligently retained Fr. Butler in a position where he had access to children and could foreseeably cause harm which Plaintiff would not have been subjected to had Defendants taken reasonable care.

62. In failing to timely remove Fr. Butler from working with children or terminate the employment of Fr. Butler, Defendants failed to exercise the degree of care that a reasonably

prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

63. As a direct and proximate result of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical, emotional, and psychological injuries, along with pain and suffering.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants, jointly and/or severally, for compensatory damages, together with interest and costs in an unspecified amount, plus costs, disbursements, reasonable attorneys' fees, interest, and such other and further relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

The Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all of the triable issues of this Complaint, pursuant to New Jersey Court Rules 1:8-2(b) and 4:35-1(a).

RULE 4:5-1 CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the matter in controversy is not the subject of any other pending and/or contemplated action or pending and or contemplated proceeding. I know of no other parties who should be joined in this action at this time.

GIANFORCARO LAW

/s/ Gregory G. Gianforcaro
Gregory G. Gianforcaro, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff

JEFF ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES PA

/s/ Jeffrey R. Anderson / Trusha P. Goffe /
Rita Gribko
Jeffrey R. Anderson, Esq.
Trusha P. Goffe, Esq.
Rita Gribko, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: September 16, 2021

DESIGNATION OF TRIAL COUNSEL

Pursuant to Rule 4:25-4, Plaintiff hereby designates Jeffrey R. Anderson, Esq. as trial counsel for Plaintiff.

GIANFORCARO LAW

JEFF ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES PA

/s/ Gregory G. Gianforcaro
Gregory G. Gianforcaro, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff

/s/ Jeffrey R. Anderson / Trusha P. Goffe /
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Rita Gribko, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: September 16, 2021