



5.9.2019

Statement from Bishop Lawrence Persico regarding Poulson charges

Although I released a statement yesterday, I wanted to speak with you in person today regarding the charges that have been filed against Father David Poulson.

I announced on Feb. 13 that I had received credible allegations against Father Poulson regarding the sexual abuse of minors. Following our *Policy for the Protection of Children*, I immediately turned the matter over to law enforcement and have cooperated with the state attorney general throughout the process that led to yesterday's arrest.

I want to state, unequivocally, that I was not aware of any concerns regarding Father Poulson until I received those allegations in January of this year. In addition, it was not until I received and acted upon the allegation earlier this year that I learned of the memo that had been written in 2010.

Let me give you a brief overview of what I knew and when.

I came to the Diocese of Erie in late 2012.

Among many initial responsibilities and priorities, I asked to be

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updated on any clergy abuse cases. Father Poulson's name was not mentioned.

Early in my tenure, I contacted District Attorney Jack Daneri to review our clergy files, so that I could be assured there were no cases that needed to be revisited.

As you know, this process was then interrupted when the grand jury investigation began in September of 2016.

Finally, when the grand jury was convened, I decided in addition to responding to the subpoena, I would ask K&L Gates law firm to do a thorough review of all of our files and procedures. They were still in the process of reviewing all our files from the last 70 years when I received the allegation regarding Father Poulson this past January, and asked them to focus on him. It was at that time that they brought the memo to my attention.

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