



JEFF ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES PA

Investigative Report by Jeff Anderson & Associates: Volume I

Alan Placa: Key Architect of Minimizing Abuse Claims, Coercing Silence and Protecting Church Assets

Purpose, Background & Disclaimer

It is believed that the Catholic Dioceses of New York and Religious Orders operating in New York do not make available to the public the full history, knowledge, and context of the sexually abusive clerics nor its coverup of the abuse. The public's need to know of the danger both past and present and the role of instrumental figures is paramount. This report is created with the intent of warning the public of dangerous practices and conditions and of those who would deceive the public of that danger. This report is intended to raise awareness about the important issue of clerical sexual abuse and provide the public with vital information for public benefit.

The information contained in this report is an attempt to compile information already available from various sources in the public media, public sources, government records, court records, church records and other publicly available sources that have chronicled this information for public use. These sources have not been independently verified and accordingly may contain inaccuracies and omissions. The currently pending civil lawsuits referred to have been filed under the New York Child Victims Act. The claims made in these lawsuits and the other lawsuits referred to in this report have not been fully adjudicated by the court. All alleged perpetrators are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Monsignor Alan Placa has been the central lynchpin behind the New York Catholic Church's system for suppressing millions of dollars in potential sexual abuse settlements, spreading that system to dioceses across the country, and then growing the Church's small, disparate network of health services in New York into a sophisticated, multi-billion-dollar healthcare juggernaut.

Placa's early life seemed like a classic coming-of-age story for a boy raised in 1950's Brooklyn. He attended an all-boys school where he developed a lifelong intimate friendship with Rudy Giuliani, frequently staying at each other's houses, going on double dates, and even singing in an opera club together. The two attended college together, but while Rudy entered law school, Placa entered the seminary and became an ordained priest in 1970. After serving in a Glen Cove parish for his first four years, Placa was moved to St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary High School where he became the Dean of Discipline, and his unique history in the Church began to take shape.



At St. Pius X, Placa met Reverend Brendan P. Riordan, a man who would become Placa's lifelong friend and live-in partner for most of his adult life. Placa, Riordan, and multiple other associates of Placa would ultimately be accused of sexually assaulting minors themselves. It was also during his time at St. Pius X that multiple victims would later allege Placa had sexually abused or assaulted them; one student said it happened over 100 times. In 1978, the Diocese reportedly paid for Placa to leave St. Pius X and attend law school at Hofstra University of Law, setting Placa on a path that would prove fateful for him and immensely profitable for the Church.

As both an ordained priest and a trained lawyer, Placa developed a true skill for helping Church leaders navigate some of their most daunting legal challenges and accomplish some of their most ambitious financial objectives. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the first areas that he mastered after graduating was suppressing potentially millions of dollars in sexual abuse claims. After refining his own efforts in managing sexual abuse cases for the Diocese, Placa turned his experience into a teachable framework that he shared with Church officials across the country, and then into the systematized program of the so-called "Intervention Team" – the priestly panel for the Diocese of Rockville Centre that sought to protect the Church from hundreds of cases and millions of dollars in potential settlements within a decade. Placa's unwavering focus on minimizing losses, pressuring families into quick settlements, and securing non-disclosure agreements earned him recognition as the "chief architect" of the Church's sexual abuse management system.

Having earned the trust of Church leaders and validated his expertise in asset protection, Placa's career then took its next turn towards a managing a high-risk, high-reward initiative for the Bishops of New York. While overseeing the Intervention Team he helped to create, Placa simultaneously pioneered the New York Dioceses' efforts in the late 1990's to dramatically transform their position in the healthcare industry from participants into multi-billion-dollar market leaders.

Church documents and correspondence catalog a nearly twenty-year campaign of Placa's leadership, guidance, and oversight as Fidelis Care New York evolved from disparate collection of small health care interests into a multi-billion-dollar insurance behemoth and the crown financial jewel of the Dioceses of New York. By 2002, Placa's indispensable value to the Church was clear, and the Bishops would express that they saw themselves as "entrepreneurs" instead of mere public servants. Even when sexual abuse allegations against Placa forced the Diocese to launch a sex abuse investigation against him and ultimately to strip Placa of his priestly duties, he continued to serve in a leadership role on the Fidelis Care New York board, often earning accolades from Church leaders.

While his lifelong friendships with Rudy Giuliani and Brendan Riordan have generated press intrigue and political headlines, and sexual assault allegations against him still persist, the most important story of Placa's life is the fifty years of service he dedicated to growing and protecting the assets of the Church. While the true value of the Church's varied holdings is difficult to determine by design, Placa's contributions to Fidelis alone generated tens of billions of dollars in revenues and proceeds that still remain in control of the eight Diocesan Bishops of New York, while his work in silencing abuse claims against the church likely delayed or defeated potential settlements for an unknown number of victims.

Of all the priests serving in the Catholic Dioceses throughout New York, it seems that no priest has likely made more money for the New York Church in the last three decades than Alan Placa. In fact, considering the billions of dollars Placa helped the Church health system generate by guiding it the New York dioceses fully into the health insurance business, the millions he helped save the Church in minimizing sexual abuse claims, and the billions of dollars in Church assets his efforts kept from being available to sexual abuse victims' claims, Placa may well be one of the biggest money-making priests in America.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

The following timeline provides an overview of key events in Alan Placa's life and career, including his education and professional history, his involvement in sexual abuse complaint management for the church, and his involvement in the creation, growth, and eventual sale of Fidelis.

1940s-1960s

- **July 2, 1944:** Alan Placa is born. He is raised in Brooklyn, New York.¹
- **1957:** Placa meets Rudolph Giuliani at the age of 13 at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn.²
- **1964:** Placa allegedly publishes a defamatory letter against Giuliani's junior class president opponent in the college newspaper as part of a "smear campaign."³
- **1968:** Placa attends Giuliani's first wedding to Regina Peruggi as Giuliani's Best Man. Peruggi, who is Giuliani's second cousin, previously dated Placa before dating Giuliani.⁴

¹ [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), accessed January 29, 2021; [registration.elections.myflorida.com](https://www.registration.elections.myflorida.com), accessed January 25, 2021

² [salon.com](https://www.salon.com), June 22, 2007

³ Daily News, May 13, 1997

⁴ The Boston Globe, November 8, 2007

- **May 30, 1970:** Placa completes seminary and officially ordained as Catholic priest at the Immaculate Conception Seminary.⁵
- **1970:** Placa serves at St. Patrick's Parish in Glen Cove, New York until 1974.⁶
- **1974:** Placa transfers to St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary High School in Uniondale to serve as Dean of Discipline until 1978.⁷
- **1974:** According to Christopher Fernan, Placa begins sexually abusing him while serving as Dean of Discipline at St. Pius X, and will do so more than 100 times between 1974 and 1977. Fernan will file suit against Placa for the abuse over forty years later in 2019.⁸
- **January 1975:** According to Richard Tollner, Placa allegedly molests Tollner for the first time. According to Tollner, the incidents will repeat monthly for another year and a half. A friend of Tollner's will later confirm to Newsday that Toller told him about it "shortly after it happened."⁹
- **1975:** Placa meets Reverend Brendan P. Riordan at St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary High School in Uniondale. Riordan will himself be accused of sexually abusing a minor over fifteen years later.¹⁰
- **1975:** Placa serves as Assistant Principle for Activities at St. Pius X.¹¹
- **Fall 1975:** According to Richard Tollner, Placa allegedly rapes him when he is 16 years old during a trip to Fire Island, New York. Tollner will file suit over the incident over 40 years later.¹²
- **1976:** Placa serves as the Chairman of the Diocesan Priest's Advisory Council through 1977.¹³
- **1976:** Placa serves at Most Precious Blood Church during Summer Mission and as Administrator in Davis Park, New York.¹⁴
- **1977:** Placa and Riordan co-write a book together, "Desert Silence: A Way of Prayer for an Unquiet Age."¹⁵

⁵ Newsday, December 5, 2009

⁶ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#); [bishop-accountability.org](#), accessed January 24, 2021

⁷ [nytimes.com, June 15, 2002](#)

⁸ [rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020](#)

⁹ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#)

¹⁰ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#)

¹¹ [bishop-accountability.org](#), accessed January 24, 2021

¹² [rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020](#)

¹³ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#)

¹⁴ [bishop-accountability.org](#), accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#)

- **1978:** Placa leaves St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary High School to attend law school at Hofstra University School of Law. The diocese pays for Placa’s tuition because it needs “an expert in social service law.”¹⁶
- **1979:** Placa begins serving in the Central Administrative Offices for Catholic Charities in Rockville Centre.¹⁷
- **1979:** Placa serves as the Director of Services for Retarded Adults until 1981.¹⁸
- **1979:** Placa serves In Residence at Curé of Ars Church in Merrick, New York until 1990.¹⁹

1980s

- **1980:** Placa serves as Director for Community Research and Development until 1982.²⁰
- **1981:** Placa officiates the funeral mass for Giuliani’s father.²¹
- **1982:** Placa helps Giuliani receive Church approval to annul first marriage “over Regina’s protests.”²²
- **1983:** Placa serves as Director for the Advocacy Office at Catholic Charities.²³
- **1984:** March 1984: Placa admitted to the Bar in New York.²⁴
- **1984:** Placa serves as Counsel to the Office of Legal Affairs at Catholic Charities in Rockville Center until 1988.²⁵
- **1984:** Placa officiates at Giuliani’s second marriage to Donna Hanover.²⁶
- **1985:** Placa stays at Giuliani’s apartment “at least once a week” to “talk poetry, theology and politics deep into the night.”²⁷
- **September 1985:** In a television interview, Placa says of Giuliani, “Rudy has a gift for attracting people to himself. He has a gift for making you interested in what he's interested in. His enthusiasm and curiosity are contagious. It's like sparks flying from a fire.”²⁸

¹⁶ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁷ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/salon.com_june_22_2007/)

¹⁸ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org/), accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁹ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org/), accessed January 24, 2021

²⁰ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org/), accessed January 24, 2021

²¹ Daily News, May 13, 1997; [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/salon.com_june_22_2007/)

²² [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/salon.com_june_22_2007/)

²³ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org/), accessed January 24, 2021

²⁴ [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://www.iapps.courts.state.ny.us/), accessed January 25, 2021

²⁵ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org/), accessed January 24, 2021

²⁶ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/salon.com_june_22_2007/)

²⁷ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/salon.com_june_22_2007/)

²⁸ MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, September 10, 1985

- **1991:** Placa becomes Monsignor.³⁷
- **1991:** Placa serves In Residence with Brendan Riordan at SS. Cyril and Methodius in Deer Park, New York until 1998. They both live in the church rectory.³⁸
- **1992:** Placa forms the Intervention Team, a three-priest panel to advise the Bishop of Rockville Centre on “nearly every aspect of abuse complaints.” The panel includes Monsignor John Alesandro, a canon lawyer, diocesan chancellor and episcopal vicar, and Monsignor James McNamara, a priest personnel director who is later succeeded by Monsignor Frank Caldwell. The Intervention Team interrogates victims and accused priests and reports their findings to the bishop, with Placa serving as “point person” who usually meets with victims and families. It becomes known for pioneering a process to get victims to settle for small dollar amounts and sign non-disclosures to minimize impacts to the diocese.³⁹
- **1992:** Placa begins serving on the Executive Committee of the Catholic Health Care Council (CHCC), representing Rockville Centre. He will serve until 2000.⁴⁰
- **June 8, 1992:** Placa presents to the Public Policy Committee at the annual meeting of the Bishops on the topic of Health Care Proxy legislation and policy.⁴¹
- **1993:** Brendan Riordan, Thomas Kane, and two other priests are named in a suit from Mark Barry alleging the four sexually abused him when he was 9 years old at the House of Affirmation, where Kane served as Executive Director and Riordan served as Director. Placa is “the first lawyer Rev. Kane turned to after learning of Mr. Barry’s accusations. The lawsuit settles two years later in 1995 for \$42,500 and includes a non-disclosure agreement.”⁴²
- **1993:** In an internal document from Placa later revealed in a grand jury investigation, Placa asks colleagues, “Please do not identify me as an attorney [to complainants.]”⁴³
- **1993:** Placa receives a complaint from Kathy Lotten, who learned that the priest who abused her teenage son in Kings Park in the late 1970’s had been appointed as pastor at a new parish. Lotten said that Placa acts “kind of oily,” saying “he was very articulate and used a lot of big words, which I felt was to intimidate me.” Lotten added, “One in particular I remember was, ‘if this priest is guilty he’s guilty of ephrophilia,’ which is abuse of an adolescent rather than a child.” According to Lotten, Placa asked, “Are you aware that the statute is way out?” and told her that she couldn’t sue. Lotten said he also didn’t disclose that he was an attorney, stating, “I wouldn’t swear to it, but I do not remember him saying that he was an attorney. If he was there as an attorney, then I should have had an attorney.” The report included no further information on what happened with the priest.⁴⁴

³⁷ Newsday, December 5, 2009

³⁸ bishop-accountability.org, accessed January 24, 2021; andersonadvocates.com, accessed January 25, 2021; salon.com, June 22, 2007

³⁹ Newsday, June 3, 2002

⁴⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁴¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁴² telegram.com, July 22, 2007

⁴³ salon.com, June 22, 2007

⁴⁴ nytimes.com, February 20, 2003

- **November 1993:** Placa serves on Mayor-elect Rudy Giuliani’s transition team as part of a social services panel. The panel is headed by former federal prosecutors Steven Obus and Randy Levine and also includes social worker union chief Charles Ensley, former Koch administration HRA Commissioner William Grinker, and former congressional candidate Elizabeth Colon. The panel recommends that Giuliani hire a new head for the Human Resources Administration.⁴⁵
- **December 1993:** Placa and Riordan purchase an apartment on Tunbridge Lane in Orlando, Florida. Reports later reveal that Reverend Kane, the founder of the House of Affirmation, “transferred a piece of property he owned in Florida” to Placa and Riordan before he filed for bankruptcy in the early 1990’s. The apartment may be the piece of property that Reverend Kane reportedly transferred to Placa and Riordan before he later filed for bankruptcy.⁴⁶
- **1994:** Placa personally makes a \$25,000 settlement with Patchogue, New York abuse victim Raymond Trypuc, who was also an “admitted drug addict who had dropped out of therapy.” Placa claims he made the deal “after being advised to do so by Trypuc’s therapists,” but “officials at the centers that treated the man say their files don’t reflect that and they doubt it happened.” The settlement leads to a tragic outcome when Trypuc is found dead of a cocaine overdose only weeks after receiving his settlement.⁴⁷
- **1994:** Carlo Ciliberti files a lawsuit alleging that Rev. Jerry Chasse at St. Luke’s Parish in Brentwood abused him from the age of 12 to 17. The suit is dismissed because it is filed outside the statute of limitations. When Ciliberti later asks Placa for help paying for his counseling, he says that Placa made him feel “victimized all over again,” and that Placa’s position “was to always not believe what I was saying and to stick up for the Church.” Ciliberti recalled that, “In one phone call, he said to me after I told him about Chasse, ‘What the ---- do you want me to do about it?’” Rather than resolving or healing the issue, Ciliberti said that Placa “made it worse. I had to beg for everything. He just wanted me to settle and be quiet. He made me suffer even worse.” Chasse leaves Long Island in the late 1970’s for Montana, and a Diocesan spokeswoman states that officials “lost contact with him.”⁴⁸
- **1994:** Placa meets with Pat McDonough, a former religious educator and a columnist for a Catholic newspaper, who worries a boy will soon commit suicide because of Reverend Joseph Mundy’s “unrelenting” sexual advances. Placa responds, “My job is to protect the Bishop.” The boy’s mother eventually comes to Placa, who reportedly never told her of McDonough’s concern. Placa takes the boy aside “for a private chat,” questions his account, and pressures him to withdraw his allegations. Mundy’s behavior allegedly becomes more brazen in the three years that follow, including the sodomy of the boy’s friend. A diocesan spokeswoman later states that Mundy’s file contains no accusation of sexual abuse and a summary of McDonough’s report that she dismissed as “preposterous.” Mundy eventually goes on indefinite leave of absence while the victim continued to suffer from “panic attacks and paralyzing bouts of rage.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Newsday, November 26, 1993

⁴⁶ ocpafll.org, accessed January 25, 2021; Telegram & Gazette, May 22, 2002

⁴⁷ Newsday, June 3, 2002

⁴⁸ Newsday, June 3, 2002

⁴⁹ Newsday, June 3, 2002

- **October 20, 1994:** Placa receives the Catholic Health Leadership Award at the 1994 Annual Meeting of the Catholic Health Care Council.⁵⁰

1995-1999

- **1995:** Daryl McNicholas files a sexual harassment lawsuit in federal court against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Center and the St. Vincent De Paul Roman Catholic Church claiming that Reverend Joseph Hickey fired him from his role as music director of the church after he refused Hickey's sexual advances. McNicholas claims that after the priest encountered him at a gay bar in Manhattan, "Hickey began a repeated pattern of uninvited sexual overtures, conversations, innuendo and invitations to engage in sexual activity." Placa states that "he investigated the sexual harassment charges" and "concluded there was no sexual harassment," and defends Hickey, who he says was "a priest for almost 30 years" that "had no previous complaints against him."⁵¹
- **April 1995:** The Executive Committee of the CHCC hears presentation on Managed Care from the Department of Health and establishes internal Medicaid Managed Care Task Force to develop recommendations for June Bishop's meeting. Placa participates as member of Task Force and develops program for Bishop's meeting that will become central to the founding of Fidelis.⁵²
- **June 9, 1995:** Placa presents to Bishops and describes health care as "the critical issue facing the Church at the present time." His presentation "proves pivotal" and is later described as "the impetus for the creation of Fidelis Care of New York."⁵³
- **June 24, 1995:** Cardinal O'Connor writes Placa agreeing to "get at this issue in a unified and coordinated fashion," thanking Placa and calling him "a gift to the Church in New York."⁵⁴
- **October 6, 1995:** Placa participates in a panel discussion with Dr. Mary Healey-Sedutto of the Archdiocese and Peter Capobianco from St. Mary's Hospital in Amsterdam on the topic of Regional Health Networks at the Catholic Health Care Council's annual meeting.⁵⁵
- **1996:** Linda Moraitis' son Matthew tells her that Reverend Brian Brinker acted inappropriately with him during a trip to California. She tells the police and notifies Placa. Placa visits Matthew at home, who tells him that "Brinker offered him wine on the flight and rubbed his stomach." The priest later allegedly asks Matthew to "take off his bathing suit before going into a jacuzzi" and also "to watch pornographic movies." The Nassau police do not act because "the alleged incident happened outside their jurisdiction." When Moraitis follows up with Placa, he tells her that "Brinker had been sent for psychiatric treatment." Six years later, Moraitis learns from Bishop William Murphy that Rev. Brinker's psychiatric report has "nothing in it that would

⁵⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵¹ Newsday, October 26, 1996

⁵² jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵³ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵⁴ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵⁵ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

preclude Brinker from working as a priest.” Brinker is finally suspended from acting publicly as a priest in April 2002 after coverage in Newsday.⁵⁶

- **January 6, 1996:** Bishops come to agreement on how to organize a statewide entity for healthcare, with Placa “playing the key role in the birthing process.” Cardinal O’ Connor writes letter announcing “a single plan application to the State of New York” and a proposed organizational structure that was “accomplished to a large degree with the assistance of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, in particular through the good offices of Monsignor Alan Placa.”⁵⁷
- **February 7, 1996:** Placa testifies before the Senate and Assembly Health Committee on the topic of surrogate decision-making legislation.⁵⁸
- **February 1996:** Placa and Riordan sell apartment on Tunbridge Lane in Orlando, Florida.⁵⁹
- **March 4, 1996:** Catholic Conference convenes the Advisory Committee on Medicaid Managed Care, “the forerunner of the Fidelis board.” Placa participates on behalf of Rockville Centre.⁶⁰
- **May 9, 1996:** The Fidelis Care Advisory Committee meets for the first time. Placa participates as the representative for Rockville Centre.⁶¹
- **September 24, 1996:** Placa presents at the Catholic Health Care Committee’s annual meeting on the topic of the Ethics of Managed Care. During the presentation, he “expressed concern about continued Medicaid funding for abortion and also about evidence that the practice of partial birth abortion was occurring in New York State.”⁶²
- **1997:** Placa meets with 23-year-old Matthew Mosher and his therapist, where Mosher tells Placa that he “had been repeatedly molested” by Reverend Angelo Ditta from the age of nine in the priest’s bedroom “at a parish rectory in Selden.” Mosher tells Placa that, during his visits, “the priest would ask him to massage his feet, would masturbate in front of him, fondle him and get in bed naked with him.” Placa, who later confirmed that he met with Mosher, begins paying Mosher and his mother’s therapist bills, but does not notify law enforcement or offer any details to the Mosheres on how Rev. Ditta will be handled. Diocesan records later show that “Ditta was sent away for six months of therapy, before being allowed to return and continue working as a priest.” Five years later, the Diocese officially removes Rev. Ditta from active duty. A Suffolk district attorney tells Newsday that the allegations “might have been prosecutable had the Diocese reported them” when they were made. “The district attorney’s office should have been notified in 1997,” Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota reportedly says. “The case might have been prosecutable then.” Spota adds, “This Diocese seems to think they will decide what is a crime and who is a criminal, and that is just not their function.”⁶³

⁵⁶ Newsday, January 25, 2005

⁵⁷ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵⁸ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁵⁹ ocpaf.org, accessed January 25, 2021

⁶⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶² jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶³ Newsday, April 3, 2002

- **January 27, 1997:** Fidelis Care New York formally established by Bishops in ceremony at Marian Shrine. Placa participates in the ceremony and presents to the Bishops on the specific actions undertaken to establish the corporation.⁶⁴
- **February 4, 1997:** Fidelis Care New York Board of Directors meets for the first time. Placa participates and will continue to serve on the board of Fidelis until February 2017.⁶⁵
- **March 1997:** Judith Cajigas and Patricia Hastings file suit against Monsignor John Mott, alleging that he repeatedly molested them at St. Raphael’s parish school during the 1950’s. Placa is mentioned in news coverage of the lawsuit, telling Newsday, “We’ve had Mott evaluated three separate times and have no reason to believe he poses a threat.” Years later, reports will reveal that one victim’s father alerted the Church to her abuse as early as 1995. Mott will die in 1999.⁶⁶
- **April 15, 1997:** Fidelis Board resolves that Fidelis “should have the ability to develop multiple product lines” after Placa organizes “series of discussions” to address “conflicting views of mission.”⁶⁷
- **January 8, 1998:** Placa participates in Task Force on Preservation of Catholic Health Care as part of subcommittee to develop “internal policies and principles appropriate to be utilized on a Diocesan and state level.”⁶⁸
- **June 15, 1998:** Fidelis Board of Directors decides to convene task force to resolve issues on Fidelis integration of non-Catholic network participants. Placa is selected to chair the task force.⁶⁹
- **August 1998:** Reverend Thomas DeVita confesses to his Michigan congregation a “considerably watered down” version of “sexual misconduct” from 20 years earlier in Rockville Centre with a former 16-year-old parishioner that he claims was “consensual.” Placa is quoted in public reporting on the news, stating that after DeVita previously underwent a psychiatric evaluation and was “judged fit to return to his duties after six months of psychiatric treatment,” and that “it was his decision to leave Long Island.” Placa adds that “we would have reassigned him here,” and that “we have full confidence that he’s a threat to no one at this point.” Placa also tells the media that he had “spoken with the woman and her son and had offering the son counseling, which he declined” and said that there “was no financial settlement in the case.”⁷⁰
- **December 17, 1998:** Task force chaired by Placa informs Fidelis Board of Directors of “emerging consensus that Fidelis represented a new and vital vehicle for the Catholic health care ministry.”⁷¹

⁶⁴ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶⁵ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021; projects.propublica.org, accessed January 25, 2021; ny.gov, accessed December 10, 2020

⁶⁶ Newsday, March 13, 1997; longisland.news12.com, February 21, 2019

⁶⁷ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶⁸ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁶⁹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁷⁰ Newsday, August 29, 1998

⁷¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

- **1999:** Placa lives and serves In Residence with Brendan Riordan at St. Aloysius in Great Neck, New York until 2017.⁷²
- **June 3, 1999:** Placa presents on legislation and regulation at the Catholic Health Care Council Annual Meeting at the Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston.⁷³
- **June 4, 1999:** Placa takes part in a Board of Bishops meeting to approve establishing an Advisory Committee on Health Care Affiliations. The group would develop a work plan and principles “governing hospital mergers/joint ventures” that would be “available on a statewide basis.”⁷⁴

2000-2004

- **2000:** An abuse claim is brought against Reverend Nicholas Unterstein by Donna Nichols for allegedly “repeatedly abusing” teenage girls at a Huntington Station parish thirty years earlier. A State Supreme Court justice dismisses the claims for being too old but allows the case to go forward after a priest in a neighboring parish who the victim told of the abuse “improperly disclosed it in a letter.” After the Church responds by offering Nichols a “small settlement,” she refuses it and contacts Placa, where she begins “yelling and yelling that what they were offering me was absurd” and tells him she plans to go to the media. Placa then calls Nichols’ attorney and “quadrupled the settlement amount” into the six figures. Nichols later states, “They didn’t negotiate on the abuse. They negotiated on the threat of it getting out to the general public.”⁷⁵
- **February 2000:** Placa testifies before the Joint Fiscal Committees on the Governor’s budget proposals.⁷⁶
- **March 7, 2000:** Placa participates in a Catholic Health Care Council Officer’s Conference Call discussing “a proposed model policy for provision of emergency contraception to rape victims.” Placa notes in the call that “hospitals in Rockville Centre applied the so-called ‘Peoria Protocol’ which laid out specific steps to ascertain whether ovulation and therefore the potential for contraception had occurred.”⁷⁷
- **May 2000:** Reverend Andrew Millar, a 69-year-old priest, is arrested after being caught sodomizing a 15-year-old mentally disabled boy in a public restroom at Tobay beach by the boy’s father. Placa is quoted in press reports and tells reporters that Millar admitted himself to an unidentified mental facility off Long Island to be evaluated by psychiatrists, and that the Church will “provide whatever financial help to keep him at a supervised facility.” Placa tells the media that “this is the first time a Diocesan priest has been arrested on a sex charge,” adding, “You just have to be heartbroken when a child is hurt in any way at all.” A former director of priest health services later reveals that Millar’s problems with “alcohol, anxiety and sex” were “flagged” in the mid-90’s, but that the priest “did not get intensive help until a former alter boy [sic] came forward in 1999 to accuse the priest of molesting him years earlier.” Millar was reportedly sent away for treatment and asked to retire, but Newsday reported in 2002 that he

⁷² bishop-accountability.org, accessed January 24, 2021; andersonadvocates.com, accessed January 25, 2021

⁷³ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁷⁴ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁷⁵ Newsday, July 2, 2002

⁷⁶ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁷⁷ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

continued to offer Mass at St. Peter & Paul in Manorville after he retired and did not disclose his history.⁷⁸

- **June 23, 2000:** The Board of Bishops meet to consider a resolution from the Advisory Committee on Health Care Affiliations, which included Placa. The committee recommended that the Board follow a set of practices and procedures whenever contemplating an affiliation to ensure the Advisory Committee was consulted. The Bishops consider the work “helpful” but there is no record that they ever use the Advisory Committee again.⁷⁹
- **October 11, 2000:** The Catholic Health Care Council comes to an agreement for restructuring the executive committee after two years of ongoing discussions. The new Statement of Organization that replaces the by-laws is “Based upon the recommendation of an ad hoc committee” that includes Placa and five others.⁸⁰
- **December 20, 2001:** Board of Directors meets and reviews internal report that states the Board “initially viewed themselves as investors in Fidelis, but now viewed themselves as entrepreneurs.” In the meeting, “Monsignor Placa was once again applauded for the key role he had played in fostering this new phase in the evolution of Fidelis.”⁸¹
- **January 7, 2002:** The Boston Globe publishes a shocking piece exposing a far-reaching effort by the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston to suppress sexual abuse allegations. The controversy entangles Bishop William Murphy, the newly-installed Bishop of Rockville Centre who had previously served as “the No. 2 official in Boston from 1993 to 2001” and “helped arrange early retirement for the most notorious of the abusive priests.”⁸²
- **March 2002:** Bishop Murphy reportedly turns over “internal files on accused priests” to law enforcement officials in Nassau and Suffolk County in response to subpoenas. Officials in Suffolk County convene a grand jury within a month to investigate specific allegations of abuse and how the diocese dealt with them.⁸³
- **April 2002:** Bishop William Murphy announces that Placa’s three-priest Intervention Team is being disbanded and replaced by a “more diverse” panel to include a nun, a priest, and a former police commissioner. The announcement states that Placa is taking a sabbatical “to work on a book he has been planning” and will be named a parish pastor when he returns.⁸⁴
- **June 2002:** A RICO lawsuit is filed against Diocese of Rockville Centre claiming that Placa “conspired” with victims to secretly settle abuse claims and deprive the victims’ lawyers of \$100,000 in legal fees. Gary Viscio, the lawyer behind the suit, says that Placa “took advantage of the client’s state of mind and willingness to resolve the issue” and “told our clients don’t come back to us and assigned them an attorney.” The suit claims that the Diocese agreed to pay \$150,000 to each woman, with one \$48,000 sum payment and the rest delivered as an annuity.

⁷⁸ Newsday, July 19, 2000; Daily News, May 17, 2000; Newsday, June 3, 2002

⁷⁹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁸⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁸¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁸² salon.com, June 22, 2007

⁸³ salon.com, June 22, 2007

⁸⁴ Associated Press, June 14, 2002; Newsday, April 30, 2002

According to court papers, the victim at the time had not received her initial payment; when she asked the attorney Placa had recommended to her for help, she was told the attorney “couldn’t help her because of the attorney’s ‘close relationship with Placa.’”⁸⁵

- **June 2, 2002:** Newsday publishes allegations that Placa sexually abused Richard Tollner at St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary in Uniondale in January 1975 and over the year and a half that followed. The allegations are the first to be brought against Placa. Newsday’s article includes similar allegations against Placa from another anonymous former student who described “the newspaper drill,” to the paper. He said that Placa “always had a New York Times in his office” and “would sit down next to you on the couch and open it wide and, inevitably, his hand would brush your crotch.” According to the man, Placa “did it over and over again,” and it made him feel “so violated that he wrote Placa an unsigned letter 20 years later, blaming him for his loss of interest in pursuing the priesthood.”⁸⁶
- **June 3, 2002:** The Suffolk County district attorney’s office contacts Richard Tollner and makes arrangements for him to appear before a grand jury investigating the diocese’s handling of sexual abuse cases.⁸⁷
- **June 14, 2002:** Bishop William Murphy announces that Placa is stripped of his priestly rights. Murphy states he took the action “immediately after being notified by the Nassau district attorney’s office that Placa was under investigation for sexual abuse.” The move means that Placa can “no longer say mass, hear confessions or deliver any of the other sacraments.”⁸⁸
- **August 2002:** Placa begins working as a consultant for Giuliani Partners for an undisclosed amount, where he comes to the firm “about three days a week.”⁸⁹
- **September 2002:** Placa receives special permission to officiate at the funeral of Giuliani’s mother while suspended from priestly duties over sexual abuse allegations.⁹⁰
- **September 25, 2002:** Placa participates in a Fidelis Board of Directors meeting and discusses enrollment growth. Placa asks if Fidelis is retaining auto-assigned members.⁹¹
- **December 2002:** Fidelis finishes repaying \$16 million initial capital investment from Dioceses, health care providers and Catholic Charities.⁹²
- **January 4, 2003:** The Daily News reports that Reverend Michael Hands, a priest convicted of sodomizing a 13-year-old boy, stated during a deposition that Placa used Church insurance money to “buy silence” from people and accused Placa of abuse. Hands reportedly stated that Placa “had authority on some level to take \$50,000... that he could get this from the diocese, from their insurance department, and use that to pay off someone who had claimed that they were victimized by him.” Hands states that “the settlement itself would say that the issue did

⁸⁵ Newsday, June 7, 2002

⁸⁶ Newsday, June 2, 2002

⁸⁷ Newsday, June 14, 2002

⁸⁸ Newsday, June 14, 2002

⁸⁹ baltimoresun.com, February 2, 2003

⁹⁰ salon.com, June 22, 2007

⁹¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

⁹² jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

not involve sexual misconduct” and that it instead “involved a drunken driving claim against Placa,” and added that Placa “very shrewdly covered that up.”⁹³

- **February 10, 2003:** The Suffolk County grand jury report is released to the public containing shocking evidence of the Rockville Centre dioceses’ years of using “deception and intimidation” for “prevention, hindrance and delay in the discovery of criminal conduct by priests.” The report does not name priests, but later reporting states that biographical details confirm “Priest F” in the report is Placa. The report documents extensive evidence of Placa moving accused priests between locations, withholding his status as a lawyer from families, and deploying a “carefully orchestrated plan” to protect the dioceses and silence victims. In addition, the report includes evidence and testimonies from three separate victims alleging Placa sexually assaulted them.⁹⁴
- **February 20, 2003:** Placa is interviewed by the New York Times where he categorically denies the allegations made against him in the Suffolk Grand jury report. During the interview, he claims that “the vast majority of cases, 95 percent of cases” managed by the Intervention Team “were outside the statute of limitations,” and that he “rarely kept track of an accused priest one he had completed the evaluations.” He claims that “many priests despised him” because of the role he played in investigating them but that he “had no choice.” When asked if he could cite any mistakes that he personally made, Placa recalls “a complaint about a priest who frequently invited children to listen to music in his room in the rectory,” stating that he interviewed the children and priest and “determined nothing untoward was happening” but told the priest and his pastor that the get-togethers were “not wise.” Placa then says that “as a matter of fact, I now found out that he was apparently sexually abusing kids.” When discussing the allegations against him personally, Placa says he was “especially outraged to see himself included in the ‘Priests as Perpetrators’ section of the report” which included other allegations of child rape. According to the Times, Placa “noted in a sarcastic tone” that the allegations were “a clumsy attempt to abuse by touching someone's thigh.” He added, “Give me a break!” and stated, “Let me tell you something. My hand up to God, I didn't do any of those things! But if that were true, does that belong in there?”⁹⁵
- **February 2003:** The Associated Press learns that Placa has been working at Giuliani’s law firm as a consultant since August 2002, two months after he was stripped of his priestly duties. Giuliani tells the press, “Alan Placa is one the finest people I know. He's one of the people I admire most in the world, and if most people did half the good that Alan's done, the world would be a wonderful place.”⁹⁶
- **April 2003:** Thirty-four men sue the Diocese of Rockville Centre for more than \$1 billion for doing “little or nothing to stop priests who sexually abused them as children.” The suit names the diocese, Bishop William Murphy, and multiple clerics accused of molesting children as defendants. Placa is also name as a defendant for allegedly concealing the priests’ misconduct.⁹⁷

⁹³ Daily News, January 4, 2003

⁹⁴ Associated Press, February 20, 2003; [salon.com, June 22, 2007](#); Newsday, February 10, 2003

⁹⁵ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

⁹⁶ [baltimoresun.com, February 2, 2003](#)

⁹⁷ [nypost.com, April 15, 2003](#)

- **September 9, 2003:** Rudy Giuliani’s mother Helen dies. Press reports later reveal that Bishop Murphy grants Placa permission to preside over Helen Giuliani’s funeral mass, as well as the funeral mass for his own mother, despite being under investigation and having his pastoral duties stripped.⁹⁸
- **September 24, 2003:** Placa presents to the Fidelis Board of Directors and recommends creation of a for-profit subsidiary of Fidelis “to pursue business initiatives...without jeopardizing Fidelis tax-exempt status through the receipt of unrelated business income.”⁹⁹
- **December 18, 2003:** The Fidelis Board of Directors agrees to establish a for-profit subsidiary.¹⁰⁰
- **July 2004:** Fidelis Care New York creates Salus Administrative Services, Inc., a New York State Corporation that provided pharmacy benefit management and network services.¹⁰¹

2005-2009

- **August 2005:** Bishop Murphy faces outcry from Catholic lay group Voice of the Faithful over Placa being listed “In Residence” in a parish bulleting at St. Aloysius in Great Neck. The group complains to Bishop Murphy that the “front-page listing, with a phone number under his name, invites the public to contact him” and represents him as being active in ministry as a priest. A spokesman for Bishop Murphy says that Placa is “abiding by the terms of his suspension by not celebrating mass in Public or wearing his Roman Catholic collar,” but also admits that the Bishop gave Placa “permission to say some funeral Masses.”¹⁰²
- **December 2005:** Placa and Riordan purchase condominium on South End Avenue in New York, New York. In a statement, Giuliani spokesperson says that Placa stays at the condo “on occasion” but lives primarily at the rectory, and that Riordan “never stays there,” describing it as “an investment property.”¹⁰³
- **2007:** Placa is photographed with Giuliani and his third wife, Judith Nathan, during a trip to Rome.¹⁰⁴
- **2007:** Placa donates \$1,000 to Giuliani’s presidential campaign and lists himself as attorney at Giuliani’s consulting firm.¹⁰⁵
- **June 2007:** Giuliani refuses to fire Placa from consulting job after public complaints of his association to an alleged sexual abuser while running for president.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ The Canadian Press, December 16, 2003

⁹⁹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁰⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁰¹ buffalonews.com, December 19, 2015

¹⁰² Newsday, August 5, 2005

¹⁰³ nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021; nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021; salon.com, June 22, 2007

¹⁰⁴ rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

¹⁰⁵ Newsday, July 14, 2007

¹⁰⁶ Newsday, June 23, 2007

- **July 2008:** Placa and Riordan purchase apartment on Royal Windsor Lane in Fort Meyers, Florida.¹⁰⁷
- **December 5, 2009:** The Diocese of Rockville Centre formally announces that Placa “was found not guilty at a canonical trial” of the allegations brought against him by Richard Tollner in 2002. The Diocese states that “the Vatican made a ruling after a long investigation that included a trial before a church tribunal in the Diocese of Albany,” and that the case was “reviewed by Rome’s congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.” The Diocese says that Placa can “again wear his collar in public and celebrate Mass and other sacraments” and that the Vatican instructed it to do whatever it can “to restore his good name”¹⁰⁸

2010-Present

- **2011:** Placa formally retires from priestly duties.¹⁰⁹
- **October 2011:** Placa becomes sole owner of condominium on South End Avenue in New York, New York after a deed transfer with no purchase amount (\$0).¹¹⁰
- **November 2011:** Placa and Riordan sell apartment on Royal Windsor Lane in Fort Meyers, Florida.¹¹¹
- **August 2013:** Placa and Riordan purchase apartment on Presidential Way in West Palm Beach.¹¹²
- **January 2014:** Placa and Riordan purchase apartment on Embassy Drive in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹¹³
- **2015:** While Placa is serving on the Fidelis Board of Directors, the organization begins a “strategic assessment” of its future. Fidelis spends “approximately one year carefully assessing its operations, resources and the overall future viability of its business lines” and considers “various strategic options, including potential operational diversification strategies, geographical expansion outside of New York, joint ventures or monetization.”¹¹⁴
- **September 9, 2015:** Placa registers to vote in Florida.¹¹⁵
- **February 2016:** Fidelis Care New York creates a second wholly-owned subsidiary, Rego Park Office Tower, LLC (RPOT), a New York not-for-profit corporation. The subsidiary is created in the last month that Placa serves on the Fidelis Board of Directors.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷ leepa.org, accessed January 25, 2021

¹⁰⁸ Newsday, December 5, 2009

¹⁰⁹ bishop-accountability.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹¹⁰ nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021; nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹¹ leepa.org, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹² pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹³ pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹⁴ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹¹⁵ registration.elections.myflorida.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹⁶ projects.propublica.org, accessed December 4, 2020; regoparkofficetower.com, accessed December 8, 2020; therealdeal.com, April 12, 2017

- **March 2016:** Placa and Riordan sell apartment on Embassy Drive in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹¹⁷
- **April 2016:** Placa and Riordan purchase first apartment on Consulate Place in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹¹⁸
- **2016:** In the second half of the year, after Placa left the Board of Directors, Fidelis initiates “an auction process in which nine prospective purchasers, five for-profit organizations and four not-for-profit organizations, were identified and invited to submit offers for the acquisition of substantially all [of Fidelis’] assets.” Only two bids were received during the first phase of the auction, and Centene did not initially submit a bid.¹¹⁹
- **December 2016:** Two bids are received for Fidelis and presented to the Board of Directors.¹²⁰
- **2017:** Placa officiates at the wedding of Giuliani’s son, Andrew, who works at the time for the Trump White House as sports liaison.¹²¹
- **April 2017:** Placa and Riordan purchase second apartment on Consulate Place in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹²²
- **September 7, 2017:** The Fidelis Board of Directors meets to approve Centene’s bid to acquire Fidelis for approximately \$3.75 billion. Placa attends the meeting as Director Emeritus, non-voting. Placa asks the lawyer advising Fidelis a question about the diocesan Bishop’s involvement in the Transaction and is advised that they have been directly involved through their advisors, “including with respect to negotiating the APA [Asset Purchase Agreement]. All 15 members vote to approve the sale of Fidelis to Centene.¹²³
- **September 12, 2017:** The Fidelis Board of Directors meets a second time to “discuss and ratify changes that have been made to the APA,” specifically changes to the “Burdensome Condition Provision” under which the transaction could be cancelled by either party. Placa attends as Director Emeritus, non-voting member. Placa asks the lawyer advising Fidelis about the definition of a term in the APA and is advised that “the new Fidelis foundation could conduct the purposes set forth in the definition, unless any of those actions violate the restrictive covenant.” Placa makes the motion to pass the resolution to approve the updated APA, which passes unanimously with all 15 voting directors in attendance.¹²⁴
- **September 2017:** Placa and Riordan sell first apartment on Consulate Place in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹⁸ pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹¹⁹ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹²⁰ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹²¹ rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

¹²² pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹²³ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹²⁴ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹²⁵ pbcbgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

- **June 2018:** Placa purchases and moves into home on Eagleton Estate Boulevard in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.¹²⁶
- **December 2018:** Placa and Riordan sell second apartment on Consulate Place in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹²⁷
- **January 2019:** The New York Child Victim’s Act is officially passed, providing victims in the state the opportunity to bring claims in court against any alleged abuser no matter when the abuse occurred.¹²⁸
- **March 2019:** Placa and Riordan sell apartment on Presidential Way in West Palm Beach, Florida.¹²⁹
- **May 2019:** Placa and Riordan sell unit on South End Avenue in New York.¹³⁰
- **August 2019:** The New York Child Victim’s act takes effect, prompting the filing of hundreds of lawsuits statewide.¹³¹
- **August 2019:** Richard Tollner files suit against Placa for sexual assault that he alleges to have occurred in 1975 during a trip to Fire Island, New York. Christopher Fernan also files suit against Placa for more than 100 incidents of alleged sexual abuse between 1974 and 1977. In court papers, Placa denies both sets of allegations and calls them “an attempt to damage his good reputation, curry favor with the media, and coerce the Catholic church into paying a hefty sum even though it did nothing wrong.”¹³²
- **October 2020:** Facing over 220 sexual abuse lawsuits filed against it since the passage of the New York Child Victim’s Act, the Diocese of Rockville Centre files for bankruptcy, citing the “increasing burden of litigation expenses.”¹³³

WHO IS ALAN PLACA?

According to various biographical materials and news reports, Alan Placa was born July 2, 1944, and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He attended Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn, an all-male school where he would begin a lifelong friendship with Rudolph Giuliani. Placa and Giuliani attended Manhattan College together, where Placa received a BA degree. After he graduated, Placa attended seminary and was ordained a Catholic priest on May 30, 1970, at the Immaculate Conception Seminary.¹³⁴ His first assignment as a priest was at St. Patrick’s Parish in Glen Cove, New York, where he served from 1970 until 1974, when he was transferred to St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary High School in

¹²⁶ LexisNexis Comprehensive Person Report, accessed January 25, 2021

¹²⁷ pbcgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹²⁸ nytimes.com, January 28, 2019

¹²⁹ pbcgov.com, accessed January 25, 2021

¹³⁰ nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021; nyc.gov, accessed January 25, 2021

¹³¹ democraticandchronicle.com, August 14, 2019

¹³² rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

¹³³ nytimes.com, October 1, 2020

¹³⁴ Newsday, December 5, 2009

Uniondale. There, he served for four years as the dean of discipline for high school students.¹³⁵ He also reportedly served as the Chairman of the Diocesan Priest's Advisory Council in 1976 and 1977.¹³⁶

It was at St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary that at least two students allege Placa began sexually abusing them, charges that Placa categorically denies to this day.¹³⁷ It was also where, in 1975, Placa apparently first met Brendan P. Riordan, the man that would be a part of Placa's life for decades to come, and who would also be accused of sexually abusing a student over a decade later. Placa and Riordan became friends and soon wrote a book together called "Desert Silence: A Way of Prayer for an Unquiet Age" in 1977.¹³⁸ The following year, Placa left St. Pius for law school at Hofstra University School of Law. Though the Church has a documented history of quietly moving priests accused of sexual abuse to other locations when complaints are filed, Placa later stated that his trip to law school was paid for by the diocese because it "needed an expert in social service law."¹³⁹

After leaving Pius, between 1978 and 1986, Placa served as Director of Research and Development for Catholic Charities in Rockville Centre, where he held a variety of additional titles over time including Director of Services for Retarded Adults and Director of Advocacy Offices.¹⁴⁰ Starting in 1984, Placa became Counsel for the Diocese's Office of Legal Affairs, and then joined the Rockville Centre Diocese, where he ran healthcare services and rose to the role of Vice Chancellor in 1988.¹⁴¹ Placa officially became a Monsignor in March 1991, solidifying his position of power as both priest and lawyer for the Church and making him one of the more influential figures across all New York dioceses.¹⁴²

The Diocese of Rockville Centre, which covers nearly 1,200 square miles in Nassau and Suffolk county, New York, is the eighth largest diocese in the United States and home to over 1.4 million Catholics. It was there that Placa would ultimately play a pivotal role in generating and protecting billions of dollars in wealth for the Church over the last three decades.

In 1992, Placa founded a panel of three priests to manage sexual abuse complaints for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.¹⁴³ The panel, which was called the Intervention Team, personally investigated each complaint and provided close guidance to the Bishop on the cases and the priests involved. Placa would personally play a role in hundreds of sexual abuse cases for the Diocese through the Intervention Team.¹⁴⁴ Placa oversaw the Intervention Team until it was disbanded in April 2002, only months before an investigation was opened into sexual abuse allegations against Placa himself and Placa's priestly rights were suspended.¹⁴⁵ In 2009, the Vatican formally finished its investigation into the allegations against Placa, declaring him Not Guilty and recognizing him as an active priest in good standing.¹⁴⁶

While overseeing the operations of the Intervention Team, Placa also guided the development of an entirely different project for the Church. In 1992, the same year he founded the Intervention Team, Placa was also named to the Executive Committee of New York's Catholic Health Care Council. Over the

¹³⁵ nytimes.com, June 15, 2002

¹³⁶ salon.com, June 22, 2007

¹³⁷ rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

¹³⁸ salon.com, June 22, 2007

¹³⁹ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁴⁰ salon.com, June 22, 2007

¹⁴¹ salon.com, June 22, 2007; bishop-accountability.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁴² Newsday, December 5, 2009

¹⁴³ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁴⁴ Associated Press, February 20, 2003; salon.com, June 22, 2007; Newsday, February 10, 2003

¹⁴⁵ nypost.com, June 15, 2002; Newsday, June 14, 2002

¹⁴⁶ Newsday, December 5, 2009

five years that followed, Placa personally championed and guided the ambitious health care project that would eventually become Fidelis Care New York, which formally formed in 1997. Placa served on the Board of Directors for Fidelis Care New York from 1997 to 2016 and continued to attend Fidelis board meetings as Director Emeritus until the Board of Directors' approval of its sale to Centene in 2017.¹⁴⁷

Today, Placa is retired from pastoral service and lives in West Palm Beach with Monsignor Brendan P. Riordan, who is also retired. Since 2002, he has been employed at Giuliani Partners, first as a consultant and currently as a Senior Vice President, according to his LinkedIn and Facebook pages.¹⁴⁸

THE MIDWIFE OF FIDELIS

In the mid 1980's, the Dioceses of New York operated a small, scattered assortment of health services for parishioners and the poor across the state. Beginning in 1995, Alan Placa "played a key role in the birthing process" of the Church's coordinated expansion of this loose network of health programs into Fidelis Care New York, at one time the state's largest insurance network worth billions of dollars in annual revenue. He was instrumental in convincing the Diocesan Bishops to embrace the transformation of the Church's nonprofit health services, served on the organization's Board of Directors from 1997 to 2016, and played a key role in steering the development of Fidelis from its formation to participating as a Director Emeritus in the final meeting of the Fidelis Board approving its sale to Centene. He also played a key role in pushing and expanding the Church health care operations into for-profit health care. In the process, he helped to both generate billions of dollars of assets from the healthcare market off the books of the Dioceses, and thus further beyond the reach of sex abuse victims.

New York's Catholic Health Care Council officially formed in 1986, when it comprised of a collection of members representing the various Catholic health care services throughout the state. The Council included representatives and executives from hospitals, nursing homes, and certified home health care agencies, as well as church leaders from every diocese in the state. As Vice Chancellor and Secretary to the Bishop for Health Affairs for the Diocese of Rockville Center, Placa was ideally suited to represent the diocese on the Council, and beginning in 1992, he served on the Executive Committee, which "directed the affairs" of the Council.¹⁴⁹

During the early 1990's, Placa continuously demonstrated his utility to the Church on complicated legal and policy issues related to healthcare. After the passage of Health care Proxy legislation in 1990, for instance, Placa presented an overview of surrogate decision-making at the annual meeting of the Bishops and the Public Policy Committee on June 8, 1992. Church reports state that Placa explained to church leaders the legislation's applications to Church policies, which helped to inform its opposition to the legislation and its strategic pursuit of amendments to make the bill more "acceptable."¹⁵⁰

Two years later, Placa testified before the Senate and Assembly Health Committee on the same topic. He was awarded the Catholic Health Leadership Award by the Catholic Health Care Council in 1994, and in 1997 and 2000, he testified on the Church's behalf before the Joint Fiscal Committees on the Governor's proposed Medicaid budget. From regional networks and the ethics of managed care to

¹⁴⁷ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021; ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹⁴⁸ rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

¹⁴⁹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

legislative proposals and emergency contraception, Placa was deeply involved in designing and implementing the Church's positions and strategies on a wide range of health-related topics.¹⁵¹

After the passage of Medicaid Managed Care state legislation in 1991 and moves from the Pataki administration prioritizing a broader approach to managed care, the Catholic Conference decided in April 1995 to establish an internal Medicaid Managed Care Task Force. The group was given the responsibility to develop "alternatives and options for maintaining Catholic identity and health care ministry" and invited to present its recommendations at a June 1995 Board of Bishops meeting.¹⁵² This would ultimately lead to a critical series of meetings and discussions led by Placa that would later be called "**the formal beginning of Fidelis.**"¹⁵³

Placa responded directly to the invitation with a letter to the Archbishop of New York, agreeing to present and attaching a six-page essay titled "Medicaid Managed Care: Catholic Issues and the Role of Bishops." His essay and letter positioned healthcare as the critical issue facing the Church. Placa lamented that, "because of misunderstanding the legal situation and because of unclear thinking on the subject, we lost our institutions of higher education in this country," and warned that the same might happen in healthcare. Placa's essay urged the Catholic Conference to expand, rather than relinquish, its control in healthcare, and to maintain and protect its institutional influence on healthcare issues through joint ventures and other strategies. His letter expressed his belief that "one of the first tasks" of the newly formed task force should be "to advise you on the formulation of guidelines for reviewing proposed 'joint ventures' in health care."¹⁵⁴

On June 9, 1995, Placa participated in the task force's meeting and formally presented his "Catholic Perspective and the Role of the Bishops" essay. During his presentation, Placa exhorted the Bishops, stating, "If the Sisters of the Poor were to immigrate to this country today, and step onto the shore in New York City, and wish to carry out the Gospel call to healing, they would start an insurance company." **Church officials would later describe these presentations as "the impetus for the creation of Fidelis Care of New York."**

On June 24, Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, wrote a letter back to Placa, thanking him for his presentation and affirming his agreement with Placa's proposal. Cardinal O'Connor's letter stated, "I will communicate with John Kerry and the Board of Bishops about your suggestion that some forum be made available in order for us to get at this issue in a unified and coordinated fashion. It is clear that we can afford no delay." He added, "You are a gift to the Church in New York. Thanks for your efforts."¹⁵⁵

According to Church officials and publicly available documents, New York's Bishops held further meetings through the fall of 1995 discussing the potential structure of a statewide entity. An agreement on a strategic plan was ultimately reached in early January 1996, **with Placa reportedly "playing the key role in the birthing process."** A letter from Cardinal O'Connor to the Bishops on January 6, 1996 offered a broad outline of the proposed organization structure of Fidelis. The letter read in part, "Yesterday, the Archdiocese of New York together with the Diocese of Brooklyn, resolved all significant outstanding issues relative to proceeding forward, with a single plan application to the state of New York. This plan

¹⁵¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵² jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵³ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁴ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁵ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

was accomplished to a large degree with the assistance of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, in particular through the good offices of Monsignor Alan Placa.”¹⁵⁶

After additional agreements and restructuring, the Council’s Advisory Committee on Medicaid Managed Care was formally expanded to the Fidelis Care Advisory Committee on May 9, 1996. The committee membership included seven Brooklyn representatives, five Archdiocese representatives, and one representative from each of the other Dioceses. Included among this group was Placa, representing the Diocese of Rockville Centre.¹⁵⁷

On January 27, 1997, the eight Diocesan Bishops of New York gathered at Marian Shrine in West Haverstraw to vote on **the formal formation of Fidelis Care New York**. The formation included the legal transfer of ownership of Fidelis Care from Catholic Medical Center to joint ownership among the eight Bishops as members, or “owners”, of the corporation. Church documents note that the Bishops were “joined by Diocesan experts they had chosen to participate in the session.” Among these experts was Placa, who gave a presentation with Mary Healey-Sedutto on the specific legal actions that were taken to establish the corporation and details on the newly-created Board of Directors, which would meet just a week later.¹⁵⁸

The Fidelis Board of Directors’ original structure matched the structure of the 1996 Advisory committee with seven Brooklyn representatives, five Archdiocese representatives, and one from each of the other six Dioceses in New York. According to public records and Fidelis Form 990s, **Placa served on the Fidelis Board every year from its inception in early 1997 to February 2016**. The Fidelis Care New York by-laws empowered its Board of Directors with “responsibility for the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation “including its property, funds, and other assets.”¹⁵⁹

Fidelis was immediately faced with both internal and external challenges that Placa would play a critical role in resolving. During the first official board meeting of the company on February 4, 1997, some members expressed “conflicting views of mission” regarding the relationship between Fidelis and MDNY, a Catholic health care entity located in Long Island. Church officials later wrote that Placa organized “a series of discussions” that culminated in an April 15, 1997, meeting where the board agreed that Fidelis “should have the ability to develop multiple product lines, including but not limited to Medicaid, long term care, worker’s compensation, special needs populations and Medicare.”

A year later, at a March 8, 1998, board meeting, Archdiocese representatives expressed concern that the acquisition of Better Health Plan and the addition of non-Catholic participants into its network would negatively impact Catholic providers. During the year that followed, Placa chaired a Task Force responsible for resolving the concerns and reaching a consensus among the members on Fidelis’ mission, board composition, capital returns, and strategic role within the Catholic health care ministry. **The discussions and sessions he oversaw led to a clarified mission and structure and support for a wide range of business expansions and initiatives in new markets and product lines.**¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁷ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁸ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁵⁹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021; projects.propublica.org, accessed January 25, 2021; ny.gov, accessed December 10, 2020

¹⁶⁰ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

Two years later, in late 2001, the Fidelis Board reported that the Task Force on the Boards' Role and Responsibilities agreed on the need to shift the Board's responsibility "from operational oversight to strategic oversight" and commenced drafting a document to "refine Fidelis' strategic vision and clearly articulate the connection between the plan's organizational strategy and the broader mission of the Church." On December 20, 2001, the Task Force presented its revised mission and expressed the realization of Placa's original vision. According to church officials, "the report recognized that the Board of Directors initially viewed themselves as investors in Fidelis, but now viewed themselves as entrepreneurs." Church officials noted that Placa "was once again applauded for the key role he had played in fostering this new phase in the evolution of Fidelis."¹⁶¹

In the decade that followed, Placa maintained his role on the board of Fidelis, guiding its growth and helping it navigate through challenges. Remarkably, Placa's involvement in Fidelis appears to have been unaffected by the sudden eruption of scandal in 2002, when allegations that Placa sexually abused students at St. Pius X decades earlier led to the disbanding of the Intervention Team he oversaw and the stripping of his priestly rights.¹⁶² During a September 25, 2002 meeting, only three months after his priestly duties were suspended and he was placed under investigation by the Church, the Fidelis board learned that overall enrollment in its insurance program had reached 160,000 members, thanks in part to the implementation in New York of a mandatory enrollment requirement. Church reports note that during the meeting, Placa raised the question of whether Fidelis was retaining auto-assigned members after their initial enrollment. When it was confirmed that members were being retained, Placa reportedly stated that he believed it confirmed that Fidelis' service quality was satisfactory even to members who didn't seek to enroll in the first place. By the end of 2002, Fidelis reportedly generated enough revenues and profits to finish repayment of the \$16 million initial capital investment from the Church's dioceses, providers, and charities.¹⁶³

In 2003, Placa faced even more controversy after a Suffolk County grand jury report was released to the public that documented his efforts to quietly settle sexual abuse complaints against the Diocese for as little as possible, as well as additional sexual abuse allegations from his time at St. Pius X.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Placa's role at Fidelis remained prominent. At a September 2003 board meeting, Church officials wrote that Placa presented the results of a Board Task Force from June to "consider strategic initiatives for the expansion of the mission and ministry of Fidelis." **Placa's presentation concluded that "there was an immediate need for a for-profit subsidiary of Fidelis in order to pursue business initiatives [...] without jeopardizing Fidelis tax-exempt status through the receipt of unrelated business income."** Placa's report also said there were "many other long-term opportunities which could also be pursued through this vehicle." Church documents confirm that the board approved this recommendation in a December 2003 meeting and formally approved the action in early 2004.¹⁶⁵ Fidelis would later create a wholly owned subsidiary, Salus Administrative Services, Inc., a New York State Corporation that provided pharmacy benefit management and network services.¹⁶⁶

Placa maintained his role on the Fidelis Board of Directors for the next decade. In 2015, while he was still serving on the Board, Fidelis began a "strategic assessment" of its future. According to Fidelis' petition to the New York Attorney General regarding its sale to Centene, the company spent the year-long

¹⁶¹ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁶² Newsday, June 14, 2002

¹⁶³ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁶⁴ Associated Press, February 20, 2003

¹⁶⁵ jackbalinsky.org, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁶⁶ buffalonews.com, December 19, 2015; New York Times, August 22, 1997

process “carefully assessing its operations, resources and the overall future viability of its business lines and considered various strategic options, including potential operational diversification strategies, geographical expansion outside of New York, joint ventures or monetization.” In 2016, the Fidelis Board of Directors determined that selling Fidelis “would be in the best interest of Petitioner [Fidelis] and its Members [the eight Diocesan Bishops of the State and Ecclesiastical Province of New York].”¹⁶⁷

In the second half of 2016, Fidelis officially launched an auction process with nine prospective purchasers. The process only yielded two bids, but months later in 2017, Centene formally submitted a new bid for the company. On September 7, 2017, the Fidelis Board of Directors gathered to hold a special meeting and vote on approval of Centene’s bid to acquire all of Fidelis’ assets for \$3.75 billion. In the minutes of the Board meeting submitted in Fidelis’ petition to the state, Placa is listed in attendance as a Director Emeritus, non-voting member of the Board. According to the petition, Andrew Roth, an attorney advising Fidelis on the sale with North Rose Fulbright, answered a question from Placa by stating “the Members have, through their advisors been directly involved in many aspects of the Transaction, including with respect to negotiating the APA [Asset Purchase Agreement].” By the conclusion of the meeting, the 15 members of the Fidelis Board of Directors had voted unanimously to approve the sale of Fidelis to Centene.¹⁶⁸

Less than a week later, on September 12, 2017, the Fidelis Board of Directors convened a second special meeting on the Centene sale to “discuss and ratify changes” made to the Asset Purchase Agreement (APA). In particular, the group met to discuss changes to the “Burdensome Condition Provision,” under which the transaction could be canceled by either party. Even though Placa was again attending as a Director Emeritus, non-voting member of the Board, the official minutes from the meeting show how significant his involvement remained. According to those minutes, Placa raised a question regarding Section 6.07 about the definition of the term “Applicable Purposes” in the APA. Mr. Roth responded to Placa, explaining that the term was “a reference to the restrictive covenant provision in the APA; i.e. the new Fidelis foundation could conduct the purposes set forth in the definition, unless any of those actions violate the restrictive covenant.” As the meeting concluded, **Placa himself “made a motion to pass the resolution” and formally approve the updated APA, which was unanimously passed by the 15 voting directors in attendance.**¹⁶⁹

The successful sale of Fidelis to Centene generated \$3.6 billion in proceeds that were transferred to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, a charitable foundation created during the sale and controlled by the same eight Bishops who oversaw Fidelis. Considered on its own, Placa’s deep involvement in guiding the formation and expansion, and eventually, participating in the sale of Fidelis is a remarkable story of one priest playing a key role in generating billions of dollars controlled by the Bishops. Placa’s role as the pioneer of Fidelis is even more remarkable because it was not the only system he successfully built for the Church. In fact, before, during, and after the launch of Fidelis, Placa fulfilled a very different role for the Church completely unrelated to healthcare. For nearly two decades, he served as the “chief architect” of its efforts to suppress sexual abuse complaints, and thus to save the church millions of dollars in payments to sex abuse victims.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ ny.gov, accessed January 24, 2021

¹⁶⁸ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹⁶⁹ ny.gov, accessed December 9, 2020

¹⁷⁰ wsj.com, May 14, 2018; Newsday, June 3, 2002

Alan Placa was one of the chief architects and executors of the Diocesan policy on sexual abuse from the mid-1980's until 2002.¹⁷¹ Time and again, Placa's approach to managing sexual abuse complaints consistently prioritized church interests over victims, and his decisions and actions "placed troubled priests back in jobs where they had contact with children," at times even "against the advice of psychiatrists."¹⁷² Before he was ultimately removed from the so-called Intervention Team he helped to form and run, Placa served for a decade as the point person for meeting with victims and their families with sexual abuse complaints, while also sitting on a three-priest panel that made recommendations to the Diocese Bishop on managing priests accused of abuse.¹⁷³ Through that team, Placa helped develop a well-honed strategy of shuffling offending priests from therapy to new locations while simultaneously convincing victims to keep quiet.¹⁷⁴ Victims say he actively discouraged them from pursuing legal action against the Church, and that Placa was "evasive and lacked compassion in dealing with their complaints." Multiple victims and their family members indicate they felt deceived by their meetings with Placa. According to reports, his dual role as both priest and attorney was rarely explained to victims and their families, putting accusers at a significant disadvantage. Placa reportedly used his position as spiritual adviser to meet and solicit intimate, painful information from victims and their families – ostensibly as a compassionate priest and church leader – but in reality "to get information from victims that would later bolster the diocese's legal position," ultimately pushing victims into nondisclosure arrangements and low-dollar settlements. Placa claimed that he had to "balance" victim concerns against priest rights, but a thorough review of his actions shows a consistent loyalty to the Church and an apparent focus on suppressing victims' public allegations and on settlement minimization and asset protection.¹⁷⁵

As Placa completed his Diocese-funded legal training in the mid 1980's, the first wave of media reporting on priestly sexual abuse began to reach the public. According to public reporting, Placa himself began playing "**a central role in how such complaints were handled on Long Island.**" Placa's involvement was not just guidance on legal strategies; he "served as the diocese's legal counsel and personally handled complaints from victims," and he quickly became known as a critical resource for the Church in managing the intake and resolution of complaints as they arose. Placa's involvement in managing sexual abuse complaints against priests helped to establish him as a "**nationally recognized legal expert**" on abuse for the Church, and by the late 1980's, he reportedly "crisscrossed the country giving seminars to priests" on the topic of sexual abuse.¹⁷⁶

One of the earliest cases of abuse that Placa was brought in to manage was also one of the church's most notorious: The House of Affirmation. The House of Affirmation was a Church-owned rehabilitative center in Whitinsville, Massachusetts that opened in 1974 where priests accused of sexual abuse were "sent for psychotherapy and other counseling services." On the surface, the Church presented the center as "a retreat for vocational redirection," but according to victim statements and public testimony, people who worked at or visited the center when it was open described it as "**a breeding ground for sexual predators**" and a "**pedophile boot camp**" that was home to a "**serious, full-blown sex**

¹⁷¹ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁷² Newsday, December 5, 2009; Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁷³ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁷⁴ Newsday, August 5, 2005

¹⁷⁵ Newsday, December 5, 2009; Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁷⁶ Newsday, June 2, 2002; Newsday, June 3, 2002

mentality.¹⁷⁷ Alleged victims of priests that attended the House of Affirmation reportedly described a “child sexual abuse ring” involving multiple priests that was run through the facility.¹⁷⁸

Placa reportedly consulted for the center and served as its legal advisor, but the role was short-lived; the center was shut down in 1987 after a financial scandal involving its founder, Reverend Thomas A. Kane. While serving the House of Affirmation, Placa formed critical relationships and friendships with priests that would later face allegations of sexual abuse. Placa’s close friend Brendan P. Riordan, now a Monsignor who was a priest at the time of the center’s operations, served as a Director of the House of Affirmation, and the center’s founder Reverend Kane was also reportedly connected to Placa.¹⁷⁹ Some of the actions taken by Placa and the Church in response to abuse allegations at the House of Affirmation demonstrate the early strategies that became a hallmark of Placa’s approach to complaints in the years that followed.

When Rev. Kane was sued in 1993 by a former student who claimed Kane, Riordan, and two other priests began sexually abusing him at the House of Affirmation when he was 9 years old, Placa was reportedly **“the first lawyer Rev. Kane turned to”** after learning of the accusations.¹⁸⁰ The victim’s suit against Kane was ultimately settled in 1995 for only \$42,000 and included a non-disclosure agreement barring the victim from publicly discussing the case or taking legal action against any other priests besides Kane.¹⁸¹ Riordan denied having any sexual involvement with the accuser, Mark Barry, and Placa reportedly told the New York Times that the victim “lied under oath” about alleged abuse by Riordan, prompting the victim to say of Placa, **“He is a lawyer, a priest and a man of God. I can’t believe that he called me a liar.”**¹⁸² Later reports emerged that Kane, who filed for bankruptcy in the early 1990s, had also **“transferred a piece of property he owned in Florida to Monsignor Riordan and Monsignor Alan Placa”** before he filed for bankruptcy, in what might have been an early effort to protect assets from victim settlements and lawsuits by shifting ownership internally between church officials and entities.¹⁸³ The home would also be the first of eight total properties that Placa and Riordan would own and live in together over the next three decades.¹⁸⁴

Placa’s approach to managing sexual abuse complaints for the Church grew more sophisticated and effective throughout the 1980’s, and victims consistently spoke of his involvement as confusing, alienating, and insulting. One man told Placa in the mid-1980’s about his alleged abuse at the hands of Rev. Matthew Fitzgerald of St. Brigid’s Church in Westbury before he knew that Placa also served as legal counsel for the diocese. According to the victim, Placa first visited his home “as a representative of [Bishop John] McGann,” where the man began telling his story, “because I’m thinking we’re moving forward.” After the conversation, however, the victim said that **“there was no follow-up, no phone calls, just we’ll get back to you.”** When the victim later discovered Placa’s legal role in the Diocese, he began to worry whether Placa came to speak with him “as a priest who was concerned about the welfare of a victim” or “as a lawyer representing the Diocese,” and wondered whether or not Placa could use his testimony as a defense for the Diocese in court. While the victim never received justice, Reverend Fitzgerald was moved to another parish and then to Florida. There, even more abuse

¹⁷⁷ [telegram.com, July 22, 2007](https://www.telegram.com); [bishopaccountability.org](https://www.bishopaccountability.org), accessed January 27, 2021

¹⁷⁸ Telegram & Gazette, July 24, 2002

¹⁷⁹ Telegram & Gazette, May 22, 2002

¹⁸⁰ [telegram.com, July 22, 2007](https://www.telegram.com)

¹⁸¹ Telegram & Gazette, May 22, 2002

¹⁸² Telegram & Gazette, May 22, 2002

¹⁸³ Telegram & Gazette, May 22, 2002

¹⁸⁴ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com); [spectator.org, November 27, 2007](https://www.spectator.org)

allegations were brought against him, forcing the Church to remove him from service in 2002.¹⁸⁵

PLACA'S INTERVENTION TEAM

By the early 1990's, Placa had proven himself to be one of the Church's most valuable experts in "handling" abuse claims. In 1992, Placa formally converted his process into an institutional tool for the Church, forming a small panel of priests called the Intervention Team.¹⁸⁶ Placa's Intervention Team was responsible for internal investigations of accusations and complaints against priests and "advised the Bishop on nearly every aspect of abuse complaints." Placa served as the "**point person**" who most often met with victims and families, and sat on a panel that made recommendations to Bishops "about how to deal with the accused priest." Placa was joined on the Intervention Team by two other priests: John Alesandro, a canon lawyer and Diocesan Chancellor like Placa who was also an Episcopal Vicar, and Monsignor James McNamara, a former priest personnel director. McNamara was succeeded in 1994 by Monsignor Frank Caldwell.¹⁸⁷

As part of Placa's operations in the Intervention Team, Placa and Alesandro were "listed as 'of counsel' on the letterhead" of a law firm run by George Rice, who served as the Diocesan attorney between 1970 and 2005. According to Rice, they were added because "it was the only way the two could obtain malpractice insurance."¹⁸⁸ Rice, who was a "close personal friend" of both Placa and Alesandro, reportedly also "worked closely with local priests to establish many of [Long Island's] Catholic parishes and parochial schools" and also "served on the board of Catholic Health Services ... and served on the board of St. Charles Hospital."¹⁸⁹

The Intervention Team's approach to priestly sexual abuse reportedly treated abuse as a short-term behavior issue rather than one of psychology and criminal activity. Robert Fulton, the former director of priest health services in Rockville Centre, told Newsday that the Panel "did not seem to buy into the disease model, that these priests were sick and needed help." Instead, "they treated it as a moral lapse." Placa told Newsday that the church was "**not law enforcement**" and that its responsibility "is not to determine whether or not what someone says happened." Placa believed that the Church's role was "twofold - to provide help to the alleged victim and to arrange for the immediate psychiatric evaluation of any priest against whom a credible allegation was brought." Placa said that the panel would recommend removal for any priests that were shown through evaluation to be a danger and claimed that no priests who were returned to ministry ever abused again.¹⁹⁰

Between the Intervention Team's official formation in 1992 and its eventual disbanding by Bishop Murray in 2002, Placa was personally involved in managing hundreds of sexual abuse allegations and investigations against Church officials. Despite a thorough review of public reporting on these cases, however, it isn't clear that Placa ever once notified authorities of an offending priest. In fact, a 2002 report from Newsday said that Placa admitted in an interview that "**he never would have referred a complaint to police.**"¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁸⁶ Newsday, August 5, 2005

¹⁸⁷ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁸⁸ Newsday, June 12, 2005

¹⁸⁹ Newsday, June 12, 2005

¹⁹⁰ Newsday, June 2, 2002

¹⁹¹ Newsday, April 30, 2002

Throughout the 1990's, New York news media covered case after case that Placa and his team were involved in handling and resolving. In nearly every case, Placa's actions demonstrated his unwavering commitment to protecting Church interests by challenging the credibility of victims, pressuring victims and families into low-dollar settlements and nondisclosure agreements, and shielding offender priests from accountability by shuffling them back and forth between psychiatric evaluations and other parishes.

- In 1993, Placa received a complaint from Kathy Lotten, who learned that the priest who abused her teenage son in Kings Park in the late 1970's had been appointed as pastor at a new parish. Lotten said that Placa was "kind of oily," saying "he was very articulate and used a lot of big words, which I felt was to intimidate me." Lotten added, "One in particular I remember was, **'if this priest is guilty he's guilty of ephebophilia,'** which is abuse of an adolescent rather than a child." According to Lotten, Placa said **"Are you aware that the statute is way out?"** and reportedly told her that she couldn't sue. Lotten said he also didn't disclose that he was an attorney, stating, "I wouldn't swear to it, but I do not remember him saying that he was an attorney. If he was there as an attorney, then I should have had an attorney." The outcome of the priest is unknown.¹⁹²
- In 1994, Placa himself made a \$25,000 settlement with Patchogue, New York abuse victim Raymond Trypuc, who was also an "admitted drug addict who had dropped out of therapy." Placa claimed he made the deal "after being advised to do so by Trypuc's therapists," but "officials at the centers that treated the man say their files don't reflect that and they doubt it happened." Placa's choice to give \$25,000 to a suffering addict led to a predictably tragic outcome when Trypuc was found dead of a cocaine overdose only weeks after receiving his settlement.¹⁹³
- Carlo Ciliberti filed a lawsuit in 1994 alleging that Rev. Jerry Chasse at St. Luke's Parish in Brentwood abused him from the age of 12 to 17. The suit was dismissed, however, because it was filed outside the statute of limitations. When Ciliberti later asked Placa for help paying for his counseling, he said that Placa made him feel "victimized all over again," and that Placa's position "was to always not believe what I was saying and to stick up for the Church." Ciliberti recalled that, "In one phone call, he said to me after I told him about Chasse, **'What the ---- do you want me to do about it?'**" Rather than resolving or healing the issue, Ciliberti said that Placa "made it worse. I had to beg for everything. He just wanted me to settle and be quiet. He made me suffer even worse." According to a 2002 Newsday article, Chasse left Long Island in the late 1970's for Montana, and a Diocesan spokeswoman stated that officials "lost contact with him."¹⁹⁴
- In 1994, Placa met with Pat McDonough, a former religious educator and columnist for the Long Island Catholic newspaper, who was convinced a boy would soon commit suicide because of Reverend Joseph Mundy's "unrelenting" sexual advances. "The 14-year-old former altar boy told her during a religious retreat that Rev. Joseph Mundy had confided how lonely he was, how difficult celibacy was, and how the two of them needed each other." When McDonough told Placa she believed Mundy was grooming the boy for sex and asked how Placa would handle it,

¹⁹² [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/20/nyregion/20placa.html)

¹⁹³ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁹⁴ Newsday, June 3, 2002

she recalls Placa responding, **“My job is to protect the Bishop.”** When McDonough then asked who would protect the boy, “Placa looked away from her and lit a cigarette.” The boy’s mother eventually went to Placa, who reportedly never told her of McDonough’s concern. In addition, Placa took the boy aside “for a private chat” during the same visit and “subtly pressured him to back off his account.” Years later, the victim recalled that “the whole conversation was less than two minutes. **He said to me that he knew kids didn’t get much sleep when they went on these retreats, and that was a problem because sleep deprivation could play tricks on one’s mind, isn’t that right?** He never asked me about Mundy.”¹⁹⁵

According to reporting by Newsday, “During the next three years, the man said Mundy became increasingly brazen,” with the priest taking the teen “to the back room of a gay bar where he attempted to sodomize him, bought him pornography and plied him with vodka as he begged for sexual favors.” The victim told Newsday that later, when he brought a younger friend with him to Mundy’s Wading River parish, Mundy sodomized his friend in the rectory while he was singing in the church next door. Years later, the victim expressed his anger at being ignored by Placa. “Placa had good reason to believe that something was going on, and he didn’t ask me a thing.” He noted, “I think he wanted to make sure I wasn’t going to say or do anything. And once this passed, it opened the floodgates, because Joe [Mundy] thought it was safe.”¹⁹⁶

In analyzing the Mundy case, further details demonstrate how deft Placa was in manipulating investigation to render “credible allegations” into less effective insinuations through opaque and differing interpretations. In its reporting on Placa’s involvement with the Mundy case, Newsday noted that Diocesan spokeswoman Joanne Novarro “said she was told Mundy’s file contains no accusation at all of sexual abuse – by McDonough or anyone else,” and stated that McDonough’s complaint about Mundy only references “confusion of roles, imprudent behavior and spending too much time with young people.” Novarro even stated that “McDonough was asked straight out: ‘Do you have any suspicion of sexual abuse?’ and she replied, ‘absolutely not.’” When asked about this characterization, McDonough dismissed it as “preposterous.” According to Newsday, McDonough said, “No way could Alan come away from our meeting saying that I was not making allegations of sex abuse. I was very clear about that.” As of 2002, Mundy had resigned from the Wading River parish and was on indefinite leave of absence from the Diocese. The victim, however, continued to suffer from “panic attacks and paralyzing bouts of rage.”¹⁹⁷

- In 1995, Daryl McNicholas filed a sexual harassment lawsuit in federal court against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Center and the St. Vincent De Paul Roman Catholic Church. The lawsuit claimed that Reverend Joseph Hickey fired him from his role as music director of the church after he refused Hickey’s sexual advances. McNicholas, who is gay, claimed in court papers that after the priest encountered him while he was out with friends at a gay bar in Manhattan, “Hickey began a repeated pattern of uninvited sexual overtures, conversations, innuendo and invitations to engage in sexual activity.” McNicholas also charged that Hickey “engaged in slander by falsely accusing McNicholas about missing and damaged church property.” According to Newsday, Placa, who was identified as “a Vice Chancellor for the Diocese,” said that “he investigated the sexual harassment charges” and “concluded there was

¹⁹⁵ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁹⁶ Newsday, June 3, 2002

¹⁹⁷ Newsday, June 3, 2002

no sexual harassment,” and defended Hickey, who he said was “a priest for almost 30 years” that “had no previous complaints against him.”¹⁹⁸

- In 1996, Linda Moraitis’ son Matthew told her that Reverend Brian Brinker acted inappropriately with him during a trip to California. She reportedly told the police of the encounter and told Placa. According to Newsday, during a visit to Moraitis’ home, Matthew recounted to Placa that “Brinker offered him wine on the flight and rubbed his stomach.” The priest would later go to allegedly ask Matthew to “take off his bathing suit before going into a jacuzzi” and also “to watch pornographic movies,” requests that Matthew had to rebuff and avoid in part by locking himself in his room. Moraitis said that the Nassau police did not act because “the alleged incident happened outside their jurisdiction,” and that when she followed up with Placa, he told her “Brinker had been sent for psychiatric treatment.” But six years later, as the priest abuse scandal became national news in the spring of 2002, Moraitis learned from Bishop William Murphy himself that Rev. Brinker’s psychiatric report had “nothing in it that would preclude Brinker from working as a priest.” Brinker was finally suspended from acting publicly as a priest after an April 2002 after his story was covered in Newsday.¹⁹⁹
- In 1997, Placa met with 23-year-old Matthew Mosher and his therapist. Mosher told Placa that he “had been repeatedly molested” by Reverend Angelo Ditta from the age of nine in the priest’s bedroom “at a parish rectory in Selden.” According to Mosher, during his visits to Ditta’s room, “the priest would ask him to massage his feet, would masturbate in front of him, fondle him and get in bed naked with him.” Mosher stated that Ditta’s abuse abruptly stopped when he was 14, when Mosher thinks he “got too old for him.” Placa, who later confirmed that he met with Mosher, reportedly began paying Mosher and his mother’s therapist bills, but did not notify law enforcement or offer any details to the Moshers on how Rev. Ditta would be handled. According to Newsday, Diocesan records show that “Ditta was sent away for six months of therapy, before being allowed to return and continue working as a priest.” Five years later, following a wave of national coverage of the priestly abuse scandal and a statement from Bishop William Murphy that there were no “credible” allegations against any active Long Island priest, the Diocese officially removed Rev. Ditta from active duty. In reacting to the news, a Suffolk district attorney told Newsday that the allegations “might have been prosecutable had the Diocese reported them” when they were made. “The district attorney’s office should have been notified in 1997,” Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota reportedly said. “The case might have been prosecutable then.” Spota added, “This Diocese seems to think they will decide what is a crime and who is a criminal, and that is just not their function.”²⁰⁰
- In March 1997, Judith Cajigas and Patricia Hastings filed a lawsuit against Monsignor John Mott, accusing him of repeated molestation at St. Raphael’s parish school in the 1950’s when they were members of youth groups he oversaw. Placa was mentioned in news coverage of the lawsuit, telling Newsday that he had not yet been served with the lawsuit but noting that Mott underwent psychiatric evaluations after a similar lawsuit against him in 1994. Placa reportedly told Newsday, **“We’ve had Mott evaluated three separate times and have no reason to believe he poses a threat to anyone.”** Even after Mott died in 1999, victims continued to come forward, including one in 2019 who said her father alerted the Church to her abuse as early as 1995.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Newsday, October 26, 1996

¹⁹⁹ Newsday, January 25, 2005

²⁰⁰ Newsday, April 3, 2002

²⁰¹ Newsday, March 13, 1997; longisland.news12.com, February 21, 2019

Five years later, a racketeering lawsuit was filed against the Diocese of Rockville Centre claiming that Placa “conspired” with Cajigas and Hastings to secretly settle their abuse claims against the Diocese and deprive the firm representing them of \$100,000 in legal fees. The Diocese said the suit was “the first Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO, suit” brought against it. Gary Viscio, the lawyer who brought the suit, defended it as warranted because “the Church has engaged in a pattern of concealing criminal conduct to protect the priests” and was “maintaining bank accounts for the purpose of quietly paying off victims/complainants.” The Church confirmed that “the Diocese did agree in the past few months to make payouts to the women but said there was no intent to deceive or make secret deals.” The suit reportedly stated that the Diocese agreed to pay \$150,000 to each woman, “of which \$48,000 would be a lump sum payment and the remaining amount would be an annuity” and that the women in exchange “agreed to release the Diocese from any future liability and agreed to a nondisclosure agreement.” According to *Newsday*, Viscio charged that Placa “took advantage of the clients’ state of mind and willingness to resolve the issue” when he pushed a settlement, and “told our clients don’t come back to us and assigned them an attorney.” According to court papers, Cajigas at the time had not received her initial payment, and when she asked the attorney “recommended by Placa to help her get the money,” she was told that the unidentified attorney “couldn’t help her because of the attorney’s ‘close relationship with Placa.’”²⁰²

- In August 1998, a Kings Park family reacted with shock when the parish pastor who allegedly abused her son 20 years earlier reportedly shared a “considerably watered down” version of the story to a Michigan congregation. Reverend Thomas DeVita admitted “at three consecutive masses that he had had a sexual relationship with the 16-year old.” DeVita, who at the time was “still a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Center,” reportedly told parishioners, “Let me sincerely assure you that I am not a pedophile,” and claimed that he “befriended” the teen with a friendship that “was good, wholesome, enjoyable and supportive, but at one point our emotions got the upper hand, and we crossed the line on a few occasions.” DeVita, who “admitted to ‘sexual misconduct’ but said it was consensual,” reportedly “underwent a psychiatric evaluation as required by the diocese’s policy for personnel accused of sexual abuse.” In *Newsday*’s 1998 report on the issue, Alan Placa was quoted, stating that DeVita was judged fit to return to his duties after six months of psychiatric treatment. “It was his decision to leave Long Island,” Placa stated, adding that “We would have reassigned him here” and that **“we have full confidence that he’s a threat to no one at this point.”** Placa also told *Newsday* he had “spoken with the woman and with her son and had offered the son counseling, which he declined,” and added that there “was no financial settlement in the case.”²⁰³
- In 2000, Donna Nichols brought an abuse claim against Reverend Nicholas Unterstein, claiming that she and her sister were “repeatedly abused as teenage girls” at a Huntington Station parish thirty years prior. A State Supreme Court justice “dismissed the claims brought by Nichols as being too old, but allowed the case to go forward because a priest in a neighboring parish, whom Nichols had told of the abuse, improperly disclosed it in a letter.” Nichols was then offered a “small settlement” by the Church. She refused it, and then contacted Alan Placa because of his role handling abuse cases for the Diocese. Nichols said that she was “yelling and yelling that what they were offering me was absurd” and told him that she planned to go to the

²⁰² *Newsday*, June 7, 2002

²⁰³ *Newsday*, August 29, 1998

media. According to Nichols, Placa called her attorney John Aertakis and “quadrupled the settlement amount,” which Nichols said reached into the six figures. “They didn’t negotiate on the abuse,” said Nichols. “They negotiated on the threat of it getting out to the general public.”²⁰⁴

- In May 2000, Reverend Andrew Millar, a 69-year-old retired priest with more than three decades of service in Long Island parishes, sodomized a 15-year-old mentally disabled boy in a public restroom at Tobay beach. The boy, who “told his father he had to use the restroom and walked over to the pavilion alone,” was in the stall when Millar “entered the stall and sodomized” him, according to the police. When the father became concerned and entered the stall to find Millar with his son, Millar fled. The boy’s father and a bystander ultimately chased and caught Millar, and then “held him until the police arrived.” Placa was quoted in press reports of the assault saying that Millar had “admitted himself to an unidentified mental facility off Long Island, where he had been seen by psychiatrists,” and that if Millar didn’t go to jail, the Church would “provide whatever financial help to keep him at a supervised facility.” Placa also stated, **“You just have to be heartbroken when a child is hurt in any way at all,”** and told the Daily News that “this is the first time a Diocesan priest has been arrested on a sex charge.” Indeed, police stated at the time that Millar “had not been arrested before,” but a 2002 Newsday report revealed that Robert Fulton, the former director of priest health services in Rockville Centre, said that Millar’s problems with “alcohol, anxiety and sex were flagged in the mid-1990’s,” but that “the priest did not get intensive help until a former alter [sic] boy came forward in 1999 to accuse the priest of molesting him either years earlier.” The priest was reportedly sent away for treatment and subsequently asked to retire, but Newsday noted that Millar continued to offer Mass at St. Peter & Paul in Manorville after retirement without disclosing his history.²⁰⁵

In April 2002, Bishop William Murphy announced that Placa’s three-priest Intervention Team was being disbanded and replaced by a “more diverse” panel according to the Associated Press. The announcement noted that Placa would be going on sabbatical and was taking leave “to work on a book he had been planning,” and would be named a parish pastor upon his future return.²⁰⁶

SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PLACA

In early 2002, the Boston Globe published a deeply researched investigative piece that revealed a far-reaching effort by the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston to suppress sexual abuse allegations and protect priests from accountability. Bishop William Murphy, who was appointed the Bishop of Rockville Centre in 2001, had previously served as “the No. 2 official in Boston from 1993 to 2001,” and reportedly “helped arrange early retirement for the most notorious of the abusive priests, Father John Geoghan.” According to Salon, “After Geoghan was sentenced to prison for molestation in February 2002, the Archdiocese revealed that it had settled 100 civil suits on Geoghan’s behalf, and also gave law enforcement the names of 90 priests accused of abuse.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Newsday, July 2, 2002

²⁰⁵ Newsday, July 19, 2000; Daily News, May 17, 2000; Newsday, June 3, 2002

²⁰⁶ Associated Press, June 14, 2002

²⁰⁷ salon.com, June 22, 2007

As a result of Bishop Murphy's close involvement with the unfolding scandal in Boston, the investigation "spilled over into Long Island." According to Salon, as public outcry began to rise, "officials on Long Island subpoenaed the records of the Rockville Centre Diocese, and Bishop Murphy turned over internal files on accused priests to law enforcement in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties in March 2002." Salon reported that the district attorney in Nassau County subsequently stopped their investigations after concluding "that the statute of limitations had expired on all reported incidents." In Suffolk County, however, officials "convened a special grand jury to investigate specific allegations of abuse and how the diocese had dealt with them." Within just a couple months of the grand jury investigation launching, however, Placa was identified by the media as one church official involved in the scandal: not just as an investigator, but as an alleged abuser.²⁰⁸

In June 2002, just a few months into the grand jury investigation in Suffolk County, Newsday published allegations of sexual abuse against Alan Placa for the first time. Richard Tollner, an Albany mortgage broker, attended St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary in Uniondale during the time Placa served as the dean of discipline. Tollner "said he told prosecutors he had his first encounter with the priest in January 1975, on a day that classes were out, and the teen had come in to help make banners for a Right to Life march in Washington, D.C." Tollner recounted to Newsday that Placa "**pulled out some posters in the deserted administrative area as if to show him something, and then began fondling him – all the while making conversation about the posters.**" Tollner reportedly stated that the incidents repeated monthly for a year and a half, noting that "it was always groping. **He'd draw his hand deliberately to the inside of my thigh, over my penis. It would go on for four or five minutes, sometimes as long as 10.**"²⁰⁹

Tollner's allegations were reportedly supported by Kevin Waldron, a high school friend, who told Newsday that Tollner confided in him after one incident. Waldron asserted, "This isn't a figment of his imagination 25 years later," adding, "He told me about it shortly after it happened. I'm certain of it." In response to Tollner's allegations, Newsday reported that Placa "unequivocally denied any sexual misconduct complaints were ever brought against him." He did not deny knowing Tollner, and instead could actually recall him, describing him as "**a troubled kid, very emotional, who would fly off the handle easily.**"²¹⁰

Newsday reported in the same article that another student, who wished to remain anonymous, made strikingly similar allegations against Placa. The student "said he described to Suffolk prosecutors what he called "**the newspaper drill.**" The man stated that Placa "always had a New York Times in his office" and would "sit down next to you on the couch in his office and open it wide and, **inevitably, his hand would brush your crotch.**" Placa "did it over and over again, I can't tell you how many times," said the man, who added that "he felt so violated that he wrote Placa an unsigned letter 20 years later, blaming him for his loss of interest in pursuing the priesthood."²¹¹

The mention of Suffolk county prosecutors in Newsday's June 3, 2002, story about Placa provided an early public sign that some kind of investigation was unfolding, and the two stories quickly merged. According to Newsday, Tollner said that he was contacted by the Suffolk County district attorney's office "the day the story appeared" and subsequently made arrangements "to appear before a Suffolk County grand jury investigating the diocese's handling of abuse cases," noting also that he was told the Nassau investigation "was going beyond the scope of sex abuse and into financial irregularities." Days later, the

²⁰⁸ salon.com, June 22, 2007

²⁰⁹ Newsday, June 2, 2002

²¹⁰ Newsday, June 2, 2002

²¹¹ Newsday, June 2, 2002

New York Post confirmed that “Nassau DA Denis Dillon’s spokesman Rick Hinshaw said the probe began after a news story earlier this month about Richard Tollner” and another man’s allegations against Placa.²¹²

Ten days after Newsday’s report on the allegations against Placa, Rockville Centre Bishop William Murphy announced that he had stripped Placa of his priestly rights. According to Newsday, “Murphy said he took the action immediately after being notified by the Nassau district attorney’s office that Placa was under investigation for sexual abuse.” In his public statement on the move, Murphy said he had “taken Alan Placa’s faculties away like everyone else against whom an allegation is made.” The action reportedly meant that Placa could “no longer say mass, hear confessions or delivery any of the other sacraments.”²¹³

The following January, Placa’s name appeared in the press attached to allegations of sexual abuse once again. The Daily News reported that a priest convicted of sodomizing a 13-year-old Long Island Boy said that Placa used church insurance money to “buy silence” from people, and also accused Placa of abuse. According to the Daily News, Reverend Michael Hands stated during a revealing deposition that Placa **“had authority on some level to take \$50,000... that he could get this from the diocese, from their insurance department, and use that pay off someone who had claimed that they were victimized by him.”** Hands said that “the settlement itself would say that the issue did not involve sexual misconduct,” because Placa “very shrewdly covered that up.” Hands stated that Placa would avoid any mention of sexual misconduct and said instead that the issue “involved a drunken driving claim against Placa.”²¹⁴

The following month, approximately eight months after Placa’s suspension, the 180-page report was released to the public in February 2003. A total of 97 witnesses reportedly testified during the Suffolk County grand jury’s nine-month investigation into specific allegations against Rockville Centre priests and the Dioceses’ handling of them. The jury’s final report uncovered “deception and intimidation” by Diocese officials overseeing the management of sexual abuse complaints, and declared that the evidence “clearly demonstrates that diocesan officials agreed to engage in conduct that resulted in the prevention, hindrance and delay in the discovery of criminal conduct by priests.”²¹⁵

The Suffolk County grand jury report did not name specific priests, and instead assigned titles such as “Priest A” and “Priest B” to each priest investigated. The Associated Press reported that “Placa is not named in the report, but can be identified as ‘Priest F’ through biographical details.” The report described in vivid detail how Placa moved accused priests between locations, intentionally withheld his status as a lawyer for victim families, and deployed a “carefully orchestrated plan” through the Intervention Team to simultaneously protect the diocese and silence victims. The report included internal church correspondence and memos revealing Placa’s boasting to other church officials that their **“system” was “in place and working well.”** As proof, he cited that Rockville Centre had the **“lowest ratio of losses to assets of any diocese and the lowest ratio of losses to numbers of priests in any diocese in the country.”** He even highlighted that his method has been used outside of the Diocese in nearly 200 priest abuse cases nationwide.²¹⁶

²¹² Newsday, June 14, 2002

²¹³ Newsday, June 14, 2002

²¹⁴ Daily News, January 4, 2003

²¹⁵ Associated Press, February 20, 2003; salon.com, June 22, 2007

²¹⁶ Newsday, February 10, 2003; Associated Press, February 20, 2003

Placa's inclusion in the report was not limited to his role in overseeing the management of sexual abuse complaints, however. The report also included evidence of sexual abuse from the testimony of three alleged victims. According to Salon, the report states that "in Priest F's first assignment, **he appears to have made feeble attempts at abusing a boy who was an alter [sic] server.**" The report states that Priest F "pulled up a chair next to the boy and put his right hand on his thigh. Slowly his hand began to creep up towards the boy's genital area. Alarmed, the boy covered his crotch. The conduct repeated itself within a week." The report stated that Priest F was transferred to a school after his first assignment, and that he "was cautious, but relentless in his pursuit of victims. He fondled boys over their clothes, usually in his office. Always, his actions were hidden by a poster, newspaper or a book."²¹⁷

The report stated that "**Everyone in the school knew to stay away from Priest F,**" and detailed that two alleged victims complained to the school's rector about his behavior. It noted that the victims had "suspicions, later confirmed to be correct" that Priest F was abusing a fourth boy. One victim later told Priest F, "Don't ever fucking touch me again or I'll kill you," an exchange that was witnessed by another boy. In one heartbreaking statement, one victim recounted that when he tried to report the abuse from Priest F, "the response I had gotten from my family, from my parents specifically was, that's impossible ... Priests just don't do these things. You must be mistaken."²¹⁸

The fallout from the Suffolk County grand jury report was far-reaching. Placa agreed to an interview with the New York Times, where he alternated between passionate defense of his role in sexual abuse investigation and angry denial of the allegations of impropriety, deception, and abuse against him.²¹⁹

- Placa defended his original three-priest "Intervention Team" model as "sound" and said he "saw no difference" in the new model, a "three-member team that includes a priest, a nun and a former police chief" that Bishop William Murphy installed in the place of Placa's team. According to Placa, "The model is skill sets: legal, clinical and church administrative." He added, "**I don't think there's any difference at all, unless you assume that priests are untrustworthy.**"²²⁰
- Placa told the Times that he "conducted the initial investigation of most of the allegations of abuse by priests," adding that "in every case, he offered to arrange counseling for the alleged victims – whether he believed they were telling the truth or not" and that priests were "immediately removed" from their assignments for an evaluation "in every case." Placa also claimed that "**the vast majority of cases, 95 percent of cases, were outside the statute of limitations,**" suggesting that there was no chance at accountability or resolution in the first place. The Times noted that Placa's voice was "rising in disbelief" as he stated, "**everyone came to me because I was the bishop's representative. They knew that. Not only did they know it – it wasn't something that was slipped over on them – it's what they asked for.**"²²¹
- Placa also claimed that "he played no role in reassigning priests" and "rarely kept track of an accused priest once he had completed the evaluation." According to the Times, Placa said "the

²¹⁷ salon.com, June 22, 2007

²¹⁸ salon.com, June 22, 2007

²¹⁹ nytimes.com, February 20, 2003

²²⁰ nytimes.com, February 20, 2003

²²¹ nytimes.com, February 20, 2003

dioceses sometimes ignored his advice to have all priests evaluated at facilities with no connection to the church.”²²²

- On the charge that his dual role as priest and lawyer confused and misled victims and families, Placa called the controversy a “red herring,” claiming that “if he had identified himself as a lawyer, people might have mistakenly thought that he handled litigation on abuse cases, which he did not.” According to Placa, “If I had identified myself as a lawyer,” he reportedly asked, **“what would they have done differently? Not told me their troubles?”**²²³
- Placa said the grand jury report “left the impression he was omnipotent within the church,” but that the “perception of power was overblown.” He claimed that “many priests despised him” as a result of the role he played in investigations but that “he had no choice.” Placa told the Times that if alleged victims admitted their claim was “made up,” he would apologize to the priest and ask for their forgiveness. He reportedly said, “However, suppose you try the other direction. I come to you, I say this kid says you did this. You say ‘I did not,’ and I say, ‘I believe you.’ And two weeks later you molest another child. **Who the hell is going to go to that kid and say, ‘I’m sorry?’**”²²⁴
- Placa told the Times that the Diocese “did make mistakes” but “categorized them as being in the ‘If I knew then what I know now’ vein.” However, when the Times asked Placa to “cite one mistake that he personally made,” he recalled “a complaint about a priest who frequently invited children to listen to music in his room in the rectory.” The Times said that “Monsignor Placa interviewed the children and the priest, and determined that nothing untoward was happening.” However, Placa said “he told the priest and his pastor that these get-together were not ‘wise.’” Placa then stated, **“as a matter of fact, I now find out that he was apparently sexually abusing kids.”**²²⁵
- In response to the specific allegations that he groped students through their clothes, Placa told the Times that “he was especially outraged to see himself included in the ‘Priests as Perpetrators’ section” of the report” which also included detailed allegations of child rape and a priest taking a minor to a sex club. Placa reportedly described the allegations against him “in a sarcastic tone” as “a clumsy attempt to abuse by touching someone’s thigh.” He then stated, **“Give me a break! Let me tell you something. My hand up to God, I didn’t do any of those things! But if that were true, does that belong in there?”**²²⁶

In the wake of the grand jury report release in February 2003, some might have expected Placa’s role in the church to be more marginalized than ever. In truth, Placa continued to serve on the Board of Directors for Fidelis where he continued to guide its expansion and growth for the Church, even though his priestly rights had been revoked. The same month that the grand jury report was released, it was revealed that Placa had also been working in a new role since August 2002, as a consultant for a legal firm owned by his closest friend, the former mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani.²²⁷

²²² [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

²²³ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

²²⁴ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

²²⁵ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

²²⁶ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](#)

²²⁷ Canadian Press, February 1, 2003

PLACA AND GIULIANI: A LIFETIME OF LOYALTY

Alan Placa first met Rudy Giuliani at the then all-male Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn, where he, Giuliani, and future deputy mayor Peter Powers would form a lifelong friendship. The three reportedly shared a “sense of morality and righteousness,” formed an opera club together, and even went on group dates together. Placa recounted to the New York Times years later, “**After we'd drop off the girls, Rudy and I would spend hours in the car or walking down the sidewalks, debating ideas: religion, the problems of the world, what we wanted to be.**” Placa and Giuliani were even together the moment they learned of President Kennedy’s assassination after taking exams one day. “We burst into tears,” Placa later recalled, “then we ran up the hill to the chapel to pray.”²²⁸

After high school, Placa attended Manhattan College with Giuliani and Powers, where the three also pledged Phi Rho Pi fraternity and stayed close friends. Placa edited the college’s newspaper and reportedly gave Giuliani a weekly political column, where he defined John Kennedy as ‘great and brilliant,’ Barry Goldwater as an “incompetent, confused and sometimes idiotic man,” and described the writings of a John Birch Society extremist as the “disgusting, neurotic fantasy of a mind warped by fear and bigotry.” After he lost a 1963 class election for junior class president to classmate Jim Farrell, an infuriated Giuliani allegedly coordinated a smear campaign with Placa against Farrell the following year. Placa printed a fake letter in the paper accusing Farrell of “manipulating the books of the 1962 Freshman Ball” while he was campaigning for student council president, causing him to lose the election. Though Placa insisted publishing the letter was an innocent mistake, Farrell and former Phi Rho Pi fraternity brothers say that the group were behind the campaign. It would be the first of many times that Placa and Giuliani would help each other out of precarious and questionable circumstances.²²⁹

Giuliani has said that he and Placa considered earning doctoral degrees together, “sitting somewhere, developing ideas and thoughts” as “practicing philosophers.” Ultimately, though, Placa chose to enter the seminary, while Giuliani and Powers decided to enter law school.²³⁰ Even as adults, however, Giuliani and Placa maintained an intimate friendship. During the 1980’s, Placa reportedly stayed at Giuliani’s Manhattan’s Upper East Side apartment “**at least one night a week, where the two still “talked about poetry, theology, and politics well into the night.**” Before entering seminary, Placa dated Giuliani’s second cousin Regina Peruggi, who Giuliani then later began dating himself. When Giuliani married Peruggi in 1968, Placa served as Giuliani’s best man.²³¹ Fifteen years later, when Giuliani was a U.S. Attorney and Placa was a rising official in the Long Island Diocese, Placa helped Giuliani secure an annulment of his marriage from the Catholic Church “on the grounds that he and Regina had failed to obtain a dispensation that the church would have required because of their blood relationship.” A year later, Giuliani married Donna Hanover, a Miami television journalist he met on a business trip, in a ceremony officiated by Placa. Placa also officiated at the funeral of Giuliani’s father in 1981 and the baptisms of both of Giuliani’s children.²³²

As Giuliani rose in political prominence, Placa remained a common source of quotes and statements about his lifelong friend. During a 1985 episode of the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, Placa said of Giuliani, “I think that one of his great gifts, in fact, is his ability to invite perfection from others. Rudy has a gift for

²²⁸ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/20/us/politics/20placa.html); Boston Globe, November 8, 2007; [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/2007/06/22/giuliani/); Daily News, May 13, 1997; [rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/album-reviews/alan-placa-2020-01-21/)

²²⁹ Daily News, May 13, 1997

²³⁰ [nytimes.com, February 20, 2003](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/20/us/politics/20placa.html); [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/2007/06/22/giuliani/)

²³¹ [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/2007/06/22/giuliani/); Boston Globe, November 8, 2007

²³² Boston Globe, November 8, 2007; [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/2007/06/22/giuliani/)

attracting people to himself. He has a gift for making you interested in what he's interested in. **His enthusiasm and curiosity are contagious. It's like sparks flying from a fire.**" In a 1987 interview with the New York Times about Giuliani's consideration of a run for Senate, Placa who was referred to as Giuliani's "dearest friend," said, **"It would be a wonderful model, to show that an honest man of modest means can run for office."**²³³

Placa and Giuliani's closeness continued even after Giuliani became mayor of New York City. After winning election in November 1993, Giuliani installed Placa on his transition team as part of a social services panel. Placa, who at the time was serving as Monsignor in the church and as the health chief of the Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, joined the panel in recommending a new chief of the Human Resources Administration. Even as Placa's prominence grew during the 1990's with repeated mentions in stories about investigations of priestly abuse, he remained a close confidant of the Mayor. When Giuliani learned he had prostate cancer in 2000 and dropped out of a Senate race against Hillary Clinton, Placa was quoted by the Times telling them "it's been a dramatically challenging time." After the September 11 attacks on New York City, Placa was quoted in Time Magazine's article naming Giuliani Person of the Year, saying he knew Giuliani from the age of 13 and that the attacks had "made him face his mortality and his immortality."²³⁴

Placa's lifetime of loyalty to Giuliani finally bore its most valuable fruit in 2002, when accusations of sexual abuse and investigative malpractice put Placa in the spotlight.²³⁵ That June, two months after Placa's Intervention Team was disbanded and he released a statement that he would be going on sabbatical, the Church announced it had stripped Placa of "his right to function as a priest" after being notified that Placa was under investigation by the Nassau district attorney's office for sexual abuse.²³⁶ In February 2003, the same month the Suffolk County grand jury report was released, a reporter made contact with Placa at Giuliani Partners, where he claimed he was **"merely visiting."** A spokeswoman for Giuliani confirmed days later that Placa was actually working "as a consultant" for the firm "about three days a week" and had been doing so since August 2002, just two months after losing his priestly rights. Giuliani defended hiring Placa and told the Times **"Alan Placa is one the finest people I know. He's one of the people I admire most in the world, and if most people did half the good that Alan's done, the world would be a wonderful place."** A spokesperson for Giuliani's firm described him to reporters as "a very prominent guy and an incredibly learned and able man," and praised him effusively, stating "he has training as a lawyer, he's bilingual, and he also ran the Catholic health services."²³⁷

The release of the Suffolk County grand jury report led to calls for Giuliani and his firm to cut ties with Placa, but Giuliani remained loyal to Placa and kept him on staff. In December 2003, public reports surfaced of "continued discontent" regarding Rockville Centre Bishop William Murphy's decisions, and it was revealed Bishop Murphy had granted Placa permission to preside over funeral masses for his mother and Giuliani's mother, despite being under investigation and having his pastoral duties stripped. Laura Ahern, the head of an advocacy group fighting child abuse and an advisor to Bishop Murphy at the time on the sex scandal, said that the Bishop's authorization for Placa to conduct mass was "completely outrageous" and a "smack in the face to the victims," adding that she believed the Bishop should resign.²³⁸

²³³ MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, September 10, 1985; [nytimes.com, December 3, 1987](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/12/03/us/politics/1987-12-03)

²³⁴ Newsday, November 26, 1993; [salon.com, June 22, 2007](https://www.salon.com/1997/06/22/)

²³⁵ Newsday, June 14, 2002; Canadian Press, February 1, 2003

²³⁶ Newsday, June 14, 2002

²³⁷ [nytimes.com, June 15, 2002](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/15/us/politics/1987-12-03); [baltimoresun.com, February 2, 2003](https://www.baltimoresun.com/2003/02/02/); Canadian Press, February 1, 2003

²³⁸ Canadian Press, February 1, 2003; Canadian Press, December 16, 2003

Two years later, Bishop Murphy faced outcry over Placa once again. An August 2005 article from Newsday reported that Placa was listed “in residence” in a parish bulletin at St. Aloysius in Great Neck. Voice of the Faithful, a Catholic lay group, wrote a letter to Bishop Murphy that noted that the listing implied that Placa was a priest in good standing and charged the Murphy was “not honoring his promise that no priest with a credible allegation of sexual abuse would serve in pastoral ministry.” According to Newsday, Bishop Murphy’s spokesman Sean Dolan said Placa “was abiding by the terms of his suspension by not celebrating Mass in public or wearing his Roman Catholic collar,” and was “not presenting himself as a priest in public,” although Dolan did admit that the bishop had given Placa “permission to say some funeral Masses.” Newsday reported that Voice of the Faithful pointed out, “the front-page listing, with a phone number under his name, invites the public to contact him.” The group’s co-director Dan Bartley asked, “How is that not representing himself as an active priest and how is that not representing himself as being active in ministry?”²³⁹

Despite the continued public outcry and waves of press coverage, though, Giuliani stood by Placa’s side. During Giuliani’s run for President in 2007, his lifelong relationship with Placa became a source of controversy, as commentators questioned his decision to employ and protect a known defender of sexual abusers who was also under investigation for abuse himself.²⁴⁰ When victim advocacy groups called on Giuliani to fire Placa from his firm, he refused, and released a statement stating that he believed “Alan Placa has been unjustly accused.”²⁴¹ The same year, Placa donated \$1,000 to Giuliani’s presidential campaign, and listed Giuliani’s firm as his employer.²⁴² Later that year, Placa was photographed with Giuliani and his third wife, Judith Nathan, during a trip to Rome.²⁴³

THE CANONICAL TRIAL AND VATICAN CLEARANCE

Between June 2002 and December 2009, despite the funeral Masses he had been permitted to say and his continued service on the Fidelis Board of Directors, Placa’s public status as a priest was technically suspended. But on December 5, 2009, Newsday reported that Placa had been “cleared by the Vatican” of the sexual abuse claims against him. Newsday reported that Placa “was found not guilty at a canonical trial” of the allegations brought against him in June 2002 by Richard Tollner, and that “the Vatican made the ruling after a long investigation that included a trial before a church tribunal in the Diocese of Albany.” Placa’s case was also reportedly “reviewed by Rome’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.” The clearance from the Vatican meant that Placa’s priestly faculties were fully restored, allowing him to “again wear his collar in public and celebrate Mass and other sacraments.” The diocese went even further in a public statement, noting that the Vatican instructed it to do whatever it could “to restore his good name.”²⁴⁴

In the days that followed, further details emerged of the secretive process and canonical trial “conducted in secrecy” that “traces its roots to at least the 12th century” and unfolded as part of the church’s investigation into the allegations against Placa. In interviews with Tollner, witnesses, and even one of the judges that participated in the trial, Newsday revealed what occurred at the trial. According to Newsday, “A ‘promoter of justice,’ who is a canon lawyer trained in Catholic law, serves as a kind of

²³⁹ Newsday, August 5, 2005

²⁴⁰ Newsday, June 23, 2007

²⁴¹ Newsday, June 23, 2007

²⁴² Newsday, July 14, 2007

²⁴³ rollingstone.com, January 21, 2020

²⁴⁴ Newsday, December 5, 2009

district attorney who prosecutes the case on behalf of the church. An advocate, also trained in canon law, acts as the defense counsel. Judges replace juries (as they do in many nations worldwide).”
Newsday also noted that in the trials, “the notion of ‘moral certitude’ trumps ‘beyond a reasonable doubt.’”²⁴⁵

Newsday provided a detailed account of how Placa’s trial unfolded. “The judges’ deliberations lasted months, but the trial’s in-person testimony took place over three or four days in a third-floor conference room at the Diocese of Albany’s headquarters. Albany hosted the proceeding because canonical trials on sex abuse allegations cannot take place in the priest’s home diocese.” According to Newsday’s reporting on official correspondences provided by witnesses, “besides [Rev. David] Berberian [an Albany priest], the other judges were Msgr. Michael Fitzgerald, who heads the church court system for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and the Rev. John Donovan of the Diocese of Syracuse, where he once served as vocations director. All are canon lawyers.” The three judges “sat on one side of a large, rectangular conference table” across from “15 or 16 witnesses who appeared separately and never saw each other.” Newsday reported that those witnesses “included people who went to school with Tollner, at least one other man who said he had been assaulted by Placa - and Placa.” In addition, “to the witnesses’ left was the ‘promoter of justice,’ the Rev. James Donlon, head of the Office of Canonical Services for the Diocese of Albany. To the right was the advocate, Charles Renati, an attorney from California specializing in canon law who has defended other priests in sex abuse cases.” Newsday also noted that a stenographer “sat in a corner.”²⁴⁶

Tollner told Newsday that the experience made him feel “railroaded,” saying, “It was a very one-sided trial... It was some sort of show.” According to Newsday, Tollner “said the morning of his testimony began with ‘sweet talk’ from the judges to break the ice. Then they asked him to tell his story.” Tollner “began by recounting an incident in January 1975 at the now-defunct St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary in Uniondale. He said school was closed, and he and other students were making signs in the gymnasium for an upcoming Right to Life march. Placa came in and suggested he follow him down several hallways to the deserted administration offices. There, Tollner said he told the judges, Placa fondled him.” According to Newsday, Tollner “went on to recount other allegations of sexual molestation in Placa’s office” that were also detailed in the 2003 grand jury report from Suffolk County.²⁴⁷

In response, Tollner told Newsday, the judges “questioned him on specifics of the school’s layout. At one point, they produced a blueprint to check his answers. He says they told him he was right about the school’s layout.” Newsday reported that Berberian, the lead judge, refused to comment on specific statements made at the trial, but “cited contradictions among those testifying on Tollner’s behalf and said some people important to the case did not offer testimony.” Tollner was also questioned by Renati, Placa’s defense attorney, who reportedly asked Tollner “if he was sure he didn’t provoke any behavior by Placa.”²⁴⁸

Newsday reported that Tollner’s brother James said he had a similar experience testifying. When he told the judges that Richard told him about the abuse around the time it allegedly occurred, “they were asking questions like, ‘Why didn’t your mom do anything about this?’ What I told them was my father died unexpectedly of a heart attack [around the same time].” Newsday said James added, “It was almost like they were trying to blame us that we didn’t bring it up in the past.” Richard Tollner told

²⁴⁵ Newsday, December 13, 2009

²⁴⁶ Newsday, December 13, 2009

²⁴⁷ Newsday, December 13, 2009

²⁴⁸ Newsday, December 13, 2009

Newsday that he left the trial feeling “exhausted,” and Newsday reported that Berberian, the head judge, “said he was also wearied by the trial – a complex proceeding made more stressful because the stakes here high for the church.” According to Newsday, Berberian said, “We get scared when these trials come up. This was the worst experience of my life.”²⁴⁹

According to the New York Times, after the three-person tribunal came to a decision, their finding was delivered to the Vatican for review by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “headed by Cardinal William J. Levada, the former archbishop of San Francisco.” The Times reported that the group “keeps watch over church doctrine” and has “also been responsible for overseeing investigations into priests accused of sexual abuse.” The Vatican’s review “confirmed the finding” of the Diocese of Albany’s tribunal, an announcement that rendered the decision “final and definitive.” The Rockville Centre Diocese subsequently announced Placa was “now permitted to exercise priestly ministry freely in the Roman Catholic Church.”²⁵⁰

The Church’s announcement created an uproar, generating protests and statements of outrage, calling the decision “callous and reckless.” Victims’ group The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) issued a statement that read in part, “While not surprising, it’s still heartbreaking to see that a victim deemed credible by virtually everyone else [...] is deemed not credible by a couple of Vatican bureaucrats thousands of miles away.” In response, diocese spokesman Sean Dolan accused SNAP of “smearing a man found to be innocent,” and called their statement “hateful of the church and disrespectful of the men who have given their lives in service to Our Lord and who minister day after day to the People of God.”²⁵¹

In a protest outside St. Agnes Cathedral soon after Placa was cleared by the Vatican, Tollner confronted Bishop William Murphy during a protest. Surrounded by people who “held signs accusing Murphy of protecting Placa,” Tollner reportedly said to the Bishop, “I’d like to know how Alan Placa was cleared.” Murphy reportedly replied, “I don’t know... because it’s out of my hands.” According to Newsday, security officers grabbed Tollner’s arm and moved him away from the Bishop. Former Nassau County district attorney Denis Dillon reportedly stopped by the protest “to apologize for not being able to do more to help” regarding Placa, reportedly telling Tollner that, by 2002, “we didn’t have the evidence to charge him with a crime.” Bishop Murphy later offered to meet with Tollner, an offer Tollner rejected. According to Newsday, Tollner said Murphy “had seven years to answer and help and listen, and he never responded.”²⁵²

PLACA TODAY

Placa receded from public duties after the Church concluded its investigation in his favor, but he continued to serve on the Fidelis Board of Directors until February 2016, according to the organization’s Form 990’s. Even after he formally left the Fidelis board, he participated in the September 2017 meetings as a non-voting Director emeritus, overseeing the final decisions in approving the organization’s \$3.7 billion sale to Centene.²⁵³ Placa also remained employed at Giuliani’s firm after regaining his priestly duties, which he continued to put to use for Giuliani by officiating the 2017

²⁴⁹ Newsday, December 5, 2009

²⁵⁰ [nytimes.com, December 12, 2009](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/12/us/politics/2009-12-12)

²⁵¹ Newsday, December 8, 2009

²⁵² Newsday, December 17, 2009

²⁵³ projects.propublica.org, accessed January 25, 2021

wedding of Giuliani's son Andrew, who worked at the time for the Trump White House as a sports liaison.²⁵⁴ As of January 2021, Placa still lists himself as a Senior Vice President at Giuliani Partners, and his Bar license in New York State lists Giuliani Partners under "business name."²⁵⁵ Despite working there for 18 years, however, it isn't clear what actual work Placa has done for the firm, if any. According to a former Giuliani aide quoted by Rolling Stone in 2020, "I don't know what he did. I don't know what he worked on. He was just there."²⁵⁶ What remains true above all is that even as Placa's career took him from the heights of power in advising Diocesan Bishops to the depths of defending and protecting abusive priests, Giuliani has remained by his side.

As of January 2021, Placa lives in a home on Eagleton Estate Boulevard in the PGA Resort Community of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Placa co-owns the home with Brendan Riordan, the same priest who he has lived and owned property with at eight locations since 1993.²⁵⁷ County property records show that the two purchased the Palm Beach Gardens property in June 2018 for \$476,500.²⁵⁸ As retired priests, Placa and Riordan are no longer assigned to serve at any parish or entity.²⁵⁹

Although none of the allegations made against Placa were ever proven in a court of law, they have not gone away. According to a January 2020 report in Rolling Stone, the allegations against Placa "were revived again in recent months when two former students sued him in previously unreported lawsuits filed in New York Supreme Court." One of those students is Richard Tollner, whose suit alleges he was 16 when "Placa drugged and raped him during a trip to Fire Island, New York, in the fall of 1975." The other suit was brought by Christopher Fernan, who alleges Placa "sexually abused him more than 100 times from 1974 to 1977, including one attempt that occurred onstage during a school play." In the court papers Placa filed in response, he demonstrated his steadfast commitment to protecting church assets, reportedly calling both lawsuits "**an attempt to damage his good reputation, curry favor with the media, and coerce the Catholic church into paying a hefty sum even though it did nothing wrong.**"²⁶⁰

In a twist of irony, though, Placa's stated concern for the Church's assets is perhaps more appropriate now than ever before. The suits brought against Placa in August 2019 in Nassau County were made possible because of the passage of New York's Child Victims Act in January 2019. The law provided Tollner, Fernan, and potentially thousands of other unknown victims the opportunity to bring claims in court against any alleged abuser, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. By removing the statute of limitations, state legislators removed one of the key barriers exploited time and time again by Placa and Church officials across the country to suppress sexual abuse claims against priests.

Since the passage of that law, four dioceses in New York have filed for bankruptcy, including Rockville Center, where Placa loyally served for over three decades. In announcing the Diocese's bankruptcy, Bishop John O. Barres said that Rockville Centre had determined it "was not going to be able to carry out its spiritual, charitable and education missions" in the face of "the increasing burden of litigation expenses." By the time of the bankruptcy filing in October 2020, 223 lawsuits alleging sexual abuse had been brought against Rockville Center Diocese due to the passage of the Child Victims Act.²⁶¹

²⁵⁴ [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), January 21, 2020

²⁵⁵ [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com), accessed January 27, 2021

²⁵⁶ [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), January 21, 2020

²⁵⁷ [salon.com](https://www.salon.com), June 22, 2007; [spectator.org](https://www.spectator.org), November 27, 2007

²⁵⁸ [pbcgov.com](https://www.pbcgov.com), accessed January 25, 2021; [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com), accessed January 25, 2021

²⁵⁹ [bishop-accountability.org](https://www.bishop-accountability.org), accessed January 24, 2021

²⁶⁰ [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), January 21, 2020

²⁶¹ [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), October 1, 2020

How many victims has Fr. Placa deceived? At this time, it is truly unknown how many of the hundreds of lawsuits brought against Catholic Dioceses of New York include victims that once confided in Alan Placa, who might have hoped for his counsel and protection against forces and threats that many of them were too young to understand. If history is a guide, those victims will face a protracted legal battle in bankruptcy court, where Church officials use the same tactics that other Dioceses have employed nationwide to minimize the pool of assets available for victim settlements. Although the passage of the Child Victim's Act may have neutralized the lasting power of Placa's playbook for managing diocesan sexual abuse scandals, his contributions to the building, growth, and sale of Fidelis for the church eventually provided New York's eight Diocesan Bishops a \$3.6 billion lifeline that they control to this day, regardless of the purported insolvency of their individual dioceses. The Catholic bishops with the assistance of priest/lawyer Placa has hidden assets to avoid accountability in the same manner they have hidden sexual offenders.