

## Protecting the Vulnerable: Province Release of Names of Accused Jesuits

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. *What information are you releasing? Whose names are on this list?***

**A.** This list contains the names of the Jesuits who are or were members of the U.S. Central and Southern Province, the former New Orleans Province, the former Missouri Province, or the Region of Puerto Rico of the Society of Jesus, and against whom a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor (a young person under the age of 18) or a vulnerable adult has been made. Also included are the names of Jesuits from other provinces against whom there are credible claims resulting from their work while assigned to this province. Finally, the list includes Jesuits of this province whose names have been published on diocesan websites. It does not include non-Jesuit employees of our schools or parishes; we do not have access to those personnel files.

**Q. *How do you define “sexual abuse”?***

**A.** The province defines sexual abuse as “any external, objectively grave violation of the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor or a vulnerable adult.” This includes not only physical sexual contact or actions but may also include certain verbal behavior. Sexual abuse includes the acquisition, possession or distribution of images of a minor for purposes of sexual gratification. Sexual abuse includes attempts to solicit a minor for sexual purposes with language (spoken or written) even if there is no subsequent physical contact. Sexual abuse also includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for purposes of sexual gratification.”

The province has adopted the principles and directives articulated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, available on our website, which states “the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads:

§1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are:

1o the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

2o the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of fourteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology.”

**Q. *How do you define “vulnerable adult”?***

**A.** A vulnerable adult is any person over the age of 18 who habitually lacks the use of reason and/or is incapable of looking after his or her own rights and interests.

**Q. *What are the criteria for inclusion on the list?***

**A.** Men’s names are included on this list if there is a credible allegation against them. Their inclusion does not necessarily mean they were found guilty of any charge. Many of the allegations received by the province are from decades ago and were reported years after the alleged abuse.

**Q. What do you mean by a credible allegation?**

A. A credible allegation is one in which the provincial believes, with moral certitude, after careful investigation and review by professionals, that an incident of sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult occurred, or probably occurred, with the possibility that it did not occur being highly unlikely. “Moral certitude” in this context means a high degree of probability, but short of absolute certainty.

All allegations are presented to the province’s Review Board which sees both the initial allegation and the results of the investigation. The Review Board offers its judgment as to credibility, which is presented as a recommendation to the provincial, who makes the final decision, as required by the Standards for Accreditation of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. The province’s observance of these standards is certified by Praesidium, Inc., an independent accrediting agency.

**Q. What is a province Review Board?**

A. As required by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the standards of which are adapted for religious men in the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) Standards for Accreditation, the province has established a Review Board whose purpose is to provide consultation to the provincial in addressing all reports of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by current, former and/or deceased Jesuits. The Review Board is comprised of medical, mental health and law enforcement professionals, most of whom are not Jesuits, other clergy or employees of the province. The Review Board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to the provincial.

**Q. Is this list complete?**

A. While we believe this list is complete, it is possible that there is information in our files that we are not aware of. As such, the province has made a decision to have an outside organization review the province’s files from 1955 to the present to help ensure that we have a complete understanding. This organization is comprised of former FBI agents and former law enforcement personnel. They will begin their review in the spring and if their review identifies additional information, it will be presented to our Review Board and a recommendation will be made to the provincial. If the new information results in a finding that an allegation is credible, the list will be updated.

**Q. Why 1955 as cutoff date?**

A. We chose this year at the recommendation of the auditing organization and because 1955 is the date the Missouri and Wisconsin Provinces became separate. This time period will cover the files of all living members and all members who died or were dismissed from the Society after December 31, 1954, as well as Jesuits from other provinces who worked in what is now the UCS Province and for whom we have records. The review period will also include Jesuits dating back to the early 1900s, if the Jesuit was still alive in 1955.

**Q. Why are you releasing this list now?**

A. It is important for us to do this at this moment in time when the People of God are questioning the leadership of the Church. By providing the transparency in decision making they want and deserve, we hope to begin the process of restoring trust. Further, we hope that by demonstrating our sincere desire to amend past mistakes, any other previously unknown victims may be encouraged to approach us for pastoral assistance.

**Q. Why didn’t you release the list sooner?**

A. There are many reasons for not doing this sooner. Foremost was the desire to protect the privacy of victims, most of whom requested confidentiality. Secondly, while we deplore the actions of the offenders, they still have legal rights that we must protect. Finally, over the years, each case was handled individually; there was no master list of offenders. It has taken time to create this preliminary list, and it will take more time for the outside auditors to review our files so that we can make sure we have a final list.



**Q. Are any accused Jesuits still in active ministry?**

- A. No Jesuit with a credible accusation is currently serving in public ministry. Of the current 374 members of the province, four men have had a credible accusation made against them. They have in place specific restrictions appropriate to the accusation against them and are assigned to an appropriate residence where they receive supervision.

**Q. If men had harmed children, why did you reassign them in new locations?**

- A. In many cases, we did not know that men had harmed children until many years later. Men were given new assignments without any awareness of harm that they had done elsewhere.

In other cases, we did know about the accusations and allowed men to continue in ministry or begin ministry elsewhere. This was a failure on our part for which we are gravely sorry. We in the Church handle these situations very differently now than we did before 2002, when the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was instituted. Our awareness of the nature and effect of abuse of minors has changed dramatically over the last 40 years. For example, it was often recommended that men who had abused minors could be safely returned to ministry after receiving treatment. Now we know better.

**Q. Most of these men served in many locations. Were they moved because of accusations against them?**

- A. No. Unlike diocesan priests, Jesuits are not ordained to a limited geographic area such as a diocese. Part of the Jesuit vocation is a willingness to go wherever they are needed. Especially during their initial training, they are sent to a variety of places to learn to serve in a variety of settings.

**Q. If they have a credible allegation against them, why are they still Jesuits?**

- A. Put simply, they are our brothers. Jesuits are committed to continuing to care for their brother Jesuits, even those who have offended by abusing minors. They are removed from public ministry and assigned to a Jesuit community where they are under supervision. They agree to a safety plan that includes avoiding contact with minors. In caring for them, Jesuits also safeguard society by keeping these men out of ministry and supervised in a Jesuit community where they can't re-offend. If they do not adhere to the safety plans designed for them, they can be dismissed.

**Q. What does it mean for a Jesuit to be dismissed from the Society of Jesus?**

- A. Any man who leaves the Society of Jesus, either voluntarily or by decision of his Jesuit superiors, is considered dismissed.

**Q. What is a Safety Plan?**

- A. Safety plans are developed on recommendations made by the Review Board to, and in collaboration with, the Jesuit province. Safety plans define risk reduction strategies, such as a Jesuit's required intervention programs, restrictions such as technology and travel, access by visitors and more. Jesuits are required to sign their safety plan, agreeing to follow its restrictions, and they have a designated supervisor who affirms their adherence to the plan.

**Q. What are you doing to make sure this doesn't happen now?**

- A. Jesuits have a zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between a Jesuit and a minor. Our protocols and procedures have been in place since 2002 when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. These norms have been made specific for religious life by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in its Standards for Accreditation.

The province is accredited by Praesidium, Inc., an organization providing consultation, risk management assessment, policy development, and training materials for use in preventing sexual misconduct and responding to allegations of



sexual misconduct. The province maintains accreditation through regular audits by Praesidium's auditors; these audits ensure the province's observance of the CMSM standards.

In addition, the province has enhanced its screening process for men interested in becoming Jesuits. Before a Jesuit is accepted as a novice, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and an extensive criminal background check.

Our formation program fosters healthy development both in terms of the spiritual life of the Jesuit as well as his psychosexual health and well-being. Jesuits at every stage of their ministry and formation receive regular safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries.

**Q. *What steps has the province taken to ensure that those who apply to become a member of the Society of Jesus are suitable for ministry?***

- A.** This province adheres to and, in some areas, goes beyond the standards set by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). For each candidate, we require the following:
- A completed criminal background check including every jurisdiction where the candidate has resided in the last seven years.
  - A completed national sex offender registry check.
  - A minimum of six references, with at least three personal references and two professional references.
  - Four face-to-face interviews with Jesuits and, in most cases, an additional interview with a lay colleague or a woman religious who has worked with Jesuits. This interview goes into great detail about the candidate's sexual history and family background.
  - A psychological evaluation and psychosexual history conducted by a licensed psychologist or a licensed mental health professional with skills in conducting psychosexual histories and assessing psychosexual health in preparation for a life of celibate chastity.
  - A review of publicly accessible content on all social media, personal blog sites and websites associated with accounts controlled by the candidate.
  - Additionally, vocation directors and formation directors are provided with education to assist in identifying any candidate who may be at risk to sexually abuse a minor.

**Q. *What should I do if I've been abused by a Jesuit?***

- A.** If you or someone you know has been abused by a Jesuit, you are urged to contact the appropriate law enforcement or child-protection agency in the location in which the incident took place.

You are further encouraged to advise the Jesuits by calling Carol Zarinelli Brescia, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, at (314) 915-7168 or at her confidential e-mail address: [ucsoutreach@jesuits.org](mailto:ucsoutreach@jesuits.org). We want to assist with pastoral care if you are open to it. If the victim is currently a minor, we are required to report the incident to civil authorities.

**Q. *What happens when a report is received? What makes it a credible accusation?***

- A.** When an accusation is made against a Jesuit, the province immediately reports it – verbally and in writing – to law enforcement, if it involves the abuse of someone currently a minor. The province fully cooperates throughout the investigation. Upon receipt of an allegation involving sexual abuse of a minor, the accused Jesuit is suspended from ministry pending the outcome of the investigation. The province offers pastoral and therapeutic services to the victim.

If law enforcement decides to pursue a criminal investigation, the province initiates its own investigation only after the one conducted by law enforcement concludes. If there is no criminal investigation, the province immediately initiates its own internal investigation. The results of the province's internal investigation are presented to an independent Review Board comprised of medical, mental health and law enforcement professionals, most of whom are not Jesuits, other clergy or employees of the province. The Review Board helps determine if an accusation is credible and makes its recommendation to the provincial.

No Jesuit who has a credible allegation of sexually abusing a minor is allowed to remain in public ministry.



**Q. *Has the province sought guidance from an independent organization that specializes in the prevention of abuse?***

A. Yes. This province is accredited by Praesidium, Inc., an independent firm that advises organizations regarding the prevention of sexual abuse. The ongoing accreditation process is designed to be rigorous to ensure that the province's practices are consistent with today's standards relating to child protection. The province has achieved accreditation for many years.

**Q. *What training does a member of the province receive regarding the province's Safe Environment Program?***

A. Every member of the province annually completes two units of Praesidium-approved basic training (similar to Protecting God's Children) and signs the province's Code of Ethical Conduct, affirming that he has read and accepts the policies and protocols of the Province regarding abuse. Every year, all members of the province renew their training by participating in "Conversations that Matter," a program mandated by the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, designed to foster within Jesuits a deeper understanding of healthy relationships and awareness of appropriate boundaries.

**Q. *Does the province work with law enforcement to investigate reports of abuse?***

A. The province reports to appropriate child protection agencies, as required by applicable state law. Additionally, the province cooperates with law enforcement regarding investigations undertaken by law enforcement. This has always been our commitment and continues to be so today.

