

JESUITS WEST PROVINCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Jesuits West: Release of Names of Jesuits with Credible Claims of Sexual Abuse of a Minor or a Vulnerable Adult

Q Are any Jesuits who are accused of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult still in public ministry?

A No Jesuit with a credible accusation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult is currently serving in public ministry. When an accusation is received, the accused Jesuit is suspended from ministry pending the outcome of an investigation. If the accusation involves a minor, the Province immediately reports it – verbally and in writing – to law enforcement.

Q Why are you releasing this list now?

A We do so because the People of God demand and deserve transparency. We hope that this act of accountability will help victims and their families in the healing process. Most importantly, parents need to know that their children are going to be safe at church, at school or in any setting which includes Jesuits. We can only be of service to the People of God if people trust us.

Q What are the criteria for inclusion on this list?

A Men's names are included on this list if there is a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. Their inclusion does not necessarily mean they were found guilty of any charge. The list names Jesuits with credible claims of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult dating back to 1950.

The list contains the names of Jesuits who are or were members of Jesuits West Province, the former California Province and the former Oregon Province, against whom a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor (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 Jesuits West or the California or Oregon Provinces; and Jesuits of the former Oregon Province with credible claims already published as part of the Oregon bankruptcy filing. Finally, the list includes Jesuits listed in diocesan bankruptcies or listed by other dioceses.

Q Why are you including names on this list if you say that “their inclusion does not necessarily mean they were found guilty of any charge”?

A Many claims were received after an accused priest was deceased. In those instances, the accused was unable to defend himself or deny the charges. The Province was unable to undertake a thorough investigation. Deceased individuals are included in this list based upon the fact that a credible claim was reported.

Many Catholic dioceses have published lists of accused clergy. In many instances, Jesuits West was not informed of the claims nor did it have the opportunity to conduct an independent review.

Additionally, we are listing the names of all clergy against whom a claim had been filed as part of the Oregon Province bankruptcy proceedings. Those claims were not independently investigated or verified. Consequently, Jesuits West now republishes those lists of names already in the public domain.

Q When did the Oregon bankruptcy occur?

A In 2009, the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus, which encompassed Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, filed for bankruptcy as a result of claims leveled against Jesuits related to sexual abuse of minors. And in 2011, a plan of reorganization was confirmed. Since that time, as part of the reorganization, the Jesuits have posted on their website a list of those Jesuits named in claims filed in the bankruptcy.

Q The list names 111 Jesuits. What percentage of the total number of Jesuits who served in the Province from 1950–present is reflected in that number?

A Over a nearly 70-year period, there have been 111 men with credible claims of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult out of 3,567 Jesuits during that time period, or 3 percent. The actual number of Jesuits in the Province since 1950 is much greater than 3,567 due to the number of Jesuits who served or studied here from other provinces and, therefore, the percent of Jesuits with credible claims is lower than 3 percent. Today, there are seven Jesuits with credible claims, out of 484 Jesuits of the Province, or 1.4 percent. Those men have been removed from ministry and live under supervision in a community that does not serve minors.

Q How do you define a “vulnerable adult”?

A A vulnerable adult is any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially restricts his or her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his or her rights.

Q Is possession of child pornography considered abuse?

A Province policy says that activities involving child pornography constitute abuse.

Q Are all forms of sexual abuse of a minor the same? Why are there no descriptions of the abuse?

A Because any form of abuse of a minor is serious and harmful, we did not differentiate. Further, in some cases it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the abuse, but it is clear that there was some form of abuse. Rather than be uneven in the descriptions, we simply state “sexual abuse of a minor.”

Q The list indicates years associated with the abuse. Is it accurate to assume the abuse was associated with the place where the Jesuit was assigned when the abuse occurred?

A In some instances, it is accurate, and in others it is not. The purpose of this list is not to state specifically the site where the abuse happened but that it happened, the year, and the various places the Jesuit worked so that if there are other victims from those places, they might come forward.

Q If a year is listed, does that mean only one instance of abuse occurred? Or could there be more?

A In some cases, there is just one instance, in others there is more than one. For Jesuits where there is a range of years, it is clear that there was more than one instance.

Q What are you doing to make sure this never happens again?

A Jesuits have a zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between a Jesuit and a minor. Both the California and Oregon Provinces (the predecessor Provinces of Jesuits West) had formal policies in place since the 1990s. In 2002, 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 claims of sexual abuse of minors. The Charter 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. Both the California and Oregon Provinces, as well as Jesuits West, have been following these protocols since 2002.

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 claims of sexual misconduct. The Province maintains accreditation through regular audits by Praesidium's auditors.

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 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 state of their ministry and formation receive regular safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries.

Q Are preventative measures making a difference?

A According to recent data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA), "the clergy sex abuse scandal unfolding in the news today is the same public scandal that erupted with national media reports in 2002 (beginning in Boston)." CARA states that the abuse we're reading about in headlines today most often occurred in the 1960s through the 1980s and that claims of sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the United States have fallen dramatically.

Q What happens when a claim is received?

A When a claim is made against a Jesuit, the Province immediately reports it – verbally and in writing – to law enforcement if it involves the abuse of a minor. The Province fully cooperates throughout the investigation. Upon receipt of a claim involving sexual misconduct with 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. The Province initiates its own internal investigation irrespective of whether a criminal investigation is initiated.

The results of the Province’s internal investigation are presented to an independent lay [review board](#) comprised of professionals from the fields of psychology, law enforcement and human resources. The review board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to the Provincial of Jesuits West, who makes the final determination.

No Jesuit who has a credible claim of sexually abusing a minor or vulnerable adult is allowed to remain in public ministry.

Q Who are the members of the independent 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 (CMSM) Standards for Accreditation, the Province 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, a consultative body to Jesuits West’s Provincial, is comprised of lay professionals from the fields of psychology, law enforcement and human resources. The Review Board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to the Provincial of Jesuits West.

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 Why did the Jesuits return priests to active ministry after claims of sexual misconduct?

A This was a failure on our part for which we have deep regret and are gravely sorry. Before the 2002 Dallas Charter, these cases were handled differently, based on the clinical psychological consensus at the time that men could be rehabilitated with effective treatment. Our awareness of the nature and effect of abuse of minors has changed dramatically. We now know that returning these men to ministry was misguided and wrong. Jesuits West has abolished this practice as part of its zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between a Jesuit and a minor or a vulnerable adult.

Q Are men immediately dismissed from the Jesuits following a credible claim?

A No. This is decided on a case-by-case basis. If a Jesuit is not dismissed, yet credibly charged with abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult, he is sent to live in a Jesuit community on a Safety Plan. Unlike a parish or school community, this is a community that does not serve minors. Jesuits are committed to continuing to care for their brother Jesuits, even those who have credible claims of sexual abuse of minors. In caring for them, Jesuits also safeguard society by keeping these men out of ministry and supervised in a Jesuit community where they cannot re-offend.

Q What is a Safety Plan?

A Safety Plans are developed on recommendations made by the Review Board to, and in collaboration with, the Jesuits West Province. Safety Plans define risk reduction strategies, such as a Jesuit's required intervention programs, restrictions (including technology and travel), access by visitors, and more. Jesuits are required to sign their Safety Plan and agree to follow its restrictions. They have a designated supervisor who monitors their adherence to the plan.

Q Where do Jesuits who are on Safety Plans live?

A Jesuits of the Jesuits West Province who are on Safety Plans live at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California, which is also home to the Province's infirmary.

Q How many Jesuits are there on Safety Plans at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center?

A There are seven.

Q What steps has the Province taken to ensure that candidates to the Society of Jesus are suitable for ministry?

A We take great care screening and assessing applicants to the Jesuits. Before a candidate is accepted as a novice, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and an extensive criminal background check. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) has outlined standards for screening new candidates for membership. This Province adheres to and, in some areas, goes beyond these requirements.

For each candidate, we require:

- A completed criminal background check, including every jurisdiction where the candidate has resided in the last five years.
- A completed national sex offender registry check.
- A minimum of five references.
- Four face-to-face interviews 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 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 training modules 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. In addition, all members of the Province annually 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.

Q What should I do if I have been abused by a Jesuit?

A Anyone who has felt victimized by a Jesuit should contact both Griselda Cervantez, Advocacy Coordinator for Jesuits West, at 408-893-8398 or at her confidential email address, gcervantez@jesuits.org, and appropriate law enforcement and child-protective agencies. If the victim is currently a minor, we are required to report the incident to civil authorities.

Q What firm will conduct the review of files?

A As our primary purpose in releasing this list is transparency, Jesuits West has engaged former FBI Executive Assistant Director, Dr. Kathleen McChesney, and her firm, Kinsale Management Consulting, to oversee a review of our files. As a result of the examination, there may be additional offenders identified. If so, their names will be added to the list.

Q Who are the Jesuits?

A Founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, the Jesuits are a religious order of Catholic priests and brothers. In the United States, there are five Jesuit Provinces. The Jesuits West Province, which was formed in July of 2017 when the former California and Oregon Provinces became one, is comprised of Arizona, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington.