

Bishop Mark Seitz's reflections on the list of members of the clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors in the Diocese of El Paso and his pledge promising healing and hope

January 31, 2019

The Diocese of El Paso publishes this list of priests of the Diocese and priests/brothers belonging to religious orders who ministered in our Diocese since 1950 and who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors.

This is a day which is painful for many, including myself. It is also a day of hope, because I believe this difficult public acknowledgement of the pain suffered by victims will promote healing for victims of abuse, their families, our communities and our Church.

My heart goes out to you who have been victimized by clergy who turned out to be wolves in sheep's clothing. I ache for both the victim-survivors who have courageously come forward and those of you who have never shared your pain. I am hoping those of you who have never reported what happened will now feel assured you can come forward and tell your story without fear.

I pray that this will help relieve you of a burden that you have carried for many years. Please hear this: you are not guilty for things that were done to you. You were a child and a person you trusted abused your trust. You are safe now to share your story. Sharing your story will help you find healing and will encourage others to do the same.

The publication of the list is not the end of a process but rather is a step along the way to what I hope will be a full and complete accounting of all those members of the clergy who served in the Diocese and who sexually abused minors. There are other allegations against members of the clergy whose names are not on this list. These cases are being investigated and, if any of the allegations are determined to be credible, the list will be updated with a supplement. I am driven not only to publish the names of the credibly accused diocesan clergy, but also not to commit an equally unjust act of publishing the name of a cleric against whom a credible allegation has not been made. Please note none of the cases being investigated involve men who are still priests.

I was saddened to see the El Paso list. It contains names of 14 priests who were incardinated to the Diocese, 5 priests who served in the diocese but were incardinated in another, 8 priests who belonged to religious orders serving in the Diocese and 3 names of brothers belonging to religious orders serving in the Diocese. The number of names has been significantly affected by several factors that have to be considered in order to keep the list in its proper perspective:

- While one case of the sexual abuse of a minor is too many, bear in mind that the list covers nearly 70 years. During that time, we have calculated that over 1,000 diocesan priests and priests/brothers belonging to religious orders served in the Diocese of El

Paso. This means that the number of those credibly accused represent between 2% to 3% of the priests and religious who served in El Paso. This percentage is less than what has been estimated in national studies.

- Until August 17, 1982, the Diocese was much larger geographically than it is today because, in addition to including a substantial part of West Texas, it also included most of southern New Mexico. Prior to 1982, the Diocese had many more priests than it does today.
- The Diocese was created in 1914 and consistently suffered from a chronic shortage of vocations. Prior bishops accepted priests from other dioceses who had not been subjected to the careful vetting process now in place. Further, some priests were accepted from the treatment center operated by the Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs, NM with documentation asserting they were fit to return to ministry. Today, the Diocese benefits from research and experience that has changed the approach to sexual predators of minors. A member of the clergy who has been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor is permanently removed from ministry.

The Diocese has not received any report of sexual abuse of a minor that took place since 1999. While the abuse may have happened decades ago, however, I recognize that the pain and suffering from that abuse is felt every day by the victims, their families, our communities and our Church.

Much has been done to improve the response of the Church of El Paso to the sexual abuse of minors. Since 1993 a Pastoral Response Committee, a group of lay mental health professionals, has carefully investigated all allegations of abuse and provided counseling for the victims. The Pastoral Response Committee later became a committee of the Diocesan Review Board, a group of primarily lay people called for by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which was approved by the US bishops in 2002.

The Charter also mandated safe environment training of all clergy and all those, both professional and volunteers, in service of the Church. All children in Catholic schools and those in our religious education programs are receiving training to help them recognize and report inappropriate behavior. In 2014 the Diocese instituted the VIRTUS Safe Environment Program in our Diocese because it is the best resource in the country. Also, the Diocese hired a full time Safe Environment Coordinator.

The publication of names of clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors is a significant and progressive step toward the goal of healing the wounds suffered by victims. Soon, the focus will expand from holding clergy accountable to developing processes to hold bishops accountable for not reporting clergy abuse and failing to remove clergy from ministry when this action should have been taken. I am confident that those structures will soon be in place.

The list you see before you today has been carefully compiled by Diocesan staff and the Diocesan attorney. Further, I engaged a retired El Paso police detective with broad experience, including the investigation of crimes against minors, to review cases involving alleged sexual abuse of minors by diocesan clergy. He has had access to all Diocesan files. I am confident the list contains the names of diocesan clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors.

In the name of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of El Paso I express my deep sorrow for the harm that has been caused to victims and their families. There is nothing I will ever be able to do to take away your pain.

As I have been doing since my arrival as your bishop, I promise and pledge that:

- I can and will provide psychological therapy whenever appropriate.
- I will continue to make myself available to meet with victims and to personally ask forgiveness.
- I will cooperate with law enforcement officials in the prosecution of clergy who abused minors.
- When a substantiated claim is made, I will immediately remove the cleric from ministry. When the Diocesan Review Board finds that an accusation is credible and I have made the appropriate determination, I will permanently remove that cleric from ministry and do all I can to ensure he will not victimize any child in the future.
- I will continue efforts through the VIRTUS Safe Environment Program to build communities that are well trained and therefore safe for minors and vulnerable adults.
- I can assure you that the priests and people of our Diocese will continue to offer prayers and to do penance for victims and their families.
- A Mass of Atonement and Healing will be offered this evening at 7:00 p.m. at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Victim-survivors of abuse of any kind and coming from any source are encouraged to attend. We also invite Catholics and people of good will throughout the Diocese to join us in prayer for them.

I pray that God will bless these efforts and through them to allow Christ's Body the Church to be cleansed and renewed and all her wounded members healed.

Bp. Mark J. Seitz

**DIOCESE OF EL PASO**  
499 St. Matthews  
El Paso, Texas 79907

**January 31, 2019**

**To: Parishes and Members of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of El Paso**  
**From: Bishop Mark J. Seitz**  
**Re: Publication of the names of Roman Catholic clergy against whom credible allegations have been made that they committed sexual abuse of minors within the Diocese between January 1, 1950 and December 31, 2018.**

In conformance with my commitment to transparency in the Church, the governance of the Diocese of El Paso (the “Diocese”) and for the spiritual good and assistance of victims of clerical sexual abuse of minors, the Diocese is publishing the names of Roman Catholic clergy against whom credible allegations have been made that they committed sexual abuse of minors within the Diocese between January 1, 1950 and December 31, 2018.

**Important Information about the geographical boundaries  
of the Diocese before and after August 17, 1982**

Prior to August 17, 1982, the geographical boundaries of the Diocese included the following West Texas counties: El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Reeves, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Pecos, Brewster, Ward and Winkler, and the following New Mexico counties: Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Lea, Lina, Otero and a portion of Sierra. On August 17, 1982, the Diocese of Las Cruces was created by canonical decree. All of the New Mexico counties named above were removed from the Diocese and became part of the Diocese of Las Cruces. After August 17, 1982, many members of the clergy of the Diocese serving in New Mexico elected to remain there and became subject (incardinated) to the newly appointed bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces.

**Identification of Members of the Clergy**

Members of clergy who appear on this list include: ordained priests of the Diocese, priests and brothers belonging to religious orders (e.g. Jesuits, Franciscans, Christian Brothers and others) that served in the Diocese, and extern priests. An extern priest is a priest who was incardinated to the bishop of another diocese and was serving in the Diocese with faculties granted by the bishop.

This list includes only clergy who have been determined, based on credible allegations, to have committed sexual abuse of minors in the Texas part of the Diocese between January 1, 1950 and December 31, 2018 and the New Mexico part of the Diocese from January 1, 1950 to August 17, 1982.

### **Definition of Credible Allegation**

A “credible allegation” is one that the bishop determines there is reason to believe is true after review of reasonably available, relevant information in consultation with the Diocesan Review Board or other professionals. Prior to 1993, the bishop may have made the determination alone or in consultation with others, including professionals. *(Note: In the Diocese of El Paso, from 1993 to 2002, the investigation and review of claims of sexual abuse submitted directly to the Diocese were conducted by the Pastoral Response Committee (PRC) and then presented to the bishop with recommendations for a determination. Reviews conducted by the PRC are included under the term “other professionals” Beginning in 2002, claims of sexual abuse submitted directly to the Diocese were reviewed by the Review Board mandated by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The recommendations of the Review Board were presented to the Bishop with recommendations for a determination. Beginning in 2002, the PRC continued to investigate claims of sexual abuse but the Review Board made the recommendations to the bishop.* A determination that an allegation against a member of the clergy is credible and, therefore, should be published, is not equivalent to a finding by a judge or jury that the cleric is liable for sexual abuse of a minor under civil law or has committed criminal sexual abuse of a minor under the Texas Penal Code unless specifically indicated below. A determination that an allegation against a member of the clergy is credible is a finding by the bishop that the conduct described in a claim constitutes a violation of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Members of the clergy who served in the Diocese against whom allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been made but whose names do not appear on the list**

The Diocese has made a diligent effort to include the names of all clergy against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors within the Diocese have been made since 1950. There have been instances where allegations have been made against a member of the clergy but have been determined to not be credible or not to involve a minor or not to have been committed in the Diocese. The names of members of the clergy who fall into this category are not listed.

Additionally, it is possible that there are members of the clergy against whom allegations were made that they committed sexual abuse of minors in the Diocese but whose names do not appear on the list. Any such omission is likely due to one or more of the following factors: no written report was submitted to the Diocese; a written report was made but no record of the report was kept; a written report was made but cannot be located; a written report was made to a religious order but was not communicated to the Diocese or a verbal report was made to a diocesan official but no record of such report has been found. Any person with knowledge of a member of diocesan clergy whose name is not on the list and who allegedly committed sexual abuse of a minor within the Diocese should report such allegations to the El Paso Police Department by calling (915) 212-4000 and, if the victim is still a minor, to Child Protective Services by calling (915) 759-3947. Additionally, such person should also report the allegations to Ms. Susan Martinez, Victim's Assistance Coordinator by calling (915) 872-8465. The Diocese will promptly investigate the allegations and present the evidence to the Diocesan Review Board for its opinion whether the allegations constitute a credible accusation. The Review Board will make its recommendation to the Bishop who will make the final determination.

**Members of the clergy who served in the Diocese against whom  
claims have been recently made but have not yet been fully  
investigated and evaluated by the Review Board**

The Diocese has received claims from individuals who have alleged that they were sexually abused within the Diocese by members of the Clergy. Some of these claims have been made through lawsuits and some have been made without the filing of lawsuits. These cases are currently being investigated by the PRC and will be presented to the Review Board when the investigations are completed. If any claim is determined by the bishop to constitute a credible allegation, the name of the member of clergy in question will be added to the list through a supplement to be published at a later date.

**Members of the Society of Jesus ("Jesuits") who served in the  
Diocese and whose names appear on a list published by the Order**

On December 7, 2018, the Society of Jesus U.S. Central and Southern Province published a list of Jesuits against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been made. Some of the Jesuits on the list served in the Diocese. The list published by the U.S. Central and Southern

Province is attached to this publication for your reference. The list published by the Diocese includes one of the priests on the Jesuit list (see Attachment No. 3). The Diocese has been informed by the Jesuits that the Order does not have knowledge of any allegation that any other Jesuit priest on the Jesuit list committed sexual abuse of a minor while serving in El Paso. Any person having knowledge of allegations that a Jesuit committed sexual abuse of a minor while serving in the Diocese should contact Ms. Susan Martinez, Victim's Assistance Coordinator by calling (915) 872-8465. The Diocese will promptly investigate the allegations and present the evidence to the Review Board.

**Franciscan Brothers and Christian  
Brothers who served in the Diocese**

The list published by the Diocese includes one Franciscan brother and two Christian Brothers (see Attachment No. 4). The Diocese has been informed by the Franciscan Order and by the Christian Brothers Order that the Orders do not have knowledge of any allegations that any other Franciscan brother or any other Christian Brothers committed sexual abuse of a minor while serving in El Paso. Any person having knowledge of allegations that any other Franciscan brother or Christian Brother committed sexual abuse of a minor while serving in the Diocese should contact Ms. Susan Martinez, Victim's Assistance Coordinator by calling (915) 872-8465. The Diocese will promptly investigate the allegations and present the evidence to the Review Board.

**List of names of members of the clergy against  
whom credible allegations have been made that they  
committed sexual abuse of minors within the Diocese**

The list is arranged in the following order:

- Attachment No. 1: priests incardinated to the bishop of the Diocese.
- Attachment No. 2: priests who served in the Diocese with privileges granted by the bishop but who were incardinated to a bishop of another diocese.
- Attachment No. 3: religious order priests who served in the Diocese with the consent of the bishop.
- Attachment No. 4: religious order brothers who served in the Diocese with the consent of the bishop.

Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz  
Bishop of the Diocese of El Paso

(Arch)Diocese	Title	First Name	Last Name	Religious	Birth Year	Year Ordained	Incardinated to Diocese	Removed from Ministry	Year Retired	Convicted	Status
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**Priests incardinated to the bishop of the Diocese of El Paso**

Diocesan	Rev.	Carlos	Frias		1932	1960	1979		2002		Deceased, 2016
Diocesan	Rev.	Sam	Garcia		1939	1967	1967	1999			Laicized, 2007
Diocesan	Rev.	Lawrence	Gaynor		1903	1941	1941				Deceased, 1978
Diocesan	Rev.	James	Hay		1918	1945	1945				Deceased, 1974
Diocesan	Rev.	Mario	Islas		1944	1970	1970	1988			Inactive
Diocesan	Rev.	Irving	Klister								Deceased
Diocesan	Rev.	Miguel	Luna		1950	1982	1982	2013			Inactive
Diocesan	Rev.	Jaime	Madrid		1942	1972	1972				Laicized, 2007
Diocesan	Rev.	Jesse	Muñoz			1964	1964		1980		Deceased, 1988
Diocesan	Rev.	Richard	Nesom		1939	1979	1979				Deceased
Diocesan	Rev.	Jose	Nieves								
Diocesan	Rev.	Arthur	O'Sullivan		1920		1957				Deceased, 1973
Diocesan	Rev.	Dennis	Tejada		1946	1972	1972				Laicized, 2007
Diocesan	Rev.	John	Tickle		1941	1967	1967	2004			

**Priests who served in El Paso with the permission of the bishop and with faculties, but who were incardinated to a bishop from another Diocese**

Worcester, Mass	Rev.	David	Holley					1977			Deceased
Gayaquil, Ecuador	Rev.	Miguel	Marin		1949	1978					Living
Unknown	Rev.	Emilio	Roure								Deceased
Philippines	Rev.	Marcelino	Santiago		1953	1978					
Unknown	Rev.	Frank	Sierra			1946			1988		

**Members of religious orders who were ordained priests and who served in the Diocese with permission of the bishop**

Religious	Rev.	Santiago	Almaguer	OFM							
Religious	Rev.	Ray	Labate	OSM							
Religious	Rev.	Alfonso	Madrid	SJ		1950					Deceased, 1982
Religious	Rev.	Manuel	Maramba	OSB	1936	1967					
Religious	Rev.	Pedro (Pete)	Martinez	SJ							Deceased, 1996
Religious	Rev.	Aloysius	Ochoa	SJ	1934	1959					Deceased
Religious	Rev.	Guido	Quiroz	OFM	1917	1944					
Religious	Rev.	Franco	Tentori	OSM	1929	1954					Living

**Members of religious orders who were brothers who served in the Diocese with the consent of the bishop**

Religious	Brother	Stephen	Furches	FSC							
Religious	Brother	Kerry	Guillory	OFM							
Religious	Brother	Sam	Martinez	FSC							