

4 Jesuit priests who served in Chuuk, Pohnpei listed with 'credible child sex abuse claims'

Haidee Eugenio Gilbert, Pacific Daily News Published 11:19 a.m. ChT Jan. 28, 2019



Members of the Catholic community gather near the gated driveway leading to the Archdiocese of Agaña chancery, as they prepare to stage a protest in Hagatna, on Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017. The protest was to be held during a meeting between Roland Sondia and Vatican tribunal members at the chancery. Sondia previously announced that he was allegedly sexually assaulted by Archbishop Anthony Apuron in the 1970s when he served as an altar boy at an Agat church. (Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)

Four priests who served in Chuuk and Pohnpei in the 1950s to as late as the 1990s are on a recently released list of Jesuit priests who have had "credible claims of sexual abuse of minors."

The listed priests who lived and worked in the Federated States of Micronesia include:

- Rev. Thomas Denny, who lived and worked at Xavier High School in Chuuk in the early 1990s. He was permanently removed from ministry in 2002, for abuses that happened in the 1960s and 1970s but were reported in 2002 and 2012.
- Rev. John Doolan, who lived and worked at Xavier High School in Chuuk from 1957 to 1960 and worked at the Chuuk parish from 1965 to 1973. He was permanently removed from ministry in 2006 and died in 2008. He admitted to abuses that happened in the 1960s to 1970s, and were reported in 1999.
- Rev. John Garvey, who worked at Xavier High School in Chuuk from 1968 to 1971, worked at Pohnpei in 1974 to 1977, and worked at Kitti Island also in Pohnpei from 1977 to 1978. The list says the accusations were "credible after investigation," after being reported in 2013. The abuses happened in 1977 to 1978. He died in 2011.
- Rev. John T. Ryan, who worked at Xavier High School from 1972 to 1973. He left the Jesuits in 2002. The list says the allegations, which happened in the 1980s to 1990s, were "credible after investigation." They were reported in 2003 and 2014.

The USA Northeast Province Jesuits, which made the list public, administers Catholic schools and parishes in the Federated States of Micronesia.

More: [Clergy sex abuse survivors in Chuuk, Pohnpei sought \(/story/news/2019/01/24/clergy-sex-abuse-survivors-chuuk-pohnpei/2673587002/\)](https://www.pdnnews.com/story/news/2019/01/24/clergy-sex-abuse-survivors-chuuk-pohnpei/2673587002/)

It was released by the province superior, Father John Cecero, "hoping to contribute to healing from the pain and anger caused by clergy sex abuse and the lack of accountability and transparency on the part of church leadership."

Father Dennis M. Baker, current president of Xavier High School in Weno, Chuuk, wrote a Jan. 15 letter to the school's parents and guardians, saying the list includes the names of three Jesuits who lived and worked at Xavier High School at some point.

"According to officials at the Province, none of these allegations involved Xavier students," Baker wrote.

Baker told Pacific Daily News over the weekend that he just learned that a fourth priest, Denny, also lived and worked at Xavier High School in Chuuk “in the early 1990s.”

“The allegation against him does not involve Xavier students. I only learned yesterday that Thomas Denny was at Xavier during the early 90s; otherwise, I’d have included him in my original letter,” Baker wrote in an email.

The law firm of Berman O’Connor & Mann, which is representing dozens of Guam clergy sex abuse plaintiffs, last week started reaching out to those who were sexually abused in Chuuk and Pohnpei’s Catholic schools and parishes “from the 1950s to the present.”

It placed public notices on Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and notices in the FSM may follow, according to Attorney Michael Berman.

Besides Xavier High School in Chuuk, the law firm also is reaching out to those who attended Pohnpei or Ponape Agriculture and Trade School, Pohnpei Catholic School, Saint Cecilia Catholic School in Chuuk, and any Catholic parishes in Pohnpei and Chuuk.

The current president of Xavier High School said the USA Northeast Province Jesuits has had protocols and procedures in place since 2002, as part of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

This is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

“If a claim of sexual abuse should ever be made, we would immediately report the incident to law enforcement. Xavier High School would fully cooperate with the investigation,” Baker wrote.

Cecero, of the USA Northeast Province Jesuits, said the published list “notes criminal and sinful failures in the pastoral care of children. The majority of these allegations were made years or even decades after abuse occurred.”

“Any case of abuse is shocking and a profound failure. Jesuits who have offended can no longer offend. Safeguards put in place since 2002 help create safe environments for everyone,” he wrote.

On Guam, the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases was lifted in 2016. Since then, there have been more than 200 clergy sex abuse claims filed against the Archdiocese of Agana and other defendants.

Reporter Haidee Eugenio covers Guam's Catholic church issues, government, business and more. Follow her on Twitter @haidee_eugenio (https://twitter.com/haidee_eugenio). Follow Pacific Daily News on Facebook/GuamPDN (<http://www.facebook.com/guampdn/>), and Instagram @guampd (<http://instagram.com/GuamPDN>).

More: [Archdiocese of Agana files for bankruptcy to pay off clergy sex abuse claims \(/story/news/2019/01/16/archdiocese-agana-files-bankruptcy-pay-off-clergy-sex-abuse-claims/2578338002/\)](https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2019/01/16/archdiocese-agana-files-bankruptcy-pay-off-clergy-sex-abuse-claims/2578338002/)

More: [21 priests, 7 others linked to church in 200 clergy sex abuse complaints \(/story/news/2019/01/15/21-priests-7-others-200-clergy-abuse-complaints/2567526002/\)](https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2019/01/15/21-priests-7-others-200-clergy-abuse-complaints/2567526002/)

More: [Vatican is now defendant in 3 Guam clergy sex abuse lawsuits \(/story/news/2019/01/15/vatican-now-defendant-3-guam-clergy-sex-abuse-suits/2578021002/\)](https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2019/01/15/vatican-now-defendant-3-guam-clergy-sex-abuse-suits/2578021002/)

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