
XAVERIAN BROTHERS

IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

July 12, 2019

Dear Friends,

Many times in the gospel we read that Jesus' heart was moved with mercy at the sight of people who were suffering. Jesus' deep compassion allowed him to experience their pain. Jesus realized that those suffering were like "sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:35-36.) This scriptural reference has particular meaning for the Xaverian Brothers today.

As religious, the Xaverian Brothers are deeply sorry for the pain caused by the crime of sexual abuse of minors committed by any Xaverian Brother. We regret not being worthy of the trust of young people. We must confess and repent as we ask forgiveness for the actions of 'shepherds' who betrayed this sacred trust and inflicted great suffering. The Xaverian Brothers who have met with victims over the years know firsthand their suffering and hope in some way to have facilitated part of their healing.

Since September 22, 2002 when the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops approved the *Charter for the Protection Of Children and Young People*, we as a Congregation have been moved with compassion to reach out to the victims of sexual abuse by members of our Congregation. We have implemented strict protections for the children in our care – enforced through zero tolerance for violations. We have removed Brothers from active ministry and notified civil authorities and the local Church officials when an allegation is made.

We also established a Review Board of lay women and men with backgrounds in psychology, law, Canon Law, pastoral care and education. The Review Board was charged with the responsibility of helping to determine credibility and to hold the Congregation accountable for its response to each allegation. If the allegation were deemed credible, the Brother was permanently removed from ministry and was given a supervision plan monitored by another Xaverian Brother.

Xaverian Brothers are educators. Our order exists to protect children and help them grow to reach their God-given potential. Our motto, that has guided our Congregation for 180 years, is "in harmony small things grow." Child abuse stands in direct conflict with everything we stand for and believe.

That is why Pastoral Care of the survivors of abuse has been a central concern. Whenever feasible a member of the General Administration has met in person with the survivor to apologize for what he or she has suffered – and in most cases continues to suffer. We have offered – and continue to offer – ongoing pastoral care, professional counseling and support.

The Congregation was one of the first religious orders to be accredited by *Praesidium* an agency that has helped establish standards to provide a safe atmosphere for children and young people. These standards also call for frequent review of what is appropriate in terms of adults relating to youth. All our sponsored schools comply with similar standards established on the diocesan level for safe schools.

The present crisis in our Church calls for constant examination of how we follow Jesus' teaching. Jesus tells us that "if you remain in my word, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." In releasing the names of the Brothers who sexually abused innocent youth, we hope to help the victims with the healing process—theirs and ours. Additionally, by providing honesty and transparency we will ensure accountability.

The Xaverian Brothers want to continue this journey of repentance, transparency, and solidarity with victims as we renew our commitment to our mission "to manifest God's compassionate love to all whom we meet in this journey of life." Please join the Brothers praying for continued healing for those who have been wounded by the evil of sexual abuse.

In Christ, the Healer,



Brother Edward Driscoll, CFX
General Superior