

To the People of God of Western North Carolina

Dear Friends in Christ,

With great sorrow yet abiding hope, the Diocese of Charlotte publishes this list of 14 clergy who have been credibly accused of child sexual abuse within the diocese since it was established in 1972.

It is painful to even try to comprehend such gravely immoral behavior, particularly for those who have carried the burden of sexual abuse by clergy. However, in speaking with survivors and hearing their stories, it is clear to me that making known the names of their abusers can promote healing for them and their families. I pray this step achieves that goal.

This list is the culmination of a process begun more than a year ago in our belief that a full accounting of credibly accused clergy would provide validation for victims and demonstrate our commitment to transparency and accountability. While most of the names on the list were made known years ago by the diocese and others, to ensure this accounting was comprehensive, the diocese engaged independent investigators to review some 1,600 personnel and other historical records dating back almost 50 years.

To all who have been victimized by Catholic clergy, I apologize on behalf of the diocese and express to you personally my heartfelt sorrow for the physical, emotional and spiritual pain you have suffered. You deserved a priest in whom you could place your trust, a model of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Regrettably, it is clear in our history that the Catholic Church – including this diocese – did not fully understand the pathology of child sexual abuse or respond to allegations as aggressively as it could have, as we do today.

While nothing can change the past, in our sorrow we also find hope. The information we present here reflects a clear shift in the way the Church – and this diocese – has addressed the problem of child sexual abuse since 2002, when the U.S. Catholic Bishops adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>).

The Charter mandates zero tolerance, strict accountability standards, and protocols for reporting allegations and preventing abuse in all of our parishes, schools and ministries. Since I became bishop in 2003, I have been fortunate to have the Charter as our guide on this issue.

Please be assured, our file review confirmed that no clergy member serving in our diocese today has a credible allegation of child sexual abuse against him. These men deserve our prayers and our support, for they have endured the long shadow cast by the immoral acts of a few in the past.

Also be assured that all of the accused clergy named on this list have long since been removed from ministry – and most are now deceased. Under the Charter, anyone credibly accused must be removed from ministry until a determination of guilt or innocence is made through government or Church proceedings.

It is also our practice to report all allegations of child sexual abuse to civil authorities for action, independent of our Church adjudication process. We continue to urge people to contact law enforcement directly if they have been victimized. And we are launching an independent hotline to make it easier for people to report suspected cases of sexual abuse or misconduct to us for investigation and Church disciplinary purposes.

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I invite you to read more here (<https://charlottediocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CDC-PRESS-RELEASE-12-30.pdf>) about the information we publish today. Please pray with me that this information achieves the goal of bringing healing to victims. I also ask that you please pray for the Church, and for the Lord to call good and holy priests to serve the People of God in our growing diocese. With the Lord's help, we can continue fostering a safe and supportive environment in our parishes, schools and ministries so that the Church in western North Carolina can help lead future generations to Him.

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Credibly Accused Clergy

Listed below are 14 clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor in the Diocese of Charlotte since it was established in 1972. Summarized are the allegations considered credible (<https://accountability.charlottediocese.org/faqs/>) as a result of action by civil authorities, findings by the diocese's Lay Review Board, or as the result of a comprehensive review of the diocese's personnel and other files by independent investigators in 2019. Included on separate tabs are credibly accused clergy and religious brothers who served in western North Carolina before the Charlotte diocese was established, or were accused of sexual abuse or misconduct elsewhere.

Search Current List

Diocese of Charlotte

Est. 1972

Western North Carolina

Pre-1972

Accused Elsewhere

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Name	Ordination Date	Affiliation(s)	Location(s) of Alleged Abuse*
<u>Donald Philip Baker</u> Left ministry	1980	Diocese of Charlotte	St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Lenoir, N.C.

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Name	Ordination Date	Affiliation(s)	Location(s) of Alleged Abuse*
<u>Charles Jeffries “Jeff” Burton</u> Removed, Deceased	1967	Society of Jesus- Maryland Province (Jesuits)	Youth Ministry Center, Flat Rock, N.C.
<u>Eugene D. Corbesero</u> Dismissed, Convicted, Deceased	1962	Consolata Society for Foreign Missions	Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.; New Jersey
<u>Aloysius Joseph D’Silva</u> Deceased	1961	Diocese of Charlotte	St. Bernadette Catholic Mission, Linville, N.C.
<u>Richard B. Farwell</u> Removed, Convicted	1981	Diocese of Charlotte	Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Salisbury, N.C.; St. Ann Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.
<u>P. Patrick Gavigan</u> Deceased	1953	Diocese of Charlotte	Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Greensboro, N.C.
<u>Adelbert “Del” Holmes</u> Removed, Deceased	1963	Glenmary Home Mission Society	St. William Catholic Church, Murphy, N.C.; Franklin, Ky.; Diocese of Richmond, Va.
<u>Donald J. Joyce</u> Removed, Deceased	1958	Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate- United States Province	Sacred Heart Catholic Mission, Wadesboro, N.C.; Lowell, Mass.

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<u>Michael Joseph Kelleher</u> Retired, Removed, Deceased	1953	Trappist-Cistercian religious order Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Charlotte	Our Lady of the Annunciation Catholic Church, Albemarle, N.C.; Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.; Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Hendersonville, N.C.; Charlotte Catholic High School, Charlotte, N.C.
<u>Peter Tan Van Le</u> Retired, Removed	1973	Diocese of Vinh Long, Vietnam	St. Joseph Vietnamese Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.
<u>Damion Jacques Lynch</u> Removed, Dismissed	1991	Diocese of Charlotte	St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, Boone, N.C.
<u>Justin Paul Pechulis</u> Deceased	1958	Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Charlotte	St. Lawrence Catholic Church (now Basilica), Asheville, N.C.
<u>Donald Francis Scales</u> Removed, Deceased	1955	Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines)	St. Michael Catholic Church, Gastonia, N.C.
<u>Robert Yurgel</u> Removed, Convicted, Dismissed	1996	Capuchin Franciscan Friars-Province of the Sacred Stigmata of St. Francis	St. Matthew Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.; Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church, Charlotte, N.C.; St. Michael Catholic Church, Gastonia, N.C.

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Last updated 02/06/2025

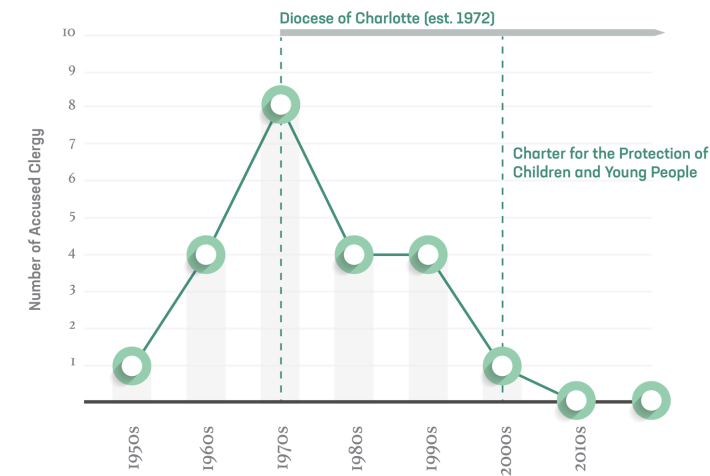
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Abuse Data Over Time

The data below offer additional context for the Diocese of Charlotte's list of credibly accused clergy, tracking incidents and reporting of abuse over time. The diocese's 2019 independent file review confirmed that no clergy member serving in the diocese today has a credible allegation of sexual abuse against him. Alleged abuse in the diocese primarily occurred in the 1970s and steadily declined before dropping off in the 2000s, after the abuse crisis was exposed nationally and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>) was adopted – affirming that its strict prevention and reporting protocols are working.

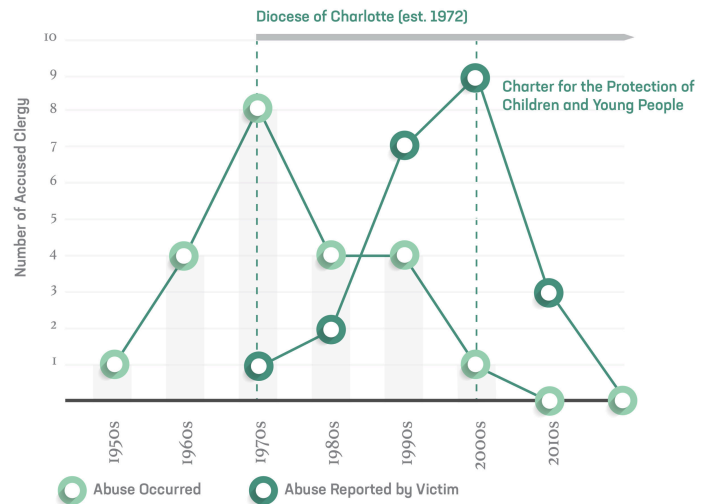
Abuse by Decade

Incidents of alleged child sexual abuse in western North Carolina increased through the 1960s and peaked in the 1970s – reflecting national trends. Abuse rates dramatically fell off in the 2000s after the U.S. bishops adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which put in place rigorous protections and reporting measures.



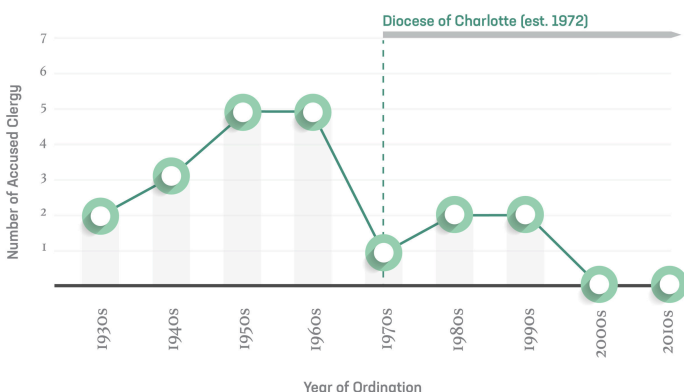
Occurrence vs. Reporting

Alleged incidents of abuse in the Diocese of Charlotte peaked in the 1970s but were not reported until much later, after the abuse crisis was exposed nationally and the Church put in place strict procedures with the 2002 Charter. It requires the Church to report every allegation of abuse to civil authorities for investigation – no matter when the abuse occurred.



Results of Improved Screening

Most of the clergy credibly accused of abuse in western North Carolina were ordained prior to the 1970s, before priestly formation and screening practices in U.S. seminaries and religious orders began to be improved. Now, candidates for the priesthood must undergo thorough screening, training and evaluation as part of their human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. In 2016, the Diocese of Charlotte started its own



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Credibly Accused Clergy Since 1972

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Response to Allegations

Upon receipt of abuse allegations, the Diocese of Charlotte responded swiftly to remove the accused from ministry. In one case, an elderly retired priest was restricted from ministry to minors. In another, the abuse allegation could not be substantiated in 1998 and the accused continued in ministry until he retired in 2002. The case was re-examined in 2019 as part of the diocese's historical file review and deemed credible.



Safe Environment Progress – By the Numbers

The Diocese of Charlotte remains committed to vigilance and transparency so that our parishes,

schools and ministries provide a safe, healthy and productive environment for all of God’s children. Background checks and ongoing training in child abuse awareness and prevention are mandatory for all clergy, Church workers and volunteers, whether or not they interact with minors. Read more about the diocese’s Safe Environment measures here (<https://charlottediocese.org/human-resources/safe-environment/>).

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<u>Andre Anthony Corbin, Jr.</u> Removed, Convicted, Deceased	1961	Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Charlotte	Gibbons Hall for Boys, Asheville, N.C.; Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Brevard, N.C.; Massachusetts
<u>Hugh A. Dolan</u> Deceased	1934	Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Charlotte	St. Pius X Catholic Church, Greensboro, N.C.
<u>John Gallagher</u> Deceased	1947	Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri (Oratorians)	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Monroe, N.C.
<u>John Joseph Hyland</u> Deceased	1942	Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Charlotte	St. Pius X Catholic School, Greensboro, N.C.
<u>William J. Kuder</u> Deceased	1933	Diocese of Raleigh	St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, (former location) west Asheville, N.C.
<u>Edward William Smith</u> Deceased	1943	Glenmary Home Mission Society	Buck Creek, N.C.; Boone, N.C.

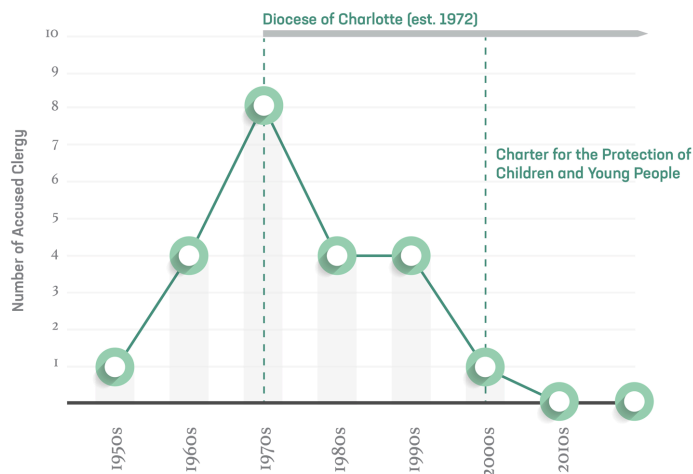
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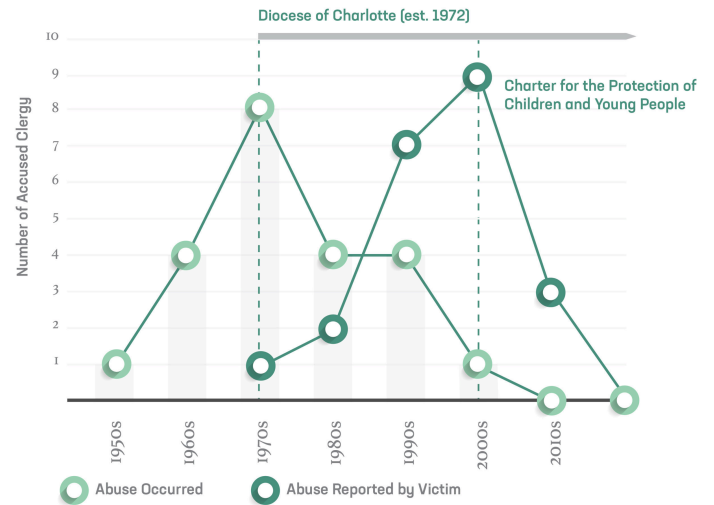


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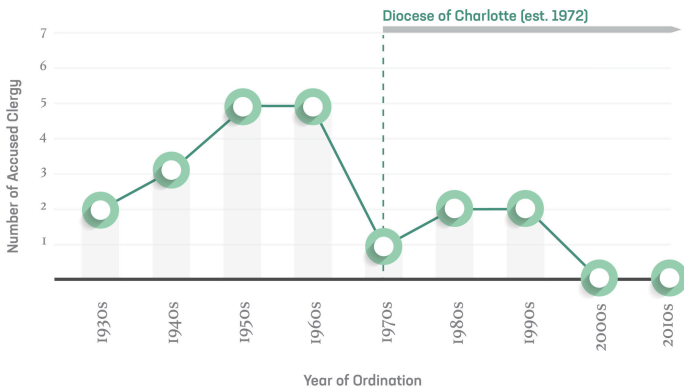
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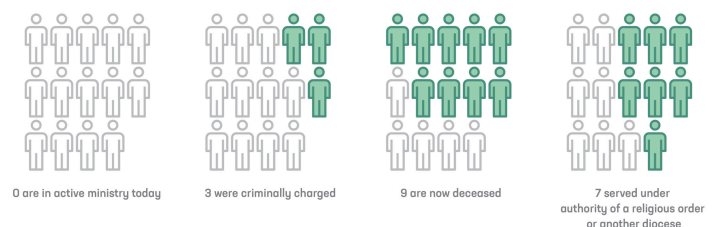
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<u>Al Behm</u> Left religious order	N/A	Glenmary Home Mission Society brother	Kentucky

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<u>George C. Berthold</u> Removed, Deceased	1963	Archdiocese of Boston	Woburn, Mass.; Brighton, Mass.
<u>Louis A. Bonacci</u> Removed, Left religious order	1973	Society of Jesus- Maryland Province (Jesuits)	Columbia, Md.
<u>Francis C. Bourbon</u> Deceased	1957	Society of Jesus- Maryland Province (Jesuits)	Buckingham, Va.
<u>H. Cornell Bradley</u> Removed, Left religious order	1969	Society of Jesus- Maryland Province (Jesuits)	Ocean City, Md.; Washington, D.C.
<u>Juan Carlos Castaño Mejía</u> Removed, Convicted, Deported	1991	Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri (Oratorians)	Rock Hill, S.C.
<u>Hugh Clarke</u> Retired, Deceased	1950	Carmelite Order Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi, Texas
<u>Augusto Cortez</u> Convicted, Dismissed, Convicted	2003	Congregation of the Mission-Eastern Province (Vincentians)	Bushwick, N.Y.; Hampton Bays, N.Y.
<u>Robert B. Cullen</u> Deceased	1958	Society of Jesus- Maryland Province (Jesuits)	Maryland
<u>Richard C. Evrit</u> Deceased	1973	Diocese of Youngstown	Salem, Ohio
<u>Frederick George</u> Left religious order, Dismissed	1975	Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines)	Richmond, Va.

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<u>Anthony Thomas Jablonowski</u> Removed, Convicted, Dismissed	1970	Diocese of Covington, Ky. Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyo. Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio On loan to Glenmary Home Mission Society	Guernsey, Wyo.; Covington, Ky.; Lexington, Ky.
<u>Harold Joseph Johnson</u> Retired, Removed, Deceased	1949	Archdiocese of Boston	Weymouth, Mass.
<u>Patrick F. Leonard</u> Removed, Deceased	1996	Order of St. Augustine-Province of St. Thomas of Villanova (Augustinians)	New York
<u>Gregory J. Littleton</u> Removed	1990	Diocese of Metuchen Diocese of Charlotte	New Jersey
<u>Harold V. McGovern</u> Removed	1970	Oblates of St. Francis de Sales-Wilmington-Philadelphia Province	Delaware
<u>James W. O'Neill</u> Removed	1967	Oblates of St. Francis de Sales-Wilmington-Philadelphia Province	Wilmington, Del.
<u>Kenneth R. Parker</u> Retired, Removed, Deceased	1965	Diocese of Raleigh	Newton Grove, N.C.
<u>Gordon John Pillon</u> Removed, Deceased	1979	Diocese of Orange, Calif. Diocese of Peoria, Ill.	La Habra, Calif.
<u>Peter Raymond Richardson</u> Left religious order, Deceased	1986	Glenmary Home Mission Society	West Liberty, Ky.; Aberdeen, Miss.

* "Location(s) of Alleged Abuse" generally refers to where the alleged abuse took place or the parish where the accused cleric was assigned or serving at the time.

Name	Ordination Date	Affiliation(s)	Location(s) of Alleged Abuse*
<u>John D. Rutledge</u> Deceased	1951	Congregation of the Mission-Eastern Province (Vincentians)	Auburn, Ala.
<u>Robert E. Spangenberg</u> Deceased	1974	Congregation of the Holy Spirit-Province of the United States (Spiritans)	Pittsburgh, Pa.
<u>William Tanguay</u> Removed	1969	Diocese of Providence	Providence, R.I.
<u>Gino Vertassich</u> Left religious order, Deceased	N/A	Glenmary Home Mission Society brother	Connecticut
<u>William G. Ward</u> Deceased	1950	Diocese of Raleigh Diocese of Buffalo	Lackawanna, N.Y.; Niagara Falls, N.Y.

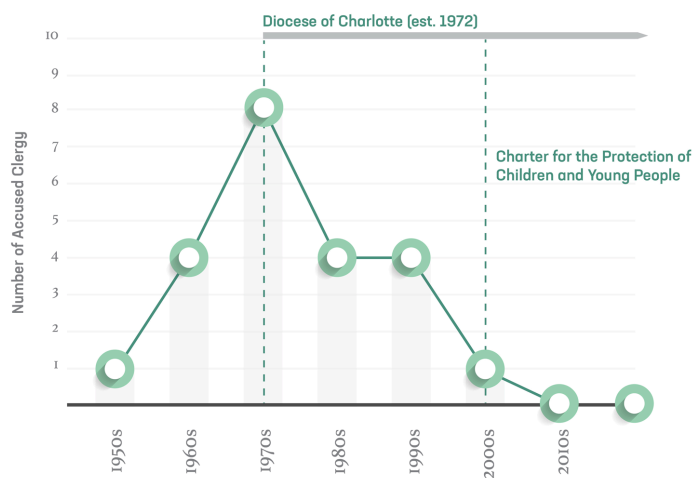
* "Location(s) of Alleged Abuse" generally refers to where the alleged abuse took place or the parish where the accused cleric was assigned or serving at the time.

Last updated 02/06/2025

Additional information identified during the 2019 file review involving clergy listed here has been referred to the diocese's Lay Review Board for further evaluation. This website will be updated as additional relevant information becomes available. For more information on the list, please see the FAQs (<https://accountability.charlottediocese.org/faqs/>). If you have information about child sexual abuse by clergy, please report it to civil authorities and to the diocese using our independent hotline (<https://accountability.charlottediocese.org/report-abuse/>).

Abuse Data Over Time

The data below offer additional context for the Diocese of Charlotte's list of credibly accused clergy, tracking incidents and reporting of abuse over time. The diocese's 2019 independent file review confirmed that no clergy member serving in the diocese today has a credible allegation of sexual abuse against him. Alleged abuse in the diocese primarily occurred in the 1970s and steadily declined before dropping off in the 2000s, after the abuse crisis was exposed nationally and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>) was adopted – affirming that its strict prevention and reporting protocols are working.

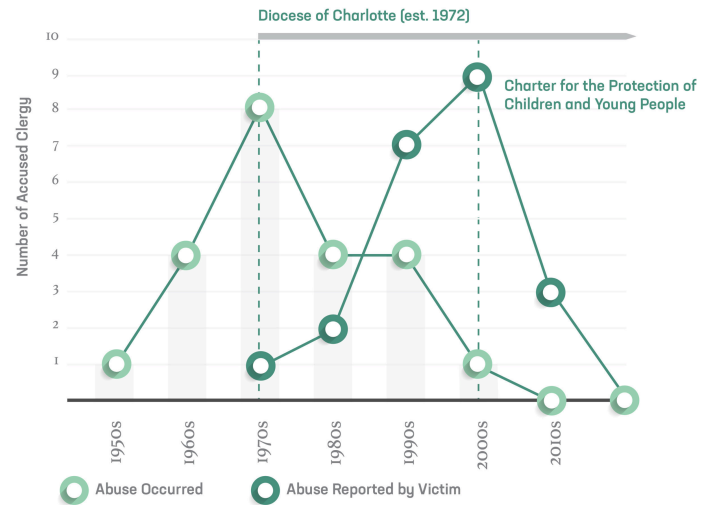


Abuse by Decade

Incidents of alleged child sexual abuse in western North Carolina increased through the 1960s and peaked in the 1970s – reflecting national trends. Abuse rates dramatically fell off in the 2000s after the U.S. bishops adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which put in place rigorous protections and reporting measures.

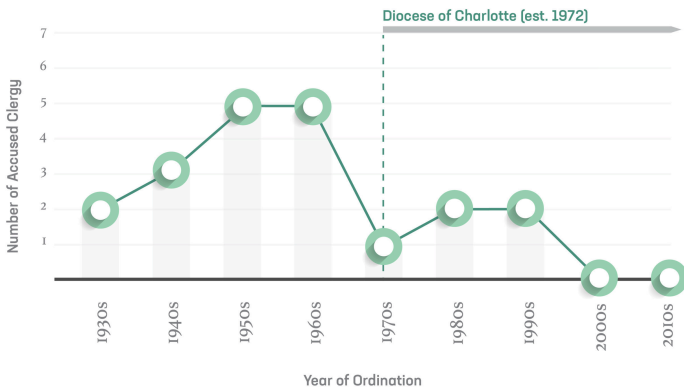
Occurrence vs. Reporting

Alleged incidents of abuse in the Diocese of Charlotte peaked in the 1970s but were not reported until much later, after the abuse crisis was exposed nationally and the Church put in place strict procedures with the 2002 Charter. It requires the Church to report every allegation of abuse to civil authorities for investigation – no matter when the abuse occurred.



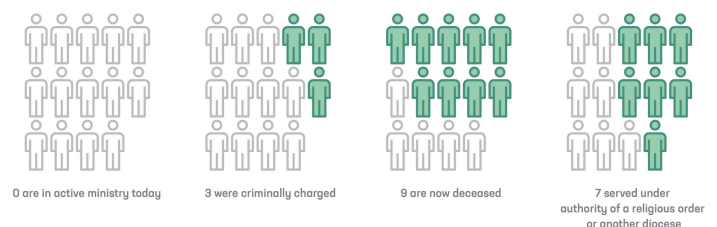
Results of Improved Screening

Most of the clergy credibly accused of abuse in western North Carolina were ordained prior to the 1970s, before priestly formation and screening practices in U.S. seminaries and religious orders began to be improved. Now, candidates for the priesthood must undergo thorough screening, training and evaluation as part of their human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. In 2016, the Diocese of Charlotte started its own college seminary to guide formation of clergy who serve locally.



Credibly Accused Clergy Since 1972

In the Diocese of Charlotte, 14 clergy have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor. Half were clergy assigned here by religious orders or another diocese. Everyone named on the list above was removed long ago from ministry, and 9 are



now deceased. No clergy serving in the diocese today has a credible allegation of sexual abuse against him.



Response to Allegations

Upon receipt of abuse allegations, the Diocese of Charlotte responded swiftly to remove the accused from ministry. In one case, an elderly retired priest was restricted from ministry to minors. In another, the abuse allegation could not be substantiated in 1998 and the accused continued in ministry until he retired in 2002. The case was re-examined in 2019 as part of the diocese's historical file review and deemed credible.

Safe Environment Progress – By the Numbers

The Diocese of Charlotte remains committed to vigilance and transparency so that our parishes, schools and ministries provide a safe, healthy and productive environment for all of God's children. Background checks and ongoing training in child abuse awareness and prevention are mandatory for all clergy, Church workers and volunteers, whether or not they interact with minors. Read more about the diocese's Safe Environment measures here (<https://charlottediocese.org/human-resources/safe-environment/>).

Since 2002



60,000
background checks
on all clergy, employees
and volunteers



53,000
people across the diocese
trained in abuse prevention
and awareness



\$1.3 million
invested in Safe Environment
training programs and
resources for adults and children

