



Children & Vulnerable Adults

March 28, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many are shedding tears these days, including myself, because of the great harm caused to minors and vulnerable adults by priests, deacons and religious brothers. On behalf of the Capuchin Franciscans I must beg your forgiveness for the trust betrayed by our abusive

friars.

So many people have been harmed. There is so much grief: the grief of victims, the grief of families of victims and families of abusers, the grief of scandalized parishioners, and even the grief of priests and friars who are faithful, dedicated servants but who are reeling with the constant disclosures about so many perpetrators. We cannot allow this to ever happen again.

I don't believe that we friars will ever fully comprehend the great harm done to the victims of sexual abuse. I understand that there are people very disappointed with the church for not taking concrete steps to address these terrible crimes. Apologies are not enough. In fact, after a point, apologies sound meaningless, unless accompanied by protective measures. Worse still, apologies may have the effect of opening deep wounds of the survivors.

I hope that people see what positive actions we have taken to prevent this kind of sexual abuse from ever happening again. Many of the steps we are taking are mirrored across this country.

As believing Christians and as ministers of the Gospel of Christ more is expected of us. We must not only be above reproach, we must be instruments of healing in our church and in our world. Franciscans especially are called to be channels of God's mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

We want to reach out to any who may have experienced abusive treatment at the hands of our brother Capuchins. Please come forward and report the abuse if you haven't already. We want to work towards reparation of the harm done. We want to help restore faith in the Catholic Church and in the witness of those who follow the Gospel in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Christopher Papavas, OFM Cap

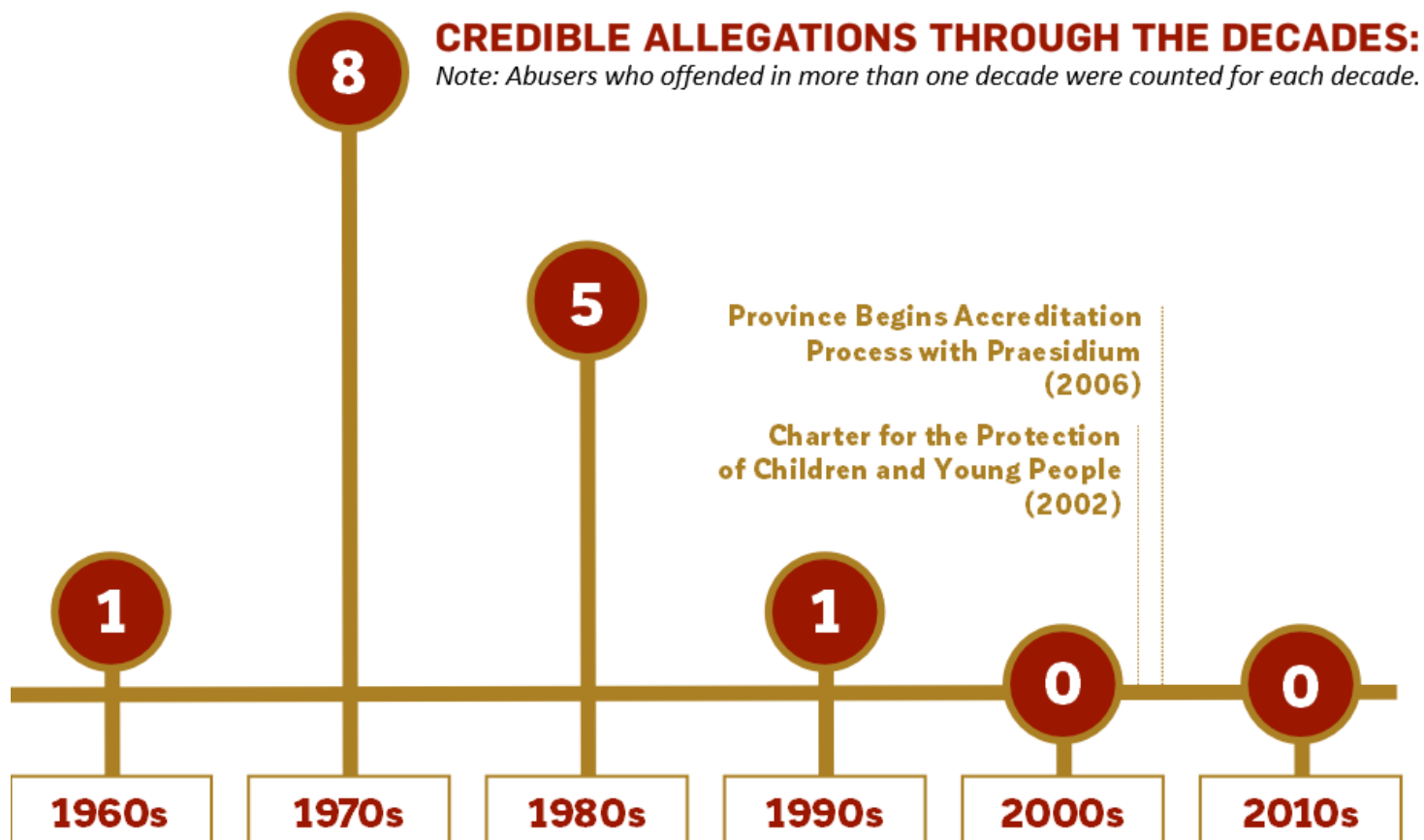
(above is an excerpt from the Provincial Minister's full letter which can be read below)

PRESS RELEASE

AUDIT REPORT

F.A.Q. ARTICLE

PROVINCIAL'S LETTER



The above diagram reflects the number of friars with credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor occurring within that decade.

What have we done TO PROTECT CHILDREN and vulnerable adults?



2002

The Church in the United States experiences a crisis of the sexual abuse of minors without precedent in our times. In response, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) drafts and approves the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**, a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy and includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of further acts of abuse.

At this time, the Province of St. Conrad establishes an **Independent Review Board** comprised of independent, lay professionals in the fields of medicine, law enforcement, mental health, etc., to provide advice and outside expertise in addressing all reports of the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.



2002 – Present

Beginning in 2002, the Capuchin Province of St. Conrad starts implementing an increasingly **strict set of requirements for prospective vocation candidates**, including: an in-depth, 5-7 hour psychological evaluation, including a sexual history review, a national sex offender registry check, multiple criminal background checks, multiple in-depth interviews, including a behavioral assessment, a social media screening, a minimum of five letters of recommendation from specific sources, among many other required screening processes and documents.

In August 2005, the Province of St. Conrad establishes a **Provincial Policy on Sexual Misconduct** which describes the requirements for immediate reporting of suspected sexual abuse and better defines the process of the Independent Review Board.



2006

The Province is accredited by Praesidium, Inc., an organization providing risk management assessment, consultation, policy development and training materials for the prevention of sexual misconduct and appropriate response to allegations.

The Province is regularly updated and audited by Praesidium to ensure the Province's adherence to the standards set forth by the Conference of the Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). The Province's most recent Praesidium audit and update was in late 2017 and the Province was re-accredited for another 5 year period starting in June 2018.

**2014**

The Province establishes a **Response Coordinator position as well as dedicated Victim's Advocates**. The Response Coordinator is a designated friar who works with the victims of sexual abuse, if they are so inclined, to convey the concern of the Province and to obtain additional information about the alleged abuse, in addition to other duties. The Victim's Advocates are non-friar volunteers who assist the victim by assuring that their report will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, keeping them apprised on the status of a report, assisting them with the reporting process and helping to convey their needs and/or questions to the Province.

**2015**

In June 2015, the Province hires a **Safe Environment Coordinator**, Jason Faris. Jason studied history, philosophy and theology at St. Mary's University and St. John's University in Minnesota and spent four years in the seminary studying for the Catholic priesthood. Jason works full-time in the criminal justice field for a local county government. The Safe Environment Coordinator is responsible for receiving reports of alleged sexual abuse, reporting to local law enforcement if it has not yet been done, coordinating with the Independent Review Board, and working with professionals to conduct a thorough independent investigation of the allegation, among other duties.

**2019**

Realizing the need for transparency to ensure justice and bring about healing, the Capuchin Province of St. Conrad contracts an independent group of auditors to conduct **an independent review of all personnel files**. The results of the independent audit are published in a press release dated March 28, 2019. The **full text of the audit can be read here**.



**Provincial
Policy on Sexual
Misconduct**



**A Guide
for Victims of
Sexual Abuse**

2016 CMSM Standards for Accreditation

— Other Helpful Resources —

WATCH

Bishop Robert Barron
asks the big question:
Why Remain Catholic?
*(With So Much
Scandal)*

► **Watch Now**



LISTEN

'The Scandal and the Scouring'. Seeking truth in light of a suffering church.



▶ **Listen Now**

WATCH

Fr. Mike emphasizes what we need to have true reform in the Catholic Church.



▶ **Watch Now**

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