

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## Franciscans from the Province of St. Barbara Releases Names of Friars Credibly Accused of Sexual Abuse of a Minor Since 1950

### Are any Friars who are accused of sexual abuse of a minor still in public ministry?

No Friar with a credible accusation of sexual abuse of a minor is serving in public ministry. When an accusation is received, the accused Friar is suspended from ministry pending the outcome of an investigation. If the accusation involves a minor, the Province immediately reports it to law enforcement.

### Why are you releasing this list now?

We do so because the victims and People of God deserve transparency. We believe we have been transparent, but after recent disclosures elsewhere, we decided to review our files to ensure we are completely forthcoming. We hope that this act of accountability can help victims and their families in the healing process. Most importantly, parents need to know that their children are safe.

### What are the criteria for inclusion on this list?

Men's names are included on this list if there is a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor dating back to 1950. An allegation is deemed "credible" if there is a preponderance of evidence that the allegation is more likely true than not after investigation. Credibility can also be established by conviction in a court, or by the admission of the truth of the allegation by the accused friar. The list contains the names of Friars who are or were members of the Province of St. Barbara against whom a credible claim of sexual abuse of a minor (under the age of 18) has been made.

### How many names with credible claims are included on the list? Of these claims, how many victims are involved?

The list of credibly accused friars since 1950 contains 50 names with 122 victims. Of the men listed, 4 are still living and in their 70s and 80s. These men live in elder care centers in close proximity to friaries. They do not minister in any capacity and are on safety plans.

## Is there a distinction between the forms of sexual abuse of a minor? Are they the same? Why are there no descriptions of the abuse?

Because any form of abuse of a minor is serious and harmful, we did not differentiate. In some cases, especially if the case is very old and the friar is deceased, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the abuse, but records indicate that there was some form of abuse. Rather than be uneven in the descriptions, we simply state “sexual abuse of a minor(s).”

## The list indicates years associated with the abuse. Is it accurate to assume the abuse was associated with the place where the Friar was assigned when the abuse occurred?

The purpose of this list is not to state specifically the site where the abuse happened but that it happened, the year, and the various places the friar worked so that if there are other victims from those places, they might come forward.

## If a year is listed, does that mean only one instance of abuse occurred? Or could there be more?

If there is only one year listed, it means that we received an allegation(s) during that year. There may be other yet unreported allegation(s) from that year, or other years. This list was prepared from the information available in our files. If there was an allegation alleging a multi-year period of abuse involving one minor, it would be reflected a multi-year period and “sexual abuse of a minor”. If there was one year, but multiple minors involved, it would be a one-year period and “sexual abuse of minors”.

## What measures have been put in place to make sure this never happens again?

The first thing the Province has done is to enhance its screening process for men interested in becoming friars. Before a friar is accepted as a novice, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual screening, and an extensive criminal background check. Our formation program fosters healthy development both in terms of the spiritual life of the friar as well as his psychosexual health and well-being. Friars at every stage of their ministry and formation receive regular safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries. Secondly, we have updated our internal policies and procedures. We have ensured all friars understand these policies and procedures, including the mandated reporting requirements. Thirdly, we have strengthened our Province Review Board consisting of lay professionals with expertise in the areas of social science and mental health, law and law enforcement. The Province of St. Barbara has a zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between a friar and a minor. We have had formal policies in place since 1995. In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing claims of sexual abuse of minors. The Charter includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. These standards have been made specifically for religious life by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in its Standards for Accreditation. The Province has been following these protocols since 2005. In the interest of

continuous improvement, the Province updates its procedures and policies from time to time. The Province is accredited by Praesidium, inc., an organization providing consultation, risk management assessment, policy development, and training materials for use in preventing sexual misconduct and responding to claims of sexual misconduct. The Province maintains accreditation through regular reviews by Praesidium's auditors.

## Are preventative measures making a difference?

According to recent data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA), "the clergy sex abuse scandal unfolding in the news today is the same public scandal that erupted with national media reports in 2002 (beginning in Boston)." CARA states that the abuse we're reading about in headlines today most often occurred in the 1960s through the 1980s and that claims of sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the United States have fallen dramatically.

## What happens when a claim is received?

When a claim is made against a friar, the local ministry and/or the Province immediately reports it to law enforcement if it involves the abuse of a minor. The Province fully cooperates throughout any investigation. Upon receipt of a claim involving sexual misconduct with a minor, the accused friar is suspended from ministry pending the outcome of the investigation. The Province offers pastoral and therapeutic services to the victim. If law enforcement decides to pursue a criminal investigation, the Province defers its own investigation until the one conducted by law enforcement concludes. During the law enforcement investigative cycle, the Province fully supports the police in their investigative process. The Province will evaluate the need to initiate its own internal investigation after the law enforcement review is completed. The results of any internal investigation are presented to an independent lay review board (Province Review Board) comprised of professionals from the fields of social science and mental health, law and law enforcement. The review board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to the Provincial of the Province of St. Barbara, Fr. David Gaa, OFM, who makes the final determination. No friar who has a credible claim of sexually abusing a minor is allowed to remain in public ministry.

## Who are the members of the independent review board?

As required by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the standards of which are adapted for religious men in the Conference of Major Superiors (CMSM) Standards for Accreditation, the Province established the Province Review Board whose purpose is to provide consultation to the provincial in addressing all reports of sexual abuse of a minor by current, former and/or deceased friars. The Province Review Board, a consultative body to Province of St. Barbara Provincial, Fr. David Gaa, OFM, is comprised of lay professionals from the fields of psychology, law enforcement, and human resources. The Province Review Board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to Fr. Gaa.

## Are men immediately dismissed from the friars following a credible claim?

No. The reasoning may be difficult to understand in today's societal expectations of resignations and terminations in response to criminal activity and wrong-doings. The Franciscan Friars are a religious order with each friar taking solemn, lifelong vows to God, themselves, and the fraternity of their fellow brothers. No matter how abhorrent their sins, casting a friar out does not serve these vows or public safety. Those with credible claims against them need to be held to their vows of obedience in permanent penance, so they can be treated, supervised, monitored and accounted for.

## Where do friars who are credibly accused live?

If a friar is credibly charged with abuse of a minor, he is sent to live in a friar community on a Safety Plan where children are not present. No credibly accused friar lives in or near a parish. If the friar is elderly and requires care that is beyond the capacity of a friary, he is sent to an elder care facility, usually in proximity to a friary. All 4 of the living credibly accused in the Province are elderly and living in care facilities. As heinous as the crime of sexual abuse of a minor is, friars are committed to continuing to care for their brother friars, even those who have credible claims against them. In caring for them, we also feel society is better safeguarded by keeping these men restricted from ministry, subject to a Safety Plan, and supervised in a friar community so as to prevent a recurrence.

## What is a Safety Plan?

Safety Plans are developed on recommendations made by the Province Review Board to, and in collaboration with, the Province of St. Barbara. Safety Plans define risk reduction strategies, such as a friar's required intervention programs, restrictions (including technology and travel), access by visitors, and more. Friars are required to sign their Safety Plan and agree to follow its restrictions. They have a designated supervisor who monitors their adherence to the plan.

## What steps has the Province taken to ensure that candidates to the Franciscan Friars are suitable for ministry?

We take great care screening and assessing applicants to the friars. Before a candidate is accepted as a novice, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and an extensive criminal background check. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) has outlined standards for screening new candidates for membership. This Province adheres to and, in some areas, goes beyond these requirements. For each candidate, we require:

- A completed criminal background check, including every jurisdiction where the candidate has resided in the last five years.
- A completed national sex offender registry check.
- A minimum of five references.

- Four face-to-face interviews with friars. This interview goes into great detail about the candidate's sexual history and family background.
- A psychological evaluation and psychosexual history conducted by a licensed psychologist or a licensed mental health professional with skills in conducting psychosexual histories and assessing psychosexual health in preparation for a life of celibate chastity.
- A review of publicly accessible content on all social media, personal blog sites and websites associated with accounts controlled by the candidate.

## What is Praesidium?

Praesidium was started more than two decades ago in response to a request from a youth-serving organization where a volunteer sexually abused a child participant. A group of researchers at the University of Texas began assembling and analyzing the scant research available to see what could be done to prevent future tragedies. Little was published at the time that was useful at the program level; most focused on psychological testing of pedophiles. The researchers subsequently began using root cause analysis of incidents of sexual abuse in organizations and determined that causes clustered in eight organizational operations: policies, screening and selection, training, monitoring and supervision, internal feedback systems, consumer participation, responding, and administrative practices.

## Does the Province work with law enforcement to investigate reports of abuse?

Yes, the Province reports allegations of abuse to appropriate child protection agencies, as required by applicable state law. Additionally, the Province cooperates with law enforcement regarding investigations undertaken by law enforcement.

## What should I do if I have been abused by a friar?

Anyone who has felt victimized by a friar should contact both Angelica Jochim, Victims Outreach Coordinator for the Province of St. Barbara, at 1-800-770-8013 or [angelica.jochim@gmail.com](mailto:angelica.jochim@gmail.com) and appropriate law enforcement and child protective agencies. If the victim is currently a minor, we are required to report the incident to civil authorities.

## Will you have another external person or firm conduct a review of personnel files to ensure your list is as complete as possible?

Yes. As our primary purpose in releasing this list is transparency, the Province of St. Barbara is engaging the services of an experienced and qualified lay professional to perform an additional review of our files. As a result of this ongoing examination, there may be additional offenders identified. If so, their names will be added to the list.

## Who are the friars?

The Franciscan friars (OFM) in the western United States are part of the Order of Friars Minor, a worldwide Roman Catholic religious community founded by St. Francis in Assisi in 1209. Since its founding in 1915, the Province of St. Barbara is headquartered in Oakland, California and has fostered a broad range of ministries—including parishes, retreat centers, social center dining rooms, and education outreach—shepherded by a host of dedicated and often colorful Franciscan friars. The Province of St. Barbara has a presence today in the States of Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. Many brothers work in specialized ministries in service to the poor and marginalized.