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Texas Catholic dioceses announce plan to release names of clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors

Lists of clergy will cover at least 1950 to 2018

AUSTIN – The 15 Catholic dioceses in Texas and the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter made the decision on Sept. 30 to release names of clergy who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor, going back at least to 1950.

The bishops' decision was made in the context of their ongoing work to protect children from sexual abuse, and their efforts to promote healing and a restoration of trust in the Catholic Church.

"This is an action in response to the faithful's call for greater accountability and transparency," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston. "Every bishop in our state has made a statement expressing his concern for all who have been hurt and I want to express my personal sorrow at such fundamental violations of trust that have happened. We are completely committed to eradicating the evil of sexual abuse in the church and promoting healing among the faithful and those injured by this crime."

With 8.5 million Catholics and 1,320 Catholic parishes in Texas, the endeavor to compile a comprehensive list of clergy who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor represents a major project. All dioceses will publish their lists by Jan. 31, 2019.

"It will take some time for files to be reviewed, and there may be people who come forward with new information following this announcement. My brother bishops in Texas and I agree that transparency in this painful matter of sexual abuse can assist with healing for survivors and transformation for our Church," explained Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS, archbishop of San Antonio.

The release of names of clergy credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor is part of an ongoing effort by the dioceses to provide an even safer environment for children. These lists will be updated as new information becomes available. Each bishop will be releasing his own statement and list. The full statement of the bishops of Texas includes information on this work, and follows.

ABOUT THE TCCB: The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is the association of the Roman Catholic bishops of Texas. Through the TCCB, the bishops provide a moral and social public policy voice, accredit the state's Catholic schools, and maintain archives that reflect the work and the history of the Catholic Church in Texas.



PREVENTING THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

We are deeply sorry that some Church leaders have, at times, failed in their responsibility to protect minors. The Catholic Church throughout the United States has worked to improve protection, especially over the last fifteen years. We will remain vigilant to provide an even safer environment for every child we serve.

The Catholic Church in Texas is committed to the prevention of sexual abuse of minors by those who are in ministry in the Church and to promote healing for survivors of abuse. Each diocese has comprehensive policies in place both to respond to complaints and to prevent the sexual abuse of minors. These safety policies and practices are regularly verified by an external audit of each diocese.

PREVENTION OF ABUSE

- **Safe Environment:** All Texas dioceses have implemented comprehensive “safe environment” education programs and have together trained many of the 8.5 million Catholics in the state -- adults, minors, employees, clergy, and volunteers -- on how to identify, report, and help prevent abuse. Prior to his anticipated ministry, every priest seeking to minister in a diocese is to present a written attestation of suitability supplied by his bishop/religious superior.
- **Background Checks:** The dioceses conduct background evaluations for all bishops, priests, deacons, and religious, as well as other diocesan, parish, and school personnel who have regular contact with minors. Since 2002, criminal background checks have been completed regularly on volunteers, employees, and clergy who are involved in ministry in the Church.

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

- **Reporting to Civil Authorities:** All of the Texas Catholic dioceses have policies to report to civil authorities whenever there is cause to believe that a minor has been sexually abused.
- **Removal from Ministry:** Diocesan policies provide that a bishop, priest, deacon, or religious who has been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor will be removed from ministry.

HEALING OF SURVIVORS

- **Therapeutic and Pastoral Response:** Each diocese has a Victim Assistance Coordinator who facilitates the provision of counseling and other professional assistance to help those who report they were sexually abused as a minor. In addition, all victims of childhood sexual abuse by a minister of the Church have the opportunity to meet with the bishop in order to facilitate healing.

PUBLICATION OF NAMES

- **Dioceses to Publish Local Lists:** Texas dioceses are actively reviewing files of bishops, priests, and deacons. By January 31, 2019, each bishop will publish a list of clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor in his diocese dating back to at least 1950.
- **How to Report:** Visit <http://txcatholic.org/how-to-report> for information on reporting abuse.

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