

FAQ's Regarding the Release of Names of Accused Xaverian Brothers and Procedures for Preventing Abuse

Q: What information are you releasing?

A: The Xaverian Brothers are releasing the following information associated with accusations of sexual abuse of minors dating from the 1930's:

- 1:** Current Xaverian Brothers with a credible or established offense against a minor (anyone under the age of 18)
- 2:** Deceased or former Xaverian Brothers with a credible or established offense against a minor (anyone under the age of 18)
- 3:** Deceased or former Xaverian Brothers with an allegation of an offense against a minor (anyone under the age of 18) that could not be fully investigated to determine credibility, but for which there is a reasonable possibility (semblance of truth) that the alleged offense occurred. Reasons that a full investigation would not be possible include that the allegation was brought forward after the death of the Brother or former member, or that historic information needed to conduct an investigation of the allegation is incomplete.

Q: Where is this information available?

A: This information is accessible on the Xaverian Brothers website: www.xaverianbrothers.org/hope-and-healing-programs/

Q: What do you mean by a credible accusation?

A: An allegation is deemed “credible” if there is a preponderance of evidence that the allegation is more likely true than not. The Review Board—an independent board of predominantly lay professionals from the fields of psychology, law enforcement, canon law and human resources—evaluates accusations and subsequent investigations and makes a judgment on the credibility of the accusation. That judgment is presented to the General Superior who makes the final decision on credibility in accordance with Congregational policies. Those policies are consistent with the standards established by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM).

Credibility can also be established by a conviction in court or by the admission of the truth of the allegation by the Brother.

Q: Are any credibly accused Xaverian Brothers still in active ministry?

A: No.

Q: What is the time frame of the incidents of sexual abuse of a minor by Xaverian Brothers that are included in this release?

A: The oldest incident of abuse included in the release was alleged to have occurred in the late 1930's and was reported to the Xaverian Brothers in 2002. The last reported incident of sexual abuse of a minor by a Xaverian Brother happened in the late 1980's, and was reported to the Xaverian Brothers in 2010. Most of the incidents date back decades.

There have been over 1275 Xaverian Brothers in the United States in the time frame included in the release.

Q: The released list indicate that some Brothers were engaged in ministry after the date the abuse took place. How do you explain that?

A: In many cases, the accusation was received many years after the abuse took place, so a Brother may have continued in ministry because we were not aware of the alleged abuse at that time. Since 2002 when the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was instituted, clear and consistent procedures have been developed for removing from ministry any Brother with a credible allegation of abuse of a minor. Prior to that time, priests and religious were sometimes allowed to continue in ministry after an accusation. For example, it was sometimes the recommendation of professionals that someone who had abused a minor could be safely returned to ministry after receiving treatment. We know better now. Our awareness of the nature and effect of abuse of minors has changed dramatically over the years. We are diligent in investigating all accusations of abuse, and we do not allow anyone with a credible accusation to engage in public ministry. We recognize now our failures of the past in this regard, and we are deeply sorry.

Q: Why are you releasing this information now?

A: Like many other religious congregations and dioceses, we made the decision – with the advice of our independent lay Review Board – to make public our list of Brothers, deceased Brothers or former Brothers against whom there is a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor. Recent revelations about sexual abuse of minors by priests and religious are leading the People of God to desire greater accountability from the leadership of the Church. We are releasing this information to provide that kind of transparency. We view this disclosure as part of our commitment now to preventing abuse and hope that it may assist survivors of abuse in their healing. We also hope that our release of names will contribute to the process of restoring trust in Church leadership.

Q: What process did you follow in preparing the list for release?

A: As part of our last accreditation process with Praesidium Services[®], the independent agency that has performed accreditation for men's religious communities, we had conducted a review of our files. However, in an attempt to assure accuracy and independent credibility, we contracted with an independent investigator to do a complete review of our files in two phases: first, the files against anyone for whom there has been any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, and, subsequently, our files of all our current members to ensure that there was nothing in any of those files that referenced an allegation of sexual abuse.

Q: How do you explain the fact that the list does not include the names of Brothers whose name appears on other web sites or whose name was previously made public in the media?

A: The list includes only the names of Brothers against whom there is a credible and established claim of sexual abuse of a minor. In some cases, there is still an ongoing investigation by civil authorities, and no judgement has been made as to credibility of the allegation. Since 2003, the practice of the Xaverian Brothers and many Xaverian sponsored schools has been to release the name of a Brother when he has been removed from ministry even before the allegation has been investigated. We do this out of a desire to be transparent regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors. In some cases, an independent investigation was conducted after the Brother was removed from ministry and the allegation of abuse could not be substantiated. In some cases, the Brother may have committed a boundary violation that, while improper and unprofessional, does not constitute sexual abuse. As with all of the allegations, the results of investigations are presented to the lay Review Board who together with the leadership of the Congregation assess credibility and determine any restrictions on ministry or the placement of a Brother on a safety plan where he is monitored and restricted from ministry.

Q: What happens when the Congregation receives an accusation?

A: When a claim involving abuse of a minor is made against a Xaverian Brother, the Congregation immediately reports it to law enforcement and local Church authorities. The Congregation fully cooperates with civil authorities throughout the investigation. If the allegation is made against a Brother who is currently engaged in ministry, the accused Brother is suspended from ministry pending the outcome of the investigation. In cases where civil authorities do not conduct an investigation, and if the Brother has denied the allegation, the Congregation hires an independent investigator to investigate and report the findings to the lay Review Board. In cases where the Brother is deceased, the Congregation makes its best efforts to investigate and substantiate the claim.

The Brothers have created a Clinical Services Assistance program with the professional oversight of a third-party clinician to offer pastoral and therapeutic services to victims.

Q: What happens if someone reports an allegation but cannot remember the name of the Brother involved?

A: The Brothers have received a few allegations from individuals who cannot remember the name of the Brother involved. In those instances, the Brothers try to assist a survivor in recalling a name. If they still cannot remember the name, but there is enough other information to make a report to civil authorities, the Brothers still follow the normal procedure of reporting the allegation to civil authorities as well as local Church authorities. The Brothers treat this survivor with the same support and level of care as they do with anyone else who comes forward with a credible allegation.

Q: What happens to a Brother when an accusation of abuse is deemed credible?

A: We are committed to safeguarding others and preventing future abuse while also caring for our Brothers, even those who are guilty of the crime of sexual abuse. Xaverian Brothers who are credibly accused of abuse do not engage in public ministry and live within a safety plan in a strictly monitored environment. Safety plans specify risk reduction strategies and restrictions on behavior, including the use of technology, travel, and access by visitors. The plans are developed and monitored in consultation with the Review Board. In some cases, the Congregation has contracted with an independent agency to monitor compliance with safety plans.

Q: What are you doing to make sure this never happens again?

A: The Xaverian Brothers have had a zero-tolerance policy. We have had protocols and procedures in place since 2003 as part of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and in light of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Dallas Charter).

The Congregation regularly provides safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries.

Q: How can I report abuse?

A: We urge anyone who has any knowledge of any child sexual abuse to come forward, and to report it immediately to civil authorities. If a Xaverian Brother is suspected of committing the abuse, we ask that you also contact the Victim's Assistance Coordinator for the Xaverian Brothers at 410-644-0034 or in writing to the Xaverian Brothers Generalate, 4409 Frederick Ave, Baltimore, MD 21229. We report allegations of child sex abuse to law enforcement in the jurisdiction where the abuse occurred as well as to Church authorities with jurisdiction for the locale where the abuse occurred.

Many dioceses also have Victim's Assistance Coordinators or confidential reporting methods. Or, for other assistance, call the ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline (staffed 24 hours daily by professional crisis counselors) at 1-800-4-A-CHILD. And if you are a victim of sexual abuse or assault, you might also contact the RAINN National Sexual Assault Online Hotline at 1-800-656-4673.