

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write this letter today with a contrite, sorrowful heart, but also confident that God's Spirit is leading us forward into the light. This is promised to us with the birth of Christ our Savior, who came to heal and redeem our fallen world. With this letter, the Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus is releasing a list ([click here](#)) of the names of those Jesuits with an established allegation of sexual abuse of a minor in this region since 1955. This list will be updated as necessary.

An established allegation is based on the facts and circumstances where there is a reasonable certainty that the accusation is true.

In making these determinations, I have been aided by our Province Review Board, which provides recommendations to me regarding specific allegations or policies. The majority of the members on this board are lay professionals. In addition, I am deeply grateful for the assistance of Ms. Marjorie O'Dea, the Province Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Director of Victim Advocacy, who has been working with the Jesuits since 2008. Previous to this position, Ms. O'Dea had a long career in law enforcement with both the Chicago Police Department and the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department where she served as Chief of Police. In the end, the decisions regarding the names disclosed today are mine.

An additional review of our records will be made in 2019 by Hillard Heintze, an independent investigative services firm based in Chicago. Based upon the results of the review, the list will be updated.

The Midwest Jesuits take this step in the spirit of transparency and reconciliation. As we look back at our history, the failures of the Society of Jesus and the Church to protect those entrusted to its care fill our hearts with outrage, sorrow and shame. On behalf of the Midwest Jesuits, I apologize to victim-survivors and their families for the harm and suffering you have endured. Many of you have suffered in silence for decades. Our concern and prayers are with you and we hope and pray that this step will strengthen the trust of those we serve. We recognize that our feelings on this day are nothing compared to the depth of suffering endured by those who have been abused, especially by one as trusted as a priest or vowed religious.

We are painfully aware that in earlier decades, some Midwest Jesuits were not removed from ministry quickly enough once an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor was established. For our failures to act, which avoided the demands of justice and failed to protect the people we serve, we are deeply sorrowful. We have learned from these tragic failures.

Today, with the Bishop's 2002 Dallas Charter, an established allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor leads to the Jesuit's permanent removal from public ministry and possible criminal prosecution. These Jesuits lead lives of prayer and penance, and are placed on restriction, under close supervision to insure the safety of the people of God.

Most of the Jesuits on our list entered religious life from the 1930's through the early 1960's. In retrospect, our evaluation of candidates, as well as the training, formation, and supervision of Jesuits was not adequate. We have learned from this painful history and our formation today strives to promote the healthy affective and psychological development of Jesuits. We now have regular life-long training in safe ministry and ethical conduct for all Jesuits. We are committed to the consistent application of these policies and procedures.

When the Province receives an allegation of abuse of someone who is currently a minor, it ensures that the relevant civil authorities have been notified. All Jesuits of the Midwest Province are required by Province policy and by civil law to immediately report any suspected abuse of a current minor to the relevant child protective service agency. In cases where the victim of abuse is now an adult, but was a minor at the time of the abuse, the Province makes appropriate notifications to authorities.

Anyone who has been abused by a Jesuit should contact the appropriate civil authorities. Contact information for law enforcement and child protection agencies is posted on the Province web site at www.jesuitsmidwest.org. In addition, victims may contact Ms. Marjorie O'Dea at 773 975 6876 or by mail at the USA Midwest Province, 1010 North Hooker Street, Chicago, Illinois 60642.

Let us continue to pray for healing graces for all victims of abuse in our church, for atonement by all of us collectively for what we have done, and what we have failed to do, and for God's grace to guide us forward as a church, the body of Christ in our world.

Sincerely in Christ,

V. Rev. Brian G. Paulson, SJ