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About the Release of Names of Jesuits Credibly Accused of Abuse of Minors

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the Jesuits of Canada decide to release a list of Jesuits credibly accused of sexual abuse?

The Jesuits have listened to the voice of the victims of childhood sexual abuse in Canada. Lists that provide the public with information about these men are important to healing. It is the right thing for us to do in the promotion of justice. In the words of Fr. Erik Oland, provincial of the Jesuits of Canada, “the trauma experienced by victims of abuse affects the whole person, including their ability to feel safe, trust others, and find meaning in life. As we have met with victims and listened to their stories, and as we have read the reports of their experience, we have experienced shame, and become convinced that the only path forward is one of truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation.”

What was the criteria for the audit?

The Jesuits of Canada commissioned a file review and audit of both the Personnel and Provincial’s files dating back to the early 1950’s, including personnel records, delegate and consultor’s files and correspondence with superiors.

The first level file review that would provide the information required for the creation of the list was completed in the spring of 2023 after extensive consultation. The review was hampered by the ordered shut down of the Provincial Archives in Montreal during the COVID crisis.

Our list features the names of historic offenders whether they were dead or living at the time that complaints were brought forward against them. In many cases, the word of a credible victim is

considered to be our guide. In other cases, where there has been rumour or innuendo but no corroboration, a name may be placed under ongoing investigation, to be added to the list as evidence comes forward.

Who conducted the file review and audit?

The file review used for the preparation of the list was undertaken by the Delegate for Conduct working with Archive Staff and independent auditor Brian King of King International Advisory Group beginning in early 2020. The team had unfettered access to all personnel files, consultant's notes and Provincials correspondence.

How do you define “credibly accused”?

The list deals with allegations where it appears more likely than not that an offence occurred. This includes cases where a Jesuit was accused by credible witnesses, parishioners, civil authorities or clergy, even if no charges or civil actions were ever forthcoming. In many instances, the sworn evidence of victims in the transcripts of civil lawsuits were considered to be the most valuable evidence, such as when the accused was deceased or had left the Society of Jesus.

What information is included on this list?

The list includes detailed information about the pastoral assignments of an accused Jesuit. It includes the names of the institutions they served, including schools, parishes or communities. It includes date of birth, the year that an individual entered the Society of Jesus and the date that they left or passed away.

The information published helps communities in different locations to determine whether or not an offender was ever in their area, and what parish or institution they were associated with.

The list is a living document that will be updated as additional information is presented.

Is this list complete?

While we believe this list is complete as of the present time, it is possible that there may be information that we are not aware of. Therefore, if new information arises that leads to a credible finding of an allegation, we will update the list accordingly.

As an example, cases of excessive corporal punishment or relationships with consenting adults are not included on the list. The files will, however, be kept and digitized for reference if additional evidence should come forward at future times.

The list is an “evergreen” or “living” document and will be added to if and when additional information comes forward in cases of persons of concern.

Are any credibly accused Jesuits still in active ministry?

No. Of the current 208 members of the province, three men have had a credible accusation made against them. Jesuits who have been accused of improper conduct are immediately removed from active ministry while their actions are investigated. If the allegations prove credible, they are not reinstated in active ministry.

The few living Jesuits who have been credibly accused of improper conduct with young people are kept under strict supervision, pursuant to Safety Plans that are updated and monitored to ensure compliance.

What is a Safety Plan?

Safety plans define ongoing restrictions to movement, travel, access by visitors, contact with parishioners, young people and more. They are restricted to a specific Jesuit community and have a designated supervisor who confirms their adherence to the plan. Audits to ensure that the Safety Plans are complied with are carried out by an independent investigator on a quarterly basis.

How will you ensure accountability in your handling of cases of abuse going forward?

The Jesuits of Canada Province has a zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between a Jesuit and a minor. Our protocols have been in place for years. They include a comprehensive set of procedures for receiving and addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The policy also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse.

It also includes procedures to bar from ministry anyone who might be a danger to children, to reach out to victim-survivors and to hold accountable those who fail in their sacred duty to protect the vulnerable.

The Jesuits of Canada's Policy & Procedures for Cases of Alleged Abuse and Misconduct can be found [here](#). A statement of commitment is available [here](#).

What steps has the Province taken to ensure that those who apply to become a member of the Society of Jesus are suitable for ministry?

Before a Jesuit is accepted as a novice, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and an extensive criminal background check. Psychological evaluations became a normal part of the application process in the 1970's.

Our formation program fosters healthy development both in terms of the spiritual life of the Jesuit as well as his psychosexual health and well-being. Jesuits at every stage of their ministry and formation receive regular safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness of and sensitivity to professional boundaries.

What else are the Jesuits of Canada doing to tackle the causes of this crisis?

The Jesuits of Canada are taking action at different levels. The goal is both to understand the breadth, depth and causes of this crisis and to take effective short-term and long-term measures that promote real transformation.

This includes:

Listening and solidarity with victims. Over and above the judicial procedures, there is the issue of sincere and authentic reconciliation with the victims. Listening is about being attentive to the suffering of others, about entering into a process of accepting responsibility and being in solidarity that ultimately leads to the conversion and transformation of attitudes, behaviours and structures that have made abuse possible.

Understanding the systemic causes of the crisis. Beyond individual cases, the crisis experienced within the Catholic Church has brought to light structural issues. This involves exploring the systemic causes of abuse, such as clericalism, a patriarchal mentality, an obsession with institutional self-preservation and insensitivity to the suffering of victims, as well as other elements that promote a culture of abuse of power, cover ups and a lack of accountability.

Implementing changes. We're implementing changes at different stages, from the onboarding and formation of Jesuits in Canada to their work. The objective is to promote a profound reform of our way of doing things.

What happens when a report is received?

When a report is received, the information is forwarded to a designated outside individual with specialised training in alternative dispute resolution, called the Delegate for Conduct. On instructions from the Jesuit Provincial, the Delegate reaches out to the complainant and determines what steps should be taken.

They are then authorized to engage a private investigator in instances where the law may have been broken, or a designated Examiner who reports to the Provincial on credibility and appropriate compensation or counseling.

These experienced outside professionals then consult with the Jesuits to determine how best to respond, and what help would be appropriate to offer.

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

All Jesuits are obliged to report allegations of ongoing abuse to the appropriate child protection agencies, as required by applicable Provincial laws. In instances where a victim reports their present or past abuse to the police, we cooperate with law enforcement regarding investigations undertaken by law enforcement. This has always been our commitment and continues to be so today.

Has the province sought guidance from an independent organization that specializes in the prevention of abuse?

The Jesuits work with the King International Advisory Group on appropriate responses in the investigation and redress of historic sexual abuse. We are advised on best practices for preventing abuse of minor going forward. We have also been in consultation with the Pontifical Gregorian University's Centre for Child Protection and support the Safeguarding Core Committee Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP). We are actively involved in the Child Safeguarding Committee of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States.

Have the Jesuits apologized for the harm done to the victims of past abuse?

The Jesuits apologize and express our profound sorrow and humbly ask forgiveness on the part of all those harmed by these crimes and reprehensible violations of human dignity. In particular cases, provincial superiors have addressed personal apologies to victims, either in writing or face to face.

A chronology of the response of Canadian Jesuits to cases of abuse can be found [here](#).

We are committed to vigorous advocacy for the rights of survivors, and to abuse prevention education, transparency, accountability and zero tolerance. There remains a long road ahead of us in confronting abuse in our Church and in society at large. We will not tire in walking this journey.

Are the Jesuits accused of having harmed students at the Spanish Indian Residential School included on the list?

The Jesuits worked with the Truth & Reconciliation Commission which was created by the Federal Government to investigate the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. The Jesuits of Canada produced all of their records related to accused Jesuits including personnel files. These

documents are now part of the collection of the National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation in Manitoba.

The names of staff at the Spanish School who were considered to be credibly accused during the investigations of the TRC are included in the list. As additional records come to light, other individuals may be added.

How can I report allegations of abuse by a Jesuit in Canada?

The Jesuits of Canada take allegations of sexual abuse seriously and will promptly and thoroughly investigate every allegation and complaint that is brought to their attention.

If you or someone you know has experienced abuse by a Jesuit, you are urged to report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement or child protection agency in the jurisdiction where it happened.

You may also contact the Jesuits of Canada Province by reaching out to William Blakeney, Delegate for allegations of misconduct at wblakeney@jesuits.org, or in writing to the Jesuits of Canada, 25 Jarry St W, Montreal, QC H2P 1S6.