



2020 Annual Report Truth, Justice, and Healing

on the implementation
of the Chapter documents
Protect and Heal and Conversion and Reparation
regarding sexual abuse of minors and safe environments

*Prepared by the “Interdepartmental Commission”
of the General Directorate
of the Legionaries of Christ*

March, 22 2021



LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST



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I. Introduction

In publishing this *2020 Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing, On the implementation of the chapter documents Protect and Heal and Conversion and Reparation regarding sexual abuse of minors and safe environments* (hereafter *2020 Annual Report*),¹ we have in mind all the victims who have suffered sexual abuse,² known and unknown; to them and their families we assured a year ago: “we want to be converted and make reparation with concrete actions.”³ We also address the Legionaries of Christ, whom the Lord calls “to heal the wounds of so many victims of abuse.”⁴ To all other members of Regnum Christi, the Church, and the whole of society, to whom we also make this request: “help us to fulfill the decisions expressed in this communiqué.”⁵ We are indebted to all of the above, and so to them we address this *2020 Annual Report*.

In these pages, the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ gives an account of the concrete steps taken since the 2020 General Chapter in search of truth, justice, and healing for the victims of sexual abuse of minors by members of our congregation⁶. It also elaborates on the implementation of safe environments in our institutions.

The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ gives an account of the concrete steps taken since the 2020 General Chapter

Here we explain why it was decided to publish the cases of Legionary

1 This *Annual Report* was prepared by the “Interdepartmental Commission” of the general government of the Legionaries of Christ, which brings together those responsible for the General Secretariat, the Department for Priestly Life, the Safe Environment Department and the International Communications Office. The publication was authorized by the general director, having heard the favorable opinion of his Council.

2 Cf. GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, *Protect and Heal*, Appendices: “contact or interaction between a minor and an adult in which the minor is used for the sexual stimulation of the adult. The crime occurs whenever an adult commits acts of a sexual nature with a minor. The Church establishes 18 years as the age of majority. In the civil sphere, the definition of minority varies from one country to another, depending on the legislation in force. Delicts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue consisting of the following: a. forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts; b. perform sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person; c. the production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions.”

3 GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, *Conversion and Reparation*, 1.

4 *Conversion and Reparation*, 14.

5 *Conversion and Reparation*, 15.

6 Cf. GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, *Protect and Heal*, 28.

priests who, throughout our history, have committed abuse in three forms: first and last name, first name only, or as a numerical code. The corresponding statistics have also been updated.

We also introduce the partnership initiated with Eshmá, an institution of professionals that offers an external and independent channel to receive and assist victims.

We explain the steps taken toward a financial reparation for victims and the advances made in implementing the safe environment policy put in place in 2014.

Together with Pope Francis, we say: “Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated. The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable adults.”⁷

This *2020 Annual Report* is a further step in this direction. We keep in our hearts the words Pope Francis addressed to us at the end of the 2020 General Chapter: “The path of renewal is not finished, because the change of mentality in individuals and in an institution requires a long time of assimilation, therefore, an ongoing conversion.”⁸ In the last section of this report, we publish the next steps toward fulfilling our commitments.

“No effort to beg
pardon and to seek to
repair the harm done
will ever be sufficient”.
(Pope Francis)

⁷ POPE FRANCIS, [Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People of God](#), August 20, 2018

⁸ POPE FRANCIS, [Address to the participants of the General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ and of the General Assemblies of the Consecrated Women and Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi](#), February 29, 2020



II.

Toward a
Culture of
Zero Abuse

II. Toward a Culture of Zero Abuse

To provide context for the *2020 Annual Report*, we begin by briefly reviewing the path already embarked on, above all for those who may not be aware of the documents the Congregation published in 2019 and 2020.

A. Steps Prior to 2019

From 2005 to 2014, under the government of Father Álvaro Corcuera, then general director, and later under the leadership of the pontifical delegate, Cardinal Velasio de Paolis, the Congregation slowly and painfully became aware of the abuses committed by its founder, Father Marcial Maciel, and the effects they had on the Congregation. At that point, starting with the United States and Ireland, many territories implemented special procedures and codes of conduct. During Cardinal de Paolis' mandate, the Legion grew in its sensitivity to the reality of child sexual abuse, an understanding of its extent within the Congregation, and the need for prevention and victim outreach. From 2011 to 2013, a victims outreach commission established by the pontifical delegate assisted those victims of Fr. Maciel who accepted the invitation to come forward.

The 2014 General Chapter requested that superiors continue to seek reconciliation and further institutionalize safe environments. Subsequently, Father Eduardo Robles-Gil, then general director, concentrated his efforts on responding to allegations and on abuse prevention through the crafting and implementation of international safe environment policy.⁹ He set up a commission to review historical abuse cases and published the *1941-2019 Report*.

⁹ Cf. *1941-2019 Report*, p. 8-9.

B. 1941-2019 Report

The [1941-2019 Report on the Study of Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ since its Foundation](#) was published on December 21, 2019, in preparation for the General Chapter of the Congregation, which took place in January and February 2020. The report was the result of a comprehensive study conducted over six months by an internal commission that, within the limits that a study of this kind could achieve, analyzed the various allegations of sexual abuse of minors throughout the Congregation's history. This public report gathered the global statistics of abuse committed by priests of the Congregation between 1941 and 2019. It was a key step in sizing up the breadth of this painful reality.

With this comprehensive view, the Congregation could further investigate and substantiate each case, thus allowing for the care and attention to victims as well as completing required civil and canonical procedures. The *1941-2019 Report* also made it possible to identify the circumstances and internal culture that allowed each abuse to occur. It was a chance to recognize that the Congregation's response in the past was often characterized by an attitude of institutional self-defense. This recognition has strengthened its resolve to place the victim at the center and continue the process of healing. In an appendix, the [Report](#) presented the steps taken to foster safe environments in the Congregation.

12/21
2019

The Legionaries of Christ publish the 1941-2019 Report on the abuses committed since their foundation to the present day

C. Conversion and Reparation

On February 26, 2020, the General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ, the supreme governing body of the Congregation, published the document [Conversion and Reparation](#). It was addressed, first and foremost, to the abuse victims and their families, explicitly asking for forgiveness. It mentioned by name the first people to accuse Father Maciel, retracting the negative judgments made against them when they presented legitimate and necessary complaints, recognizing their accusations as prophetic acts in favor of truth and justice. At the same time, the General Chapter asked their forgiveness for the pain they suffered and thanked them for the good they did, not only for the Congregation, but also for the Church.

02/26
2020

The Legionaries of Christ publish the document Conversion and Reparation

Conversion and Reparation invited all the Congregation's members to a conscience examen regarding their commitment to reach out to victims. The communiqué acknowledged "with pain and sadness" the failures and errors that fostered abuse and the inadequate handling of these crimes. The Congregation committed itself to correcting its mistakes and recognized that civil and ecclesiastical authorities, society, the

media, and organizations specialized in the prevention of abuse and the restoration of justice are its allies.

D. Protect and Heal

26/02
2020

The Legionaries of
Christ publish the
document
Protect and Heal

Also on February 26, 2020, the General Chapter published [*Protect and Heal*](#), a normative document that strengthened the international safe environment policy issued in 2014. The first part of the text addresses the principles and protocols for fostering healing and reconciliation with abuse victims; it reinforces prevention measures and safe environments; it ensures prompt, effective, and pastoral responses to claims or accusations of possible cases of sexual abuse; it seeks to ensure due process, as well as encourage collaboration with other ecclesiastical and civil bodies in order to eradicate the scourge of sexual abuse of minors.

The second part of the document provides procedural norms for child sexual abuse cases. Among the new features are the following: it commits to “fostering the value of just transparency,”¹⁰ which includes a policy for publishing cases of Legionaries guilty of abuse; it establishes sanctions for those culpable of failing to report or impeding the proper handling of a sexual abuse case; and it requires that, ordinarily, a request be made to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that those who have committed multiple or repeated abuse be removed from the clerical state and dismissed from the Congregation.

¹⁰ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 27-29.



III.

Advancing the
Congregation's
2020-2026
Commitments

III. Advancing the Congregation's 2020-2026 Commitments

Seeking a change of mindset and behavior, the 2020 General Chapter, through Conversion and Reparation and Protect and Heal, set out a way for the Congregation to prevent sexual abuse, respond to allegations, care for victims, and supervise those who have committed abuse. The newly elected general director, Father John Connor, made these [commitments publicly](#), convinced of the need to “face with determination the abuses in our history as part of our mission and as a sign of the authenticity of our vocation.”¹¹ The main commitments can be summarized as follows:

2020

The newly elected general director, Father John Connor, makes public commitments

> A. Attention to victims

Walk with victims, their families, and affected communities toward truth, justice, and healing. Work in collaboration with independent professionals, respecting the time and space each victim might need (see section A, page 13 of this *Report*).¹²

> B. Review and update

Complete the investigations and processes relating to each of the historical cases and regularly update the published reports (see section B, page 14 of this *Report*).¹³

> C. Publishing cases

Publish the cases of Legionaries who have been found guilty of sexual abuse, using the criteria the General Chapter gave and considering the civil legislation in each country (see section C, page 15 of this *Report*).¹⁴

> D. Investigation of possible cases of gross negligence

Verify, under the guidance of Conversion and Reparation and Protect and Heal, whether past abuse cases were adequately

11 JOHN CONNOR, L.C., quote from a [press release](#) on February 26, 2020

12 Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 3-6.

13 Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 7 and 28.

14 Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 27-29.

handled, and if needed, initiate the proper legal procedures and inform the competent authorities (see section D, page 19 of this *Report*).¹⁵

› E. Safe environment policy

Update international standards continuously in accordance with best practices (see section E, page x of this *Report*).¹⁶

The following sections of this *Report* describe the steps taken to fulfill each of these commitments.

A. Care for Victims

Sexual abuse against minors is one of the traumatic realities that most intensely and profoundly affects human beings.¹⁷ The healing process, often long and difficult, requires proper accompaniment. For this reason, just as the Congregation has sought the help of experts in the field of safe environment policies (Praesidium¹⁸) and training (CEPROME¹⁹ and Repara²⁰), since 2020 it has also been collaborating with Eshma²¹ to assist people who have suffered sexual abuse by a member of the Congregation.

1. Independent Channel for Receiving, Listening to, and Caring for Victims

The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ wants to walk toward truth, justice, and healing at the pace of each victim

¹⁵ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 8 and 55-57.

¹⁶ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 12-13.

¹⁷ Although experts do not encompass the sequelae of child abuse in a specific “post-sexual abuse” syndrome, nor is there any scientific agreement in diagnosing these consequences as “post-traumatic stress disorder”, it is now recognized that those who have been subjected to this type of experience may suffer the consequences of a complex trauma “whose characteristics are currently diagnosed in the category of disorders of extreme not otherwise specified (DESNOS), whose alterations affect: (a) affect and impulse regulation, (b) memory and attention, (c) self-perception, (d) interpersonal relationships, (e) somatizations, and (f) meaning system. These symptoms are included in the proposal of a new diagnostic category: complex or extreme post-traumatic stress disorder. The specific characteristics of this disorder in children presenting complex trauma are currently being studied by the scientific community.” CONCEPCIÓN LÓPEZ-SOLER (Faculty of Psychology, Universidad de Murcia. Hospital Universitario Virgen Arrixaca, El Palmar, Murcia), *Las reacciones postraumáticas en la infancia y adolescencia maltrada: el trauma complejo*, in *Revista de Psicopatología y Psicología Clínica*, Vol. 13, n. 3, pp. 159-174. (Translation our own.)

¹⁸ Praesidium (establishment of and accreditation for safe environments): <https://website.praesidiuminc.com/wp/>.

¹⁹ CEPROME (Center for interdisciplinary research and training for the protection of minors): <https://ceprome.com/>.

²⁰ Repara (acknowledgment, prevention, care, and reparation for victims of abuse): <https://repara.archimadrid.es/>.

²¹ Eshma (care for victims of sexual abuse, abuse of power and abuse of conscience): <https://eshma.eus/>

2020

The Legionaries of Christ establish a stable partnership with Eshamá, an external and independent institution founded by people who experienced firsthand the victimization of child sexual abuse

The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ wants to walk toward truth, justice, and healing at the pace of each victim, even if the statute of limitations has run out. To this end, it established a stable partnership with Eshamá, an external and independent institution founded by people who experienced firsthand the victimization of child sexual abuse and by therapists, social workers and lawyers who are experts in restorative justice. Eshamá is specialized in supporting victims of sexual abuse, abuse of power, and abuse of conscience in the Catholic Church. It already serves some victims of members of the Congregation in different countries. It offers the following:

- [*a safe and independent channel*](#) for those who wish to report an abuse by a member of the Congregation;
- an ongoing initial point of contact for receiving and listening to concerns;
- a space for therapeutic accompaniment to heal the aftermath of abuse;
- social guidance and legal assistance on the process of reporting an abuse and criminal procedures;
- restorative interaction to achieve truth, justice, and reparation.

2020

The Legionaries of Christ also carried out a study of international best practices to prepare for the development of a systematic and independent program for reparation and victim support

2. Economic Reparation and Support Program for Victims

During the year 2020, the Legionaries of Christ continued to provide financial and therapeutic assistance to a number of victims, wishing to mend in some way the suffering caused by the abuses members of the congregation committed and to facilitate everything a path to healing implies. The Legionaries of Christ also carried out a study of international best practices to prepare for the development of a systematic and independent program for reparation and victim support.²²

B. Review of 1941-2019 Report Cases and Updated Data

In 2020, all the cases represented in the statistics published in the *1941-2019 Report* have once again been analyzed one by one for the following reasons:

- to take further steps in the search for justice, reparation, and healing for victims; this includes filing cases with civil and canonical authorities, requesting that the canonical statute of

²² Cf. *Proteger y sanar*, 6. La reparación y ayuda ofrecida no condiciona las acciones judiciales por parte de las víctimas ni limita su posibilidad de comunicar libremente lo que han sufrido.

limitations be lifted, opening forums for listening and restorative justice with the help of independent experts, and ensuring the sanctions imposed on priests who have committed abuse are enforced;

- to obtain a better understanding of each case allowing for an exact, committed, and responsible intervention;
- to conclude all investigations and canonical procedures still pending in historical cases, applying the praxis established in the new *Vademecum* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.²³ In 2020, the Legionaries of Christ finished submitting to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith all cases of priests, of which we are aware, who both committed abuse in past decades and are still members;
- to arrive at a well-founded basis for publishing cases. This basis may be the results of a civil trial, the results of a canonical procedure authenticated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or, when this is not possible (because the person is deceased, is not a cleric, etc.), a competent authority's declaration.

2020

A review is made of all cases so as to take steps forward in justice, reparation and healing for the victims

The 2020 updated statistics of the *1941-2019 Report* have been published on the 0abuse.org website and in Appendix 1 of this *2020 Annual Report*. The updates are a result of additional investigations, further progress on cases brought before civil or canonical courts, and the application of the criteria established in *Protect and Heal*.

C. Publishing Cases of Legionaries Who Committed Abuse

In addition to the steps already taken and those yet to come, publishing cases of Legionaries who committed abuse is a commitment that seeks to contribute to paving a way toward truth, justice, and healing for victims, as well as solidifying a culture of zero abuse in the Congregation and in society.

The territorial directors have published a list of cases of sexual abuse of minors that occurred throughout the history of the Congregation in the countries that today compose their respective territories. Some of the published cases are of priests who are still living, some, however, are deceased, and some are no longer members of the Congregation. The territorial directors published the cases in one of three ways: using

²³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Vademecum on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics* from July 16, 2020.

first and last name, using first name only, or using a numerical code. This information will be updated periodically according to the criteria explained below. The links to the publications can be found at 0abuse.org.

1. The Main Reasons for Publication

Whether publishing the names of those who have abused minors is legitimate and appropriate is widely debated in society and in the Church. Both legal and ethical arguments come into play, leading to a great diversity of legitimate positions.²⁴ In applying the criteria established by the 2020 General Chapter to the publication of cases,²⁵ the superiors of the Congregation considered several factors: the good of the persons who suffered abuse, the reform of those who committed abuse, the good of the Church and of society, all while observing applicable civil laws.

The main reasons for publishing are listed below, aware that they do not apply in the same way in all cases.

> For the sake of known and unknown victims, publication may have the following effects:

- As an objective acknowledgement of the abuse, it can facilitate the healing process for victims.
- It contributes to restoring justice and making reparation when a victim has not been adequately attended to or has even been slandered.
- It encourages other potential victims to come forward and receive support, if they so wish, helping them more easily overcome the natural difficulty that reporting such an allegation may present.
- It makes clear that the priest in question no longer exercises any public priestly ministry, relieving victims of the concern that he could abuse again.

> For the sake of the reform of the priest who abused, publication may have the following effects:

²⁴ For an explanation of the positions and arguments at stake, see: BENJAMÍN CLARIOND DOMENE, LC, *Discernimiento moral, transparencia y rendición de cuentas. Reflexiones sobre la publicación de nombres de sacerdotes culpables del delito de abuso sexual de un menor* in DANIEL PORTILLO TREVIZO (Editor), *Teología y prevención. Estudio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia*, Editorial Sal Terrae, Maliaño (Spain), 2020, pp. 257-298.

²⁵ *Protect and Heal*, 27-29.

- It can help him become more aware of what he has done, encouraging him to repent and amend his ways.
- It facilitates his collaboration in reparation efforts and restorative encounters.
- It helps him comply with the sanctions and restrictions imposed on him.

➤ **For the good of society and the people whom the Congregation serves pastorally, the publication of cases of abuse may have the following effects:**

- It underlines our strong repulsion for any abusive behavior.
- It raises awareness of abuse in general, but also in specific situations, preventing the risk of further abuse.
- It helps the Congregation fulfill its duty to protect the minors under its care, and youth in general.
- It informs society about the priests found guilty of abuse and who no longer have public ministry.
- It prevents the scandal of holding up as an example a priest known to the Congregation as having committed abuse.
- It contributes to healing the societal wounds caused by institutional behavior and to creating dynamics in society that foster a culture of care and protection of minors.

➤ **For the good of the members of the Congregation, the publication may have the following effects:**

- It contributes to living in truth and acting in a manner consistent with the commitments the Congregation made at the 2020 General Chapter, addressing and healing the personal and structural wounds the abuse caused.
- It provides clear information necessary for assuming personal and institutional responsibility in this area.
- It avoids suspicions about members of the Congregation who have not committed abuse or have been wrongly accused.

2. Different Forms of Publication

Over the course of the 2020 calendar year, the General Directorate's Interdepartmental Commission developed a policy for fair transparency and communication. The policy seeks to apply the criteria outlined in numbers 27 to 29 of *Protect and Heal*, and it establishes three forms for publishing cases of abuse committed by current and former Legionary priests. The policy's primary aim is to enable the attainment of the goals indicated in the previous section, while respecting the legal requirements of each country.

The different forms are as follows:

a. Publication Using First and Last Name

Full names are employed for cases that occurred in countries that allow it or for cases that are already public.

b. Publication Using First Name Only

Only the first name is employed for cases involving those who have left the Congregation, since they are no longer under the responsibility of the Congregation and most of them do not exercise priestly ministry, and for those in which civil law does not allow the publication of surnames or abbreviations of surnames.

c. Publication Using a Numerical Code

Cases of priests have been published with a numerical code in the following circumstances:

- 1.° When it is appropriate to take into account a victim's reasoned request not to publish the priest's name, because it could condition the healing process or the victim's privacy.
- 2.° When an applicable civil law explicitly prohibits the publication of someone's name.
- 3.° When a canonical or civil process is still in progress, since the right to the presumption of innocence prevails until guilt is established.
- 4.° When the ends sought by publishing a priest's name—namely, the victim's healing, the restoration of justice, the reparation of scandal, the amendment of the abusing priest, and the prevention of future abuse—are met by other means. This only applies to cases typified by legislation as of minor gravity, when there is only one known victim, and there are no well-founded indications that there might be others.

In cases under preliminary investigation (cf. canon 1717 of the *Code of Canon Law*), in principle, the name of the accused is not published beyond the requirements of the investigation itself.²⁶

2021

The Legionaries of Christ publish the cases seeking the good of the persons who suffered abuse, the reform of those who committed abuse and the good of the Church and society

²⁶ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 29d.

D. Investigation and clarification of possible or suspected cases of impeding an investigation or gross negligence

The General Chapter of the Congregation in 2020 recognized “shortcomings in listening to and accompanying victims of abuse, the lack of empathetic welcome and the failure to assume full responsibility for investigating the facts, punishing the crimes and addressing justice.”²⁷ For this reason, the Congregation has firmly committed to clarifying whether there was intentional obstruction or gross negligence in the handling of each case of sexual abuse of minors, to then proceed according to the dictates of canon law or by reporting a case to the competent authority.²⁸

Last year, as a first step, the Congregation launched an investigation into the handling of an already public case, with the help of a judge from a canonical tribunal in Mexico City, analyzing the superiors’ actions. In addition, during the review of cases from past decades, the Congregation also identified those case whose management needs to be examined in more detail. As cases have been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, relevant information on how they were dealt with by superiors was included. The best way to involve external experts to assess individual responsibility is still being pursued.

E. Safe Environment Policy

The Congregation’s safe environment policy provides a general framework from which it systematically fosters a culture of protection and care for minors. The push for a safe environment culture has been particularly intense since 2014. This international policy contains standards, actions, and procedures in three main areas: prevention and raising awareness, rapid response when allegations are brought forward, and pursuing reparation and healing processes. The approval of *Protect and Heal* strengthened this policy. It is also being continually updated and enriched to respond to new demands that arise, to progress in safe environment practices in the Church and society, and as we grow to understand this phenomenon better.

The Legionaries of Christ’s safe environment policy provides a general framework from which it systematically fosters a culture of protection and care for minors

²⁷ *Conversion and Reparation*, 9.

²⁸ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 8.

The main steps taken in this area of government during 2020 were as follows:

1. Structure and Personnel

The organizational charts of the safe environment departments at the general and territorial level have been revised to make the rapid response to allegations more streamlined and professional. These departments now report directly to the corresponding general or territorial director. The job descriptions for safe environment coordinators at the territorial level have also been revised and updated following the experience gained in recent years.²⁹

The Congregation has safe environment coordinators in all nine of its territories, to help all apostolates and institutions promote a culture of zero abuse and the well-being of minors. In 2020, lay professionals were hired as safe environment coordinators in four more territories (North America, Northern Mexico, Mexico and Italy), bringing the total number of territories with lay coordinators dedicated to this effort to six (out of nine).³⁰ A lay person has also been hired to support and advise the general safe environment coordinator. The territories of North America, Mexico, and Spain have designated individuals to provide pastoral care to victims of abuse in support of the safe environment coordinator's work.³¹ Finally, three additional territories (Chile, Colombia-Venezuela, and Western and Central Europe) have established review boards with external experts for abuse cases.

As part of this ongoing improvement effort, codes of conduct and rapid response procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse or boundary violations have been reviewed and updated.³²

2. Accreditation

2020

All of the territorial safe environment policies are accredited or in the process of accreditation

The 2014 General Chapter established a two-year timeframe to implement the safe environment policy for territories that had not already done so, at the end of which a certification process would be initiated through external, independent institutions.

Currently, the North American and Spanish territories have external professional accreditation. The Territory of Spain, which achieved Praesidium accreditation in 2018, will begin the process for reaccreditation—valid for three years—during 2021. Throughout 2020, the territories of Mexico, Northern Mexico, Chile and Colombia-Venezuela have advanced in their accreditation processes and the

²⁹ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 13.

³⁰ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 13 and 31.

³¹ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 9-10.

³² Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 12, 17-19, 33.

territories of Italy and Brazil are making preparations to begin during 2021.³³

In some European countries, both state authorities and episcopal conferences give precise guidelines on prevention and intervention measures to be followed, which the Congregation endorses and implements.

At the same time, Praesidium has updated its accreditation requirements, incorporating [new standards](#) to ensure the highest level of abuse prevention in the institutions it accredits. The general director has decided to adopt these standards for the entire Congregation and they are now an integral part of the accreditation process.³⁴

3. Formation and Awareness

In September 2020, the annual training seminar for territorial safe environment coordinators was held.³⁵ It was attended by an official from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and experts from CEPROME and the Instituto Desarrollo y Persona of the Francisco de Vitoria University.

Various workshops were organized to facilitate collaboration among safe environment coordinators at the general and territorial levels. In each territory, courses were given on the regulations, context, and impact of sexual abuse of minors. Several Legionaries have also participated in courses at specialized centers such as [CEPROME](#) or [Repara](#).³⁶

In 2020, six of nine territories as well as the Congregation's houses in Rome organized training and awareness days for their priests and religious, under the guidance of experts and people who have suffered sexual abuse in the Church.

In November 2020, a global awareness and prayer campaign was held on the occasion of the World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse, around which the episcopal conferences of several countries have also instituted a day of prayer for victims of abuse in the Church.³⁷

2020

A global awareness and prayer campaign was held on the occasion of the World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse

³³ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 13-16, 21.

³⁴ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 13-16, 21.

³⁵ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 32.

³⁶ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 9-10, 30-31.

³⁷ Cf. *Conversion and Reparation*, 11j.

F. Therapeutic Care

During the past year, appropriate professional psychological care has been sought for those priests of the Congregation who are known to have committed sexual abuse against a minor. Some cases required admittance to an inpatient professional therapeutic community so they could receive expert treatment.³⁸ The aim is to help them come to terms with their past and take greater responsibility for their actions by facilitating, where possible, pathways to restorative justice for the victims.

³⁸ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 49.



IV.

Priorities for
the Year 2021

IV. Priorities for the Year 2021

2021 priorities

in search of truth,
justice, and healing
for victims of sexual
abuse of minors by
members of our
Congregation

The advances outlined in the *2020 Annual Report* are part of a work in progress. They are steps on a broader path in search of truth, justice, and healing for victims of sexual abuse of minors by members of our Congregation. Here are some of the issues that the Congregation will give priority to during the second year of implementing the commitments made at the last General Chapter:

- 1.° Strengthen an active and more systematic outreach to victims with whom there is yet no contact.
- 2.° Establish a separate program for financial reparation and support for victims of sexual abuse by priests of the Congregation.³⁹
- 3.° Conduct pending canonical proceedings as directed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, setting up the appropriate tribunals and ensuring the participation of external canonists as judges and assessors.
- 4.° Examine with external experts possible evidence of concealment or grave negligence in relation to historical cases of abuse.⁴⁰
- 5.° Conclude the external accreditation processes of our safe environment protocols that are underway in several territories.
- 6.° Expand collaboration with external institutions and experts, as well as establish forums for consultation with survivors of sexual abuse for the continuous improvement of the Congregation's work in this area.
- 7.° Address the issue of abuse of authority and conscience, as noted by the General Chapter: "We ask the General Government to analyze this complex reality and to propose appropriate measures in view of pastoral formation, the prevention of any type of abuse and the healing of those affected."⁴¹

The Congregation will report on the most significant developments in a timely manner and provide an international summary in the next annual report.

39 Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 6.

40 Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 8.

41 GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, *Seréis mis testigos*, 21



Appendix:

Updated

Statistics on

Abuse Cases from

1941-2020

Appendix: Updated Statistics on Abuse Cases from 1941-2020

1. Global Statistics on Abuse of Minors by Priests of the Congregation: 2020 Update

The data used in updating the *1941-2019 Report's* statistics is derived from the following: progress made on cases in state or ecclesiastical justice systems, new information received subsequent to the last report, and the results of applying the new requirements enacted in *Protect and Heal* to each case as of March 22, 2021.

In reviewing and studying again, during the year 2020, the 33 cases of priests of the Congregation that had been initially identified and subsequently reflected in the *1941-2019 Report*, the following conclusions have been reached:

- In two of the cases, it could not be confirmed that the case involved sexual abuse of someone who was a minor.
- In one of the cases, concerning a deceased priest, the person who had reported it at the time clarified, after the publication of the *1941-2019 Report*, that it was not a case of sexual abuse.
- There are three cases whose investigation has not been concluded. None of the individuals are members of the Congregation. One is under police investigation, the other two—one living and one deceased—are under internal verification.
- The remaining 27 cases have been confirmed in at least one of the following ways: admission of guilt, a civil trial, a canonical proceeding authenticated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or a declaration by the competent major superior. Of these priests, 16 are still in the Congregation (one of whom has been removed from the clerical state), four are deceased, six have left the priesthood and the Congregation, one has left the Congregation.
- Of the 16 who remain in the Congregation, 15 do not have public priestly ministry; one has restricted ministry which excludes ministry with minors (schools, youth groups, etc.).

2. New allegations after the 1941-2019 Report

In 2020, 7 new allegations of sexual abuse of minors have emerged regarding priests not included in the 1941-2019 Report. These allegations refer to alleged events that occurred between 1970 and 2020.

- One of the cases, involving a deceased priest, could not be substantiated due to lack of information and the investigation was closed.
- Another allegation was investigated by an external professional third party, the outcome of which, in turn, was examined by a review board. The allegations were not substantiated.
- Four allegations are still undergoing a canonical preliminary investigation. Civil law is also being observed.
- One priest is awaiting instructions from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding a possible canonical process. He does not exercise public priestly ministry.

Therefore, as of March 22, 2021, the total number of Legionary of Christ priests confirmed to have committed sexual abuse of a person under 18 is 27. This represents 2% of the 1,380 Legionaries of Christ ordained as priests throughout the history of the Congregation.⁴²

3. Known Victims

- There are about 170 minors,⁴³ that we are aware of, who were victims of sexual abuse committed by these 27 priests.
- The vast majority of the victims were adolescent boys between the ages of 11 and 16.
- With approximately 50 of these victims, progress has been made on a pathway to reparation and reconciliation, seeking to facilitate this path for all victims who wish to do so.
- The institutional channel for bringing forward allegations can be found here: <https://www.0abuse.org/>
- The independent professional channel for care for victims and bringing forward allegations is Eshma: eshma.eus, escuchamos@eshma.eus, Phone / WhatsApp / Telegram: +34 615 26 36 99

⁴² Update: 8:45pm (Rome time) March 22nd, 2021.

⁴³ This number includes the approximately 60 minors known to have been abused by Father Marcial Maciel.

4. Legal Case Status (Canonical and Civil)

- Civilly, of the 27 priests, three died without being tried, two have been convicted in criminal courts. The others, so far, have not been prosecuted for various reasons, such as the legal situation in the respective countries or because the statute of limitations has elapsed.⁴⁴
- Canonically, of the 27 priests, two died without being tried, 16 were sanctioned, eight are currently undergoing proceedings, one received a dispensation from ministry without trial. The Congregation's authorities asked the Holy See to consider lifting the statute of limitations on eight of these cases so that they can be tried.
- Regarding the 16 priests who committed abuse and remain in the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, their cases were all submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

5. Global Statistics of Abuse of Minors by Seminarians of the Congregation When Applying the Criteria in *Protect and Heal*

Sixty of the 74 Legionaries (81.08%) that the *1941-2019 Report* identified as allegedly abusing minors when they were novices or religious in formation were not ordained as priests in the Congregation. During 2020, the 14 cases that did reach the priesthood were further studied according to the criteria of *Protect and Heal* and the following conclusions were reached:

- In the case of one priest, now deceased, the person who reported the allegation clarified after the *1941-2019 Report* was published that it was not sexual abuse.
- In three of the cases, which the *1941-2019 Report* noted as “under investigation,” the respective review boards concluded

44 Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Vademécum on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics*, 48: “... consideration should be given to whether the Ordinary or Hierarch is obliged to inform the civil authorities of the reception of the *notitia de delicto* and the opening of the preliminary investigation. Two principles apply: a/ respect for the laws of the state (cf. art. 19 VELM); and b/ respect for the desire of the alleged victim, provided that this is not contrary to civil legislation. Alleged victims should be encouraged – as will be stated below (no. 56) – to exercise their duties and rights vis-à-vis the state authorities, taking care to document that this encouragement took place and to avoid any form of dissuasion with regard to the alleged victim. Relevant agreements (concordats, accords, protocols of understanding) entered into by the Apostolic See with national governments must always and in any event be observed.”

that they were boundary violations⁴⁵ and not sexual abuse.

- Three cases remain under investigation.
- The remaining seven cases have been confirmed. Of these cases, one member is deceased, two are without public priestly ministry, one is not under the jurisdiction of the Congregation and three have left the priesthood. Two of these seven have also abused after ordination.

Please find the updated statistical graphs on the website Oabuse.org

⁴⁵ Cf. *Protect and Heal*, Appendices: "Boundary violation (in relations with another person): occurs when a person exceeds the acceptable limits in a relationship with another person. It can happen inadvertently or consciously. The other person may not initially interpret it as inappropriate. It may also be the result of recklessness. This is not necessarily a morally wrong act or a crime."

Contact Information



Institutional reporting channel:
<https://www.0abusos.org>



Independent victim support channel (Eshamá):
eshma.eus, escuchamos@eshma.eus,
Phone / WhatsApp / Telegram: +34 615 26 36 99



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