



## Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Frequently Asked Questions

**Why compile and publish this list now?** The Archdiocese of Galveston Houston and other dioceses in Texas understood the heightened call from the faithful for more accountability and transparency regarding the clergy abuse crisis. We hope releasing names will contribute to healing of those affected by these tragedies. The bishops have made a solemn promise to protect and pledge to heal from the terrible scourge of sexual abuse. The release of this list is one way to carry out that pledge. It is also our hope that this encourages other survivors of sexual abuse (whether by clergy or others) to speak out.

**What prompted all Dioceses of Texas to release names on the same day?** The Texas bishops decided they wanted to act in solidarity and support of one another as we respond to the pastoral needs of the victims. Further, we wanted to act as a united conference to show the faithful and all people of goodwill that we are hearing their concerns.

**What is the definition used by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to establish a “credible allegation?”** A “credible allegation” is an allegation the Archdiocese has reason to believe is true after reviewing reasonably available, relevant information and consulting with the Archdiocesan Lay Review Board.

**What is the definition of a minor for purposes of this list?** Anyone under the age of 18 at the time the abuse is alleged to have occurred.

**Why does the year range of credible accusations start at 1950?** 1950 corresponds to the year the John Jay College used in its two national research projects. The first report was issued in 2004 regarding the nature and scope of clerical sexual abuse from 1950-2002. The second report was issued in 2011 regarding the causes and context of clergy sexual abuse from 1950-2010. Verification of claims becomes more difficult with the passage of time. For those Texas Dioceses founded after 1950, the list will begin with the founding date of the Diocese.

**Who compiled the list for the Archdiocese?** As part of the process, the Archdiocese retained the firm of Kinsale Management to examine the Archdiocesan files and identify matters that they believed should be examined by the Archdiocesan Review Board. The Archdiocesan Review Board reviewed those files and made recommendations to the Cardinal, all of which he accepted.

**Who comprises the Archdiocesan Review Board?** The Archdiocesan Review Board is a consultative body comprised of laity, one Pastor, and the Archdiocesan Promoter of Justice to advise Cardinal DiNardo in the assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a cleric and recommendations regarding the accused cleric's suitability for continued ministry. The review board currently includes retired members of the judiciary, a psychologist, a PhD in social work with a specialty in child abuse, a retired law enforcement officer, a community volunteer with a background in working with vulnerable populations and a community volunteer with a background in psychiatric nursing who is a parent of six children.

**What actions has AGH taken to address this issue prior to this list?** Since 2004, when the John Jay Report was released, the Office of Child and Youth Protection (formerly the Office of Safe Environment), has trained over 130,000 individuals including, clergy, employees and volunteers in the awareness and recognition of child abuse. All employees and all clergy are required to take the class in addition to all volunteers that interact with children. The Archdiocese requires a criminal background check for all employees including clergy, deacons and seminarians.

**Are any Diocesan Services Fund (DSF) or IGNITE Capital Campaign contributions being used for the settlement of sexual abuse claims?** No, none of these contributions are being used for that purpose.

**What is the Charter?** The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. A full copy of the Charter is available for download from the USCCB website. All United States bishops have agreed to implement the Charter throughout the United States to address sexual abuse by clergy.

In June 2003, the USCCB began auditing Dioceses throughout the United States to ensure implementation of the practices required by the Charter. An Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter is prepared by the USCCB Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. Additional information may be found on the USCCB website ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)).

**What is the Archdiocese's current reporting policy for suspected abuse of a minor?** The Archdiocesan Policy for Reporting Suspected Abuse of a Minor directs any individual who suspects a minor has been the victim of abuse or is in danger of abuse to first notify civil authorities charged with investigating these reports prior to notifying any designated officials at the Archdiocese. The policy may be found on the Archdiocesan website at [www.archgh.org](http://www.archgh.org) (see Child and Youth Protection – Safe Environment Documents).

**What is a Victim Assistance Coordinator?** The Victims Assistance Coordinator of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston serves as the primary contact for persons who were sexually abused as a minor (less than 18 years of age) by clergy, employees or volunteer ministers of the Church. The Victims Assistance Coordinator offers pastoral outreach, in the name of the Archdiocese of

Galveston-Houston, to those victims/survivors of sexual abuse as a minor by facilitating therapeutic services. If you are seeking Victims Assistance, please contact Victims Assistance Coordinator Diane Vines at [vac@archgh.org](mailto:vac@archgh.org) or confidential voicemail 713-654-5799. The Victim Assistance Coordinator advises survivors of sexual abuse that while we will make a report to Civil Authorities as a matter of course, we want him/her to know that they also have a right to make such a report.