



SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

PROVINCE OF ST. ANDREW | SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

Statement from Fr. Ted. Montemayor, Provincial for the Western Province of the Salesian Order

I write to you following recent news reports on clergy sexual abuse of minors and in advance of a further anticipated CNN report mentioning clergy and religious including some Salesian priests and brothers.

As Salesians, we condemn sexual abuse and are committed to securing and promoting the safety and well-being of children. We know that terrible acts of abuse have happened in the past. We express our sincerest apologies to all victims and their families impacted by abuse by any member of the Salesian Order.

We also want you to know that we take abuse very seriously and have over the past decade implemented policies and procedures designed to better prevent and respond to child abuse.

Our Province is accredited by Praesidium, a non-religious accreditation agency (<https://www.praesidiuminc.com>) on the prevention of child sexual abuse. Praesidium provides consultation and training on prevention of child sexual abuse, responding to reports of abuse, and supervision of priests and brothers accused of child sexual abuse. Only Orders and Dioceses with the highest standards in preventing and responding to child abuse reports are accredited by Praesidium. Our Province maintains its accreditation since 2012 through rigorous, in-person and periodic audits by Praesidium.

Salesian members credibly accused of sexual abuse are/have been placed on restriction. As such, their faculties are removed for life. They cannot officiate in any public ministries within the Catholic Church. They are forbidden from representing themselves as Catholic ministers. They are prohibited from being alone with children. Members on restrictions are subject to stringent requirements regarding accountability of their activities both within their community and in public.

Applicants to the Salesian Order must undergo stringent screening and assessment processes designed to ensure that any candidate posing a risk of engaging in sexual abuse is excluded. Salesian novices are subjected to psychological and sexual assessments and social media and criminal background checks.

The formation program for Salesians has been developed to foster healthy development in the spiritual life of the Salesian as well as psychosexual health and well-being. At every stage of their formation and ministry, Salesian members receive safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct, awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries.

Salesian members must participate in continuing education programs that specifically include the prevention of abuse and how to maintain healthy boundaries.

Further, we have developed and implemented the following various policies related to the protection of children: the Safe Children Policy, the Working with Youth Policy, the Electronic Communications Policy, and the Internet and Social Media Policy (see <http://donboscowest.org/childsafety>). These policies form the basis for an effective and transparent process in responding to accusations of child sexual abuse. Every Salesian must review these policies at the beginning of every school year. They can be found at: <http://www.donboscowest.org/childsafety>.

The Safe Children Policy mandates specific actions take place upon the reporting of sexual abuse of a minor. These steps include: 1) immediately reporting the alleged abuse to law enforcement, 2) immediately placing the accused on restriction pending the outcome of an investigation, 3) offering the victim pastoral and therapeutic assistance, and 4) referral of the case to the Salesian Review Board for comprehensive investigation and review. These steps promote healing for the victim, transparency with the public, and accountability for alleged perpetrators.

The Victim's Response Guide outlines our process for investigating and responding to reports of child abuse as well as for providing victims of abuse with pastoral and therapeutic assistance and (See <http://donboscowest.org/childsafety/victims-response-guide>).

Salesian members and school staff are trained on child abuse mandated reporting requiring them to report any suspicion of child abuse to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. Accusations of child abuse by a Salesian priest, brother or school staff are directed to the Salesian Review Board and school administration, respectively, for investigation.

Victims of abuse will be responded to with compassion and respect. If you or anyone you know has felt victimized by a Salesian at any time, please contact the Mental Health Advisor for the Salesians, Daniel Sonkin, Ph.D., at 415-332-6703 or email at contact@danielsonkin.com.

Please keep everyone impacted by these matters in your prayers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted. Montemayor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Ted. Montemayor
Provincial for the Western Province of the Salesian Order