

We, the Discalced Carmelites of the Province of St. Therese (Oklahoma Province), continue to pray for all those who have suffered at the hands of priests and religious, but particularly for those who have suffered at the hands of our priests and religious brothers. We also pray for the members of families that together with the victims have suffered and are suffering this tragedy.

There are so many layers around this calamity that it is difficult to address them all. There is the hurt, the anger and the shame felt by those abused as well as the hurt, anger and shame of the good priests and religious who have been faithful to the trust committed to them in their ministry. They also have to deal with the betrayal they feel along with that of the believing community.

We offer to all of those who have been victimized at the hands of our priests and religious a most sincere and heartfelt apology. We also offer a most sincere apology to the rest of the believing community and to those who belong to the family of Carmel.

We, with the bishops of the United States, are committed to truth and transparency in regards to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. We, as a whole, are also committed to their continued protection, the prevention of sexual abuse, an accountability for any abuse that has occurred, and a striving towards necessary reconciliation with the Church for those who have suffered abuse.

We, as religious, belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) and through our diligent efforts with this larger body of religious men, began in 2002, a long-term program of education and accountability which honors and fulfills the standards set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) regarding the protection of minors in the Catholic Church. We are working in concert with the various bishops in whose dioceses we serve to work towards this transparency that is so necessary in our times.

We will also be posting our letter of accreditation regarding our compliance to the standards set by CMSM and Praesidium, the third-party accreditors. It is our hope that this will stand as an assurance to all of you of our commitment to keeping these standards that help ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults to whom we minister. We will also be posting the glossary of terms used by CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) which we use in our guidelines.

The different dioceses in which we serve will be publishing a list of all priests credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors. Each diocese will have their own time periods that will be covered. Some will publish names of those who have been credibly accused since 1940, others since 1950, etc. We ourselves will also list the names of those who have been credibly accused on this website as well as on the websites of our monasteries in the Province that have websites.

This is a very delicate situation for several reasons. Some of these allegations are difficult to investigate since they go back decades into the past, making gathering facts and testimonies a difficult and elusive task. Also, we are now following different standards which did not exist in the past. It is also important to keep in mind, that in justice we have a duty to protect the good name of priests and religious from false accusations as well as to protect and support all victims of abuse.

A 'credible allegation' is one that after review of information available and consultation with a Review Board (consisting of lay members) is believed to be true or to have the 'semblance of truth'. Some dioceses have decided to publish the names of those who have been accused even though the allegation has not been determined to be credible. In the case of deceased priests/religious, some dioceses have

decided to publish their names if there has been a public allegation against them relying solely on the strength of the uncorroborated statement of the victim.

We ask that you continue to pray for all those who have been affected by these tragedies as well as for the bishops and church leaders that are working to maintain transparent accountability. I, as your brother in Christ, also ask that you pray for all those who have lived their vocation to the priesthood and/or religious life in faithful service and integrity who are also being affected by these calamities and who can only entrust themselves to the Lord to whom they have devoted their lives.

“Almighty and ever-present Father, your watchful care reaches from end to end and orders all things in such power that even the tensions and the tragedies of sin cannot frustrate your loving plans.

Help us to embrace your will, give us the strength to follow your call, so that your truth may live in our hearts and reflect peace to those who believe in your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

Prayer for the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time