



Society of the Divine Word Western Province

Our Commitment to Protecting Children and Youth from Sexual Abuse

Dear Friends in the Lord,

The Society of the Divine Word considers ministry to youth – beginning with the Gospel message amid the challenges of today’s secular culture, violence, poverty and the erosion of Christian values – as one of the primary ministries of the more than 6,000 Divine Word Missionaries who serve God’s people in more than 80 countries around the world. Our commitment to protecting children and youth from sexual abuse is an important part of that mission.

As far back as the 1970s, the Western Province of the Society of the Divine Word made a concerted effort to remove from public ministry and restrict contact with minors for all those accused or otherwise suspected of sexual abuse or the violation of acceptable boundaries with minors.

Beginning in 2002, the Western Province instituted numerous reforms for responding to claims of abuse and striving to ensure the safety of minors.

In 2003, the Western Province implemented a comprehensive program of Sexual Abuse Policies that requires initial and annual ongoing education in sexual abuse prevention and mandated reporting for all province members. Each member is also required to undergo initial and ongoing background checks, and to meet annually with a religious superior to review efforts to protect children and youth from sexual abuse.

The Western Province is fully accredited by Praesidium, Inc., and has been accredited since 2007. Praesidium, Inc., is an independent agency setting compliance standards for the safeguarding of minors. Accreditation is updated annually with required onsite visits and reviews in 2010, 2013 and 2018. The next onsite review will be in 2025.

An independent Sexual Abuse Review Board (Region 6 of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men -- CMSM) meets annually, and more often if needed, to oversee the response to all allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor including the review of the investigation, reporting to civil and church authorities, assistance to the victim and restriction of the member.

As an additional step toward transparency and accountability, in 2020 the Western Province arranged for an external audit of all member files (current, deceased, transferred and former) to ensure that previous internal reviews were both accurate and complete, and that no case of the sexual abuse of a minor has been overlooked or not fully recorded.

As a sign of its desire to be transparent in matters related to the sexual abuse of minors, the Western Province of the Society of the Divine Word is listing the names of its members with ties to the Western Province who have been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors.

Words cannot express the deep sorrow we feel for the harm these men have caused to victims/survivors and their families. We also apologize for participating in the harm that abuse has done to the Catholic Church. The people of God have suffered, and they rightly demand transparency and accountability. We hope that this disclosure of names will contribute to reconciliation and healing.

Most of the cases related to the names that are listed here date back decades. We view this disclosure of our shameful history as part of our commitment to preventing abuse. The Western Province employs a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse of minors and reports to civil and church authorities all accusations of sexual abuse involving a minor. We encourage anyone who suspects abuse by any member of the Western Province to contact local law enforcement or church officials or:

Provincial Superior
USW Province Center
11316 Cypress Ave.
Riverside, CA 92505
951-687-7600 svdusw@gmail.com

Director of Child Protection
Duong Nguyen
909-883-8981
duongnguyen73@hotmail.com

Rector, Divine Word Residence
Alan Jenkins 951-689-4858
lesteralanjenkins@gmail.com

Sexual Abuse Review Board (Reg 6)
Rick Burns (chair) 818-232-2648
soitgoes@sbcglobal.net

Please click on the links to learn more about the ongoing efforts of the Western Province to protect children and youth from sexual abuse, how to report sexual abuse and view the names of those who have been credibly accused.

Yours in the Divine Word,



Very Rev. Jon P Kirby SVD
Provincial Superior – Western Province