



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report Truth, Justice, and Healing

Giving an account of the commitments made regarding care for victims of abuse and the creation of safe environments

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

March 30th, 2022  
(Translated from the original in Spanish)



LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST





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I.

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Introducción:  
Social and  
Public  
*Accountability*

# I. Introduction: Social and Public Accountability

With this “*2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing*,<sup>1</sup>” the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ renders an account of the progress made in its commitment to the victims of sexual abuse throughout its history, and in the creation of safe environments that seek to prevent abuse. As we publish this report, foremost in our minds are the victims who have suffered sexual abuse<sup>2</sup>, both known and unknown. Two years ago we assured them and their families that, “we want to be converted and to make reparation with concrete actions.<sup>3</sup>” We also address the Legionaries of Christ, whom the Lord “calls to heal the wounds of so many victims of abuse.<sup>4</sup>” To all other members of Regnum Christ, the Church, and society, whom we also ask, “help us to fulfill the decisions expressed in this communiqué.<sup>5</sup>” We are indebted to all of them, and to them we address this *2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing*.

## 2021

Two main steps have been taken: active outreach to the victims and a systematic program for complete reparation.

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1 The present *2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing* was prepared by the “Interdepartmental Commission” of the General Directorate of the Legionaries of Christ, which combines the General Secretariat, Priestly Life Department, Safe Environments Department, and the International Communications Office. The publication was authorized by the General Director, after having heard the opinion of his council. Two other reports on the same topic have already been published: *Report 1941-2019* (December 2019) and the *2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing* (March 2021). All three reports can be found on [Oabuse.org](http://Oabuse.org)

2 Cf. GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, *Protect and Heal*, Glossary: “Sexual abuse of a minor: 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.

The work of 2021 focused on strengthening the pathways of truth, justice, and healing for victims, taking two new steps in addition to previous actions:

1. Active outreach to the victims, reaching out to them through both institutional and individual channels.<sup>6</sup>
2. A systematic program to offer a pathway of integral reparation to the victims of sexual abuse. The financial portion will be established with the help of committees formed by outside professionals.

At the same time, there has been continual growth toward compliance with international standards of response to victims, prevention, response to accusations, and supervision<sup>7</sup>, under the accreditation and revision of a specialized external independent institution. This institution periodically revises standards, based on international learnings regarding the abuse of minors.

Along the lines of the *1st Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing* (March 2021), together with Pope Francis we declare, “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.<sup>8</sup>”

This *2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing* (March 2022) takes another step in this direction. We hold in our hearts the words that Pope Francis spoke to us at the conclusion of the 2020 General Chapter. “The journey of renewal is not over, because a change in mentality of individuals and in an institution requires a great deal of time for assimilation, and therefore a continuous conversion.<sup>9</sup>” To continue this progress as we did last year, in the final chapter of this report we establish priorities for 2022 that will help us to continue fulfilling the commitments we have made.

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<sup>6</sup> Contact information is on the last page of this report.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. <https://www.0abuse.org/accreditation-standards-2020/>

<sup>8</sup> PAPA FRANCISCO, Letter to the People of God, August 20, 2018 ([link](#)).

<sup>9</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Address to the participants of the General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ and the General Assemblies of the Consecrated Women and Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi*, February 29, 2020 - unofficial translation from Spanish Original ([link](#)).



II.

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Toward a  
Culture of Zero  
Abuse: 16 years  
of gradual  
progress



## II. Toward a Culture of Zero Abuse: 16 years of gradual progress

The timeline below explains the commitments and actions taken by the Legionaries of Christ to prevent and counteract abuse, and to work on behalf of victims, through March 2022. A more detailed version of this timeline can be found in Appendix I of this *Report*.

# Toward a Culture of Zero Abuse in the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ

2006 to 2014

Became aware of and accepted the reality of the sexual abuse committed by the founder and other members of the Congregation and the need to care for the victims. Implementation of Church regulations (*Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*) and safe environment standards in several countries. Apostolic Visitation of the Congregation followed by the period of the Pontifical Delegate, Card. Velasio De Paolis (2010-2014).

2011-2013

Commission for outreach to the victims of Fr. Marcial Maciel. First investigation into the phenomena of abuse by members of the Congregation and first publication of the corresponding data and policies for prevention.

2014

**General Chapter:**  
Petition for forgiveness from the victims and public commitments.

2014-2018

**Implementation of means to prevent abuse from happening again:**  
Creation, implementation, and external audit of an international safe environment policy.

2019

**What exactly happened?**  
In-depth investigation of the history of all cases that occurred in the Congregation.

2019 (December)

**Historical Report 1941-2019**  
Publication of the results of the historical investigation – how many cases, when, and where they occurred.

2020 (February)

**The General Chapter publishes:**

- **Conversion and Reparation:** a public acknowledgment of errors, petition for forgiveness, and commitment to cultural change.
- **Protect and Heal:** strengthening of the international policy on safe environments, the information policy, and promotion of institutional collaboration.

2021 (March)

**Publication of the First Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing 2020:**  
Rendering an account of care for victims and the publication of each individual case.

2022 (March)

**Publication of the 2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing 2021:**  
Rendering an account of care for victims. Guide for financial reparation.



### III.

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## Advances in the Congregation's 2020-2026 Commitments

# III. Advances in the Congregation's 2020-2026 Commitments<sup>10</sup>

In the following section, we offer an account of the fulfillment of the commitments established by the *1st Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing*. Each specific commitment is presented at the beginning of the section, followed by the steps taken since the publication of the last *Annual Report*.

## A. Care for victims

***Commitment for 2021: Strengthen an active and more systematic outreach to victims.***

### Response to allegations received

In March 2021, when the *1st Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing*, was published, five allegations were under preliminary canonical investigation or awaiting a ruling from the Holy See. The status of these five cases is the following:

- Two remain under preliminary canonical investigation.
- One is awaiting a ruling from the Holy See after the conclusion of the preliminary canonical investigation.
- One is awaiting a ruling from the Holy See after the conclusion of the canonical criminal proceeding.
- In one case, after a preliminary canonical investigation carried out by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the accusations were not substantiated.

Additionally, a previous case mentioned in the *Report 1941-2019* is awaiting the results of a police investigation.

Since the publication of the March 2021 report, the Congregation has received four new allegations of presumed abuse of a minor involving

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *1st Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing* (March 2021), p. 24

priests who were not included in previous reports. These refer to alleged events in the 1980's, 2010, and 2020. Three of the priests have been removed from public priestly ministry while awaiting preliminary canonical investigation and one is exercising a restricted ministry pending the conclusion of civil and canonical proceedings.

In addition, new claims, allegations, and formal declarations have been received within the canonical proceedings for priests which had already been published in the previous reports about events of past decades.

The updated statistics can be found on the webpage [Oabuse.org](http://Oabuse.org).

### An external and independent channel to receive, listen to, and assist victims

The Congregation is committed to seeking and pursuing pathways of truth, justice, and healing for each victim, while respecting the tempo and particular circumstances of each person. This also applies to those whose cases have already been juridically closed.

To offer victims an appropriate reception and accompaniment, in 2020 the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ established a permanent partnership with Eshamá, an external and independent institution founded by persons who have first-hand experience of the victimization of child sexual abuse and by therapists, social workers, and lawyers who are experts in restorative justice. It specializes in caring for the victims of sexual abuse, as well as abuse of power and of conscience in the Catholic Church, and it also works with various institutions. The Congregation partners with Eshamá and other independent reporting channels in the countries where it is present.

At the time of this report, Eshamá is caring for 31 victims of members of the Congregation. Of these, 19 came forward after the publication of the *1st Annual Report (2020)*.

- 20 people reported sexual abuse that they suffered as minors.
- 11 people reported abuses of power and of conscience they suffered as adults. Of these 11, four also reported that in their case there was conduct which, given their state of vulnerability, could be considered sexual abuse.

All these people are participating in processes that seek to respond to their needs, which are different for each person. These include obtaining recognition, truth, reparation, and making it possible to end cycles of victimization by seeking to heal from the consequences of abuse and to integrate their wounds into their own personal history in the best way possible.

## Eshamá

The Congregation has a permanent partnership with Eshamá, an external and independent institution that specializes in caring for the victims of sexual abuse, abuse of power and of conscience in the Catholic Church

Eshamá cares for 31 victims of members of the Congregation. For its part, the Congregation has contacted 56 of the approximately 170 known victims.

## Active outreach to victims on behalf of the Congregation

In addition to working with an independent institution to receive and accompany the victims who come forward, the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ has also contacted several victims of sexual abuse that it is aware of, while seeking in every situation to respect the tempo of each of the victims.

There is a team in the General Directorate of the Congregation that is dedicated to this follow-up in each territory<sup>11</sup>, and it ensures that they have the support and means necessary to personally care for the victims who desire to receive this care in the different countries where they reside.

Thanks to the openness and trust of the victims and to the means that have been put into place throughout the past years, which need to continue improving, the Congregation has been able to connect with 56 of the estimated 170 known victims of priests of the Congregation.

The Congregation is willing to establish pathways of healing with victims, respecting their personal timing, their willingness to interact directly or indirectly with the Congregation, and seeking to overcome the existing difficulties in the measure that this is possible, as some victims have already passed away.

## B. Economic reparation and support for victims

***Commitment for 2021: Establish a separate program for economic reparation and support for victims of sexual abuse by priests of the Congregation.***

Throughout 2021, as a complement to the means already being offered to assist the integral process of healing, the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ produced a guide for offering financial reparation and support to the victims of sexual abuse of minors by members of the Congregation. This is the result of an international study which compared other systems and parameters, and which aligns with civil and canonical procedures.

When a person contacts one of the institutional reporting channels or a separate channel<sup>12</sup>, these channels receive and accompany them. In

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<sup>11</sup> Territory – a geographic area where the Congregation is present. This could consist of a country or one or more countries under the government of superior of the Congregation.

<sup>12</sup> Contact information is on the last page of this report.

addition to ensuring the allegations are reported to civil and ecclesial authorities for their proceedings, the person affected by abuse will receive assistance in recounting their experience, finding therapy, and expressing the needs they might have, including financial reparation. Where possible, the reparation will take place in a broader process of restorative justice that seeks to contribute to the complete healing of the victim.<sup>13</sup>

To accomplish this, the Congregation has developed a permanent program of reparation over time which will gradually be implemented throughout 2022 in different countries. This program consists of the elements outlined in the graphic below. The channels for receiving victims in each place are available to offer detailed explanations to them.

The Congregation is aware that no amount of reparation can compensate for abuse, or make the damage caused by abuse disappear. Nevertheless, it seeks to offer a complete reparation to help restore justice and ease the healing process for the victim. Together with care and accompaniment, the Congregation believes that financial reparation can help to alleviate, at least somewhat, the weight carried by those who bear this wound.

## Repa- ration

The Congregation has developed a program for complete reparation, to help restore justice and ease the healing process for the victim. This program will be gradually implemented throughout 2022 in different countries.

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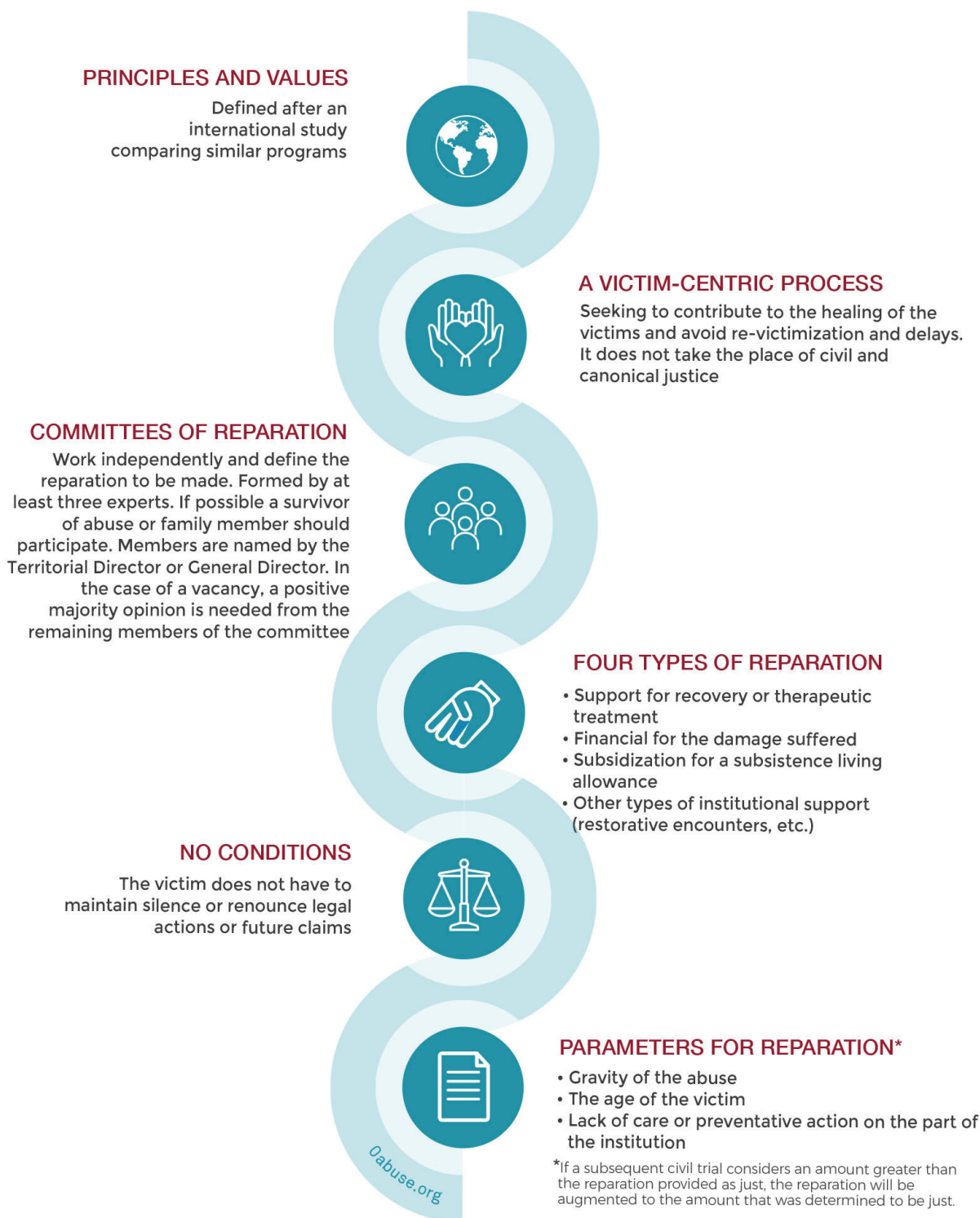
<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 3, 6 and 11.

# CHART 1: REPARATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

## of the Legionaries of Christ for victims of sexual abuse

[Oabuse.org](http://Oabuse.org)

Where possible, the reparation will take place in a broader process of restorative justice that seeks to contribute to the complete healing of the victim. It consists of the following elements:





## C. Conclude pending canonical proceedings

***Commitment for 2021: 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.***

The abuse of a minor is a crime that is prosecuted both in the civil sphere under the authority of the state, and canonically under the authority of the Church. The Congregation cooperates with both authorities.

In the *1st Annual Report* (2020), eight ongoing canonical proceedings were reported. Throughout the past year 2021, four cases have been closed and four are ongoing. Of those that have closed, in two cases the priests were found guilty during the canonical penal process and in the remaining two the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ratified the measures that the appropriate authority had already imposed without opening a canonical penal process.

During 2021, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith opened two new canonical processes. Currently, there are six total ongoing canonical processes.

All of the known cases of priests who have committed abuse and remain in the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ have already been presented to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for their instructions on how to proceed or are the object of a previous investigation.

For more information please consult the webpage [Oabuse.org](http://Oabuse.org).

## D. Concealment or grave negligence

***Commitment for 2021: Examine with external experts possible evidence of concealment or grave negligence in relation to historical cases of abuse.<sup>14</sup>***

In 2020 a judge on a canonical diocesan tribunal in Mexico began an independent investigation to analyze the actions of major superiors

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 8.

with regard to the handling of [a known case](#).<sup>15</sup> We are awaiting the conclusion of the investigation, which will also orient us in the examination of other cases. In the meantime, explicit mention was made of possible deficiencies in the handling of past cases in the results of the investigations that were presented to the Holy See in 2021.

## E. Processes of accreditation

***Commitment for 2021: Conclude the external accreditation processes of our safe environment protocols that are underway in several territories.***

Throughout 2021, there was continued progress in the external audit of our safe environment protocols in each territory<sup>16</sup> to ensure the fulfillment of the professional standards<sup>17</sup> of [Praesidium](#)<sup>18</sup>, which are recognized internationally to be among the highest for the prevention of sexual abuse against minors.

Before 2021, the territories of the United States (2017) and Spain (2018) had already been accredited by Praesidium, and now are in the process of reaccreditation.

Thanks to dedicated efforts during more than a year of evaluations, in 2021 the territories of Mexico and Central America, Northern Mexico, Chile and Colombia-Venezuela have received their accreditation. The territories of Italy and Brazil are carrying out preparations to begin their accreditation.

In the case of the territory of Western and Central Europe, up to now the Congregation has used the means of prevention and intervention promulgated by the civil and ecclesial authorities and followed the corresponding commitments and revision mechanisms. The appropriateness of seeking an accreditation by Praesidium as well is being studied.

As a part of fulfilling the standards of safe environments, the Congregation has sought greater professionalism in this area of prevention and response to abuse, as well as care for the victims. At

## Accreditation

In 2021 the territories of Mexican and Central America, Northern Mexico, Chile, and Colombia-Venezuela received their Praesidium accreditation.

<sup>15</sup> <https://legionariesofchrist.org/case-from-the-territory-of-mexico-fernando-martinez-suarez/>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Protect and Heal*, 13-16, 21.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.0abuse.org/accreditation-standards-2020/>

<sup>18</sup> Praesidium (a company specialized in the creation and accreditation of safe environments): <https://www.praesidiuminc.com/>

the publication of this report, each territory possesses a dedicated safe environments coordinator in ongoing formation.<sup>19</sup>

In October 2021 there was an international meeting of Safe Environment Coordinators. The principal themes were receiving, listening to, and accompanying victims, steps on the pathway to cultural change for preventing abuse, current canonical legislation, and the measures established by Pope Francis to address the culture of zero abuse globally.

## F. Collaboration with external institutions and experts Commitment for 2021: Expand collaboration with external

***Commitment for 2021: Expand collaboration with external institutions and experts, and establish forums for consultation with survivors of sexual abuse for the continuous improvement of the Congregation's work in this area.***

The Congregation is aware that their process of cultural change is slow and requires continuous effort and collaboration with other external institutions and experts.

The principal collaboration during 2021 was that established with Eshmá, which was mentioned in the section of this report, “An independent channel to receive, listen to, and assist victims.” In addition to receiving victims and providing professional and independent accompaniment through this institution, the Congregation has been able to draw on experts in different themes like restorative dialogue, receiving victims, and specialized psychological assistance for victims in an ongoing effort to improve.

Communities have held formative encounters which helped form increased sensitivity and understanding toward the victims, the pain that an abuse brings with it, and the best way to accompany them. On an individual basis, several Legionaries have attended formation courses given in 2021 by both ecclesiastical and civil institutions: CEPROME and *Reparare* at the Anahuac University in Mexico; the Institute for Development and the Human Person at Francisco de Vitoria University and *Project Repara* in Spain; organisms created by the episcopal conferences of Chile, France, Germany, and the United States; and

## Experts

The Congregation is aware that cultural change is slow and requires continual effort and collaboration with other external institutions and experts.

<sup>19</sup> <https://legionariesofchrist.org/child-youth-protection/>

Eshmá, Praesidium (Armatus) and the Union of General Superiors on an international level.

In the majority of cases, both the investigations and the canonical processes have been carried out in part or wholly by professionals independent of the Congregation. Furthermore, experts in canon and civil law, and in the phenomenon of the sexual abuse of minors, have been particularly consulted.

External professionals have also been included in the bodies and entities outlined in the safe environment procedures to advise the territorial director in caring for victims and handling cases.

## G. Abuse of authority and conscience

***Commitment for 2021: Address the issue of abuse of authority and conscience, as noted by the General Chapter.<sup>20</sup>***

The Congregation decided to focus its efforts in 2021 on improving the care for victims of sexual abuse of minors and to advance the canonical processes that were pending. The abuse of authority and conscience could not yet be addressed globally and systematically, but the cases of persons who approached the Congregation directly or through an independent channel were attended to.

The Congregation holds to its commitment to address the theme of abuse of authority and conscience as the General Chapter has asked in the Capitular Decree 2020: “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.”<sup>21</sup>

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20 GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, [You will be my witnesses](#), 21. “The priestly ministry demands that we have the highest respect for the dignity and freedom of every person redeemed by Christ. Having recognized with sadness that here too there have been some abuses of power and conscience in the exercise of authority and in our apostolic activity, 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.”

21 *Idem*.



IV.

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## Commitments for 2022

## IV. Commitments for 2022

### Commitment

There is still a long path to take in search of truth, justice, and healing for the victims of sexual abuse of minors. Therefore, in 2022 we commit ourselves to continue the path already taken.

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Throughout 2021 there was progress in terms of several of the commitments that the Congregation established. Nevertheless, there is still a long path to take in the search for truth, justice, and healing for the victims of sexual abuse of minors by members of our Congregation, and therefore, in 2022 we commit ourselves to continue the path already begun and to prioritize the following commitments:

- 1.° Respond to any allegation according to established procedures and strengthen outreach to victims with whom there is still no contact.
- 2.° Follow up on and strengthen the program for financial reparation and support for victims of sexual abuse by priests of the Congregation.<sup>22</sup>
- 3.° Follow up on ongoing canonical proceedings according to the instructions that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith gives in each case, constituting the corresponding tribunals and ensuring the participation of external canon lawyers as judges and advisers.
- 4.° With external experts, examine possible evidence of concealment or grave negligence with respect to past cases of abuse and enact corresponding processes.<sup>23</sup>
- 5.° Conclude the processes of external accreditation or reaccreditation of safe environment standards that are underway in several territories.
- 6.° Expand collaboration with external institutions and experts, and 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."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Protect and heal*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Protect and heal*, 8.

<sup>24</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST 2020, [You will be my witnesses](#), 21.

In the next annual report the Congregation will make known the most significant progress on an international level in the fulfillment of these commitments.



Appendix:

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Detailed timeline



# Appendix - Detailed timeline

## Steps taken before 2021

**Awareness and acceptance of the sexual abuse committed by the founder and other members of the Congregation and the need to care for the victims. Beginning of the implementation of Church regulations (Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela) and of safe environment standards in certain countries.** The intervention of the Holy See, the canonical visit, and the naming of a Pontifical Delegate helped the Congregation to become aware of the abuses committed by its founder, Fr. Maciel, and of their effects in the Congregation. Codes of conduct and procedures began to be implemented in the United States and Ireland, countries where the problem began to be addressed with greater urgency and seriousness following the indication of the episcopal conferences. An initial study was made of the cases known at the time and the interim general director published the results.<sup>25</sup>

**Commission for outreach to the victims of Fr. Marcial Maciel.** The Pontifical Delegate, Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, instituted the “Commission for Outreach” that cared for the victims of Fr. Maciel who decided to come forward. This commission presented its results to the General Chapter in 2014.

**2014 General Chapter: Petition for forgiveness from victims and recognition of the grave misconduct of Fr. Maciel.** The General Chapter of 2014 recognized the grave misconduct of Fr. Marcial Maciel and asked victims for forgiveness in the name of the Congregation.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, it asked superiors to:

- continue seeking reconciliation with victims of abuse;
- implement the international policy of safe environments for minors and vulnerable individuals;
- accredit their safe environment procedures through specialized and independent institutions.

**2014-2018 Development, implementation, and external audit of an international safe environment policy.** Father Eduardo Robles-Gil, LC, then General Director, concentrated his efforts on prevention and responding to any allegations – signs, indications, and information...

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<sup>25</sup> [Statement of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ about the path of renewal that we are traveling](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Presentation of the Communiqués of the General Chapter 2014](#)

- through the crafting and implementation of an international safe environment policy<sup>27</sup> which must be audited in every country by independent specialized institutions. Furthermore, there was some outreach to victims of members of the Congregation to initiate processes of healing and reparation.

**2019 Historical investigation of the cases that occurred in the Congregation.** A commission was established to investigate the archives and any existing documents to identify all the cases of abuse that occurred in the Congregation in all parts of the world from its foundation to the present. It sought to understand the reality of abuse in the Congregation with greater precision to begin a real process of outreach, listening, and reparation with victims, ensure that the guilty receive civil and ecclesiastic legal sanctions, and proceed towards a change of institutional culture.

**2019 (December) Publication of the results of the historical investigation: 1941-2019 Report.**

The [Report 1941-2019 on the Phenomenon of Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ Since its Foundation](#). This was a key step, with its limitations, toward defining this painful reality, and permitted:

- **A historical investigation.** Cases of abuse committed by priests of the Legionaries of Christ between 1941 and 2019 were collected.
- **An analysis of the phenomenon.** An analysis and diagnosis of the phenomenon of abuse of minors in the Congregation was carried out, identifying the specific context and cultural causes which, in each case, facilitated abuse. It was clear that historically the response of the Congregation was often characterized by an attitude of institutional defensiveness more than care for the victims.
- **The centrality of the victim.** Victims could be asked for forgiveness with greater truth, recognizing the harm they suffered, and strengthening our commitments and policies to ensure that the victim is at the center of all pathways of healing.
- **Distribution of information.** To accept responsibility and act on a global level, a public commitment to present the findings of the investigation to the highest governing body of the Congregation, the General Chapter, was made.

**2020 (February).** The General Chapter of the Legionaries of Christ was celebrated, the highest governing body of the Congregation, which represents it in its totality. The Chapter published two documents.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. *1941-2019 Report*, p. 8-9.

- **Giving an account of care for victims and publication of cases and names.** The document [\*Conversion and Reparation\*](#) was published, directed primarily to victims of abuse and their families, it made an explicit request for forgiveness from each victim and recognized the allegations of the victims as a prophetic good. This document:
  - **Recognized concrete errors and committed to correcting them.** It recognized “with pain and shame” the failures and errors that permitted abuse and the inadequate way these crimes were addressed. The Congregation committed to correcting its errors.
  - **Asked the victims for forgiveness.** It mentioned the first accusers of Fr. Marcial Maciel by name, retracted the negative judgments that were made against them, recognized that their allegations regarding truth and justice were prophetic, asked them for forgiveness for the pain they suffered, thanked them for the good they have done the Congregation and the Church itself. It also asked each of the victims who suffered abuse at the hands of a member of the Congregation for forgiveness.
  - **Invited us to a cultural change in order to seek to encounter victims.** It invited the members of the Congregation to examine their consciences regarding their commitment to reach out to victims.
  - **Recognized the role of the press and other institutions as indispensable allies.** It recognized civil and ecclesiastic authorities, society, channels of communication, and organizations that specialize in prevention of abuse and restoration of justice as indispensable allies.
  
- [\*Protect and Heal\*](#)

**Strengthened the international safe environment policy and the information policy, and promoted institutional collaboration.** This normative document strengthened the international safe environment policy promulgated in 2014. Some of the key points are:

  - **Institutional collaboration.** It promoted collaboration with other ecclesiastical and civil organizations to eradicate the scourge of sexual abuse of minors.
  - **Fight against impunity.** It established clear sanctions for those guilty of not reporting or impeding correct actions in the case of sexual abuse.
  - **Expulsion from the priesthood and from the clerical state for the guilty.** In addition to sanctions for abuse, it requested that the normal procedure would be to ask the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to enact the punishment of dismissal from the clerical state and expulsion from the Congregation for those who have committed multiple or repeated abuses.

- **Strengthening of international safe environments policies. Normative.** It strengthened: the principles and protocols of action to respond quickly, efficiently, and pastorally to allegations or claims of a possible case of sexual abuse; healing and reconciliation with the victims of abuse; preventative measures and safe environments; the publication of the cases of Legionaries guilty of abuse.

### **2021 (March) 1st Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing.**

**Gave an account of care for victims and publication of cases.**

This first annual report of the Legionaries of Christ included, among other things:

- **Rendition of an account: social audit.** It gave an account of concrete actions in the search for truth, justice, and healing for the victims of sexual abuse against minors by members of the Congregation<sup>28</sup> and in the creation of safe environments in our institutions since the 2020 General Chapter.
- **Publication of each case in different ways.** It explained the reasons and ways that the names and individual cases of Legionary priests known to have committed abuse are published on a provincial level in different countries.
- **Receiving, listening, and prioritized care for victims through an independent institution of experts.** It presented the partnership of the Congregation with Eshamá, an institution of professionals dedicated to victims of abuse in the Catholic Church, which offers an external independent channel for receiving and caring for the victims of members of the Congregation through different programs.
- **Preparations for a program of financial reparation.** It explained the progress made toward financial reparation for victims and advances in the safe environment policy put into place in 2014.
- **Publication of the commitments for 2021.** It made seven public commitments regarding points that it will give priority to throughout 2021.
- **Updating the information and data on Oabuse.org.** It updated the data that the *Report1941-2019* presented.

### **2022 (March) 2nd Annual Report: Truth, Justice, and Healing**

**Giving an account of care for the victims. A program for financial reparation.**

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 28.

## Contact information



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



Independent victim support channel (Eshmá):  
[eshma.eus](https://eshma.eus), [escuchamos@eshma.eus](mailto:escuchamos@eshma.eus),  
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Feedback on the 2020 Annual Report:  
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