



Franciscan Friars

PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA

May 31, 2019

Dear Collaborators and Friends,

May the Lord give you peace.

Today the Franciscan Friars of the Province of St. Barbara are releasing a list with the names of friars with credible accusations involving sexual abuse of minors going back to 1950. We are aware this may bring back painful memories to victims and their families. To all those victimized by a friar, I again profoundly apologize personally and in the name of all friars. To the families, supporters and advocates of those victimized, I would also like to apologize to you for the pain caused to your loved ones. There is nothing I can say that will change the past. It is inconceivable to me that a friar could abuse the trust of a child, but this is exactly what happened.

Please know that through this action, we are determined to demonstrate, that we are committed to transparency, accountability and helping survivors and their families heal. The victims, their families, and the People of God deserve transparency. While the list details misconduct by only a fraction of our Franciscan Brothers, it is a burden that all friars bear in our efforts to regain the public trust and assure parents, and society in general, that their children are safe in our ministries, parishes and other places where friars work and live. We are committed to the safety and welfare of those most vulnerable in society.

Heightened public awareness of the tragedy of sexual abuse of minors in our Province came in the early 1990s from St. Anthony's, our minor seminary in Santa Barbara. Since those early days, the friars have worked to help with the healing process for those who were abused and for the protection of children. The Franciscans have a zero-tolerance policy for those with credible accusations, and no Franciscan with a credible accusation is allowed to minister in any way. We have reviewed our files and have included the names of all those with credible accusations involving minors. Our files are also being reviewed by external professionals to ensure the list is as complete as possible.

Additionally, I encourage anyone who feels they were abused by a Franciscan to contact our independent victim's outreach coordinator, Angelica Jochim at 1-800-770-8013 or angelica.jochim@gmail.com and to contact the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

In releasing these names, I hope that in some small way it helps to bring healing to the victims and their families. I again ask for forgiveness from them and also from the People of God. Let us put our trust and hope in the Lord, who brings light to the darkness and hope to all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. David Gaa".

Fr. David Gaa, OFM
Minister Provincial