

Priest Sex Crimes: District Attorney Will Investigate Catholic Clergymen

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<https://www.valleycentral.com/news/local-news/priest-sex-crimes-district-attorney-will-investigate-catholic-clergymen/>

Cameron County District Attorney Luis V. Saenz confirms to LOCAL 23's Derick Garcia his office will investigate accusations of sex crimes within the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville. In a statement, Saenz wrote "Our office will be conducting an inquiry into this matter to determine what criminal justice actions may, or need to be, taken in response to this disclosure."

The confirmation comes less than 24 hours since the Catholic Diocese released the names of 13 priests and one permanent deacon credibly accused of sexually assaulting a minor.

[According to Bishop Daniel Flores,](#) none of the clergymen listed are in active ministry in the Diocese of Brownsville and the allegations go as far back as 1965. In a statement, the diocese defines their use of credible allegation as "one that, after review of reasonably available, relevant information in consultation with the

Diocesan Review Board or other professionals, there is reason to believe is true. A credible allegation does not necessarily mean 'guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.'"

For More Information <https://www.cdob.org/dlist/>

List of Clergy with Credible Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a Minor before the Year 2002

PLEASE NOTE: *This information about parish assignments is provided for the welfare of the Christian faithful and is not an indication that abuse occurred at any of these locations.*

Humberto Acosta

Born: February 7, 1949

Ordained: May 30, 1974

Left diocese in 1994. Allegation fully disclosed to receiving Military Ordinary in Venezuela.

Assignments: St. Mary, Mother of the Church, Brownsville; St. Joseph Church, Edinburg; St. Anthony Church, Harlingen; Our Lady of Mercy Church, Mercedes; St. Margaret Mary Church, Pharr

Lee DaCosta

Born: June 29, 1937

Ordained: April 23, 1973

Retired in 2012. Faculties removed in 2019 after review team identified him as a priest who had a credible

allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

Assignments: Sacred Heart Church, Edinburg; Sacred Heart Church, Escobares; St. Theresa Mission Church, Faysville; St. Anthony Church, Harlingen; Holy Family Church, La Grulla; St. Joseph the Worker Church, McAllen; Sacred Heart Church, McAllen; St. Joseph the Worker Mission Church, San Carlos; St. Anne Mission Church, San Manuel; Immaculate Conception Church, Rio Grande City; Our Lady, Queen of the Universe Church, San Benito; St. Joan of Arc Church, Weslaco; San Martin Porres Church, Weslaco; St. Pius X Church, Weslaco

George B. Dyer, O.P.

(deceased)

Born: January 6, 1935

Ordained: June 9, 1961 for the Dominican Friars

He returned to the Dominican Friars in 1983.

Died: 2013

Assignments: St. Luke Church, Brownsville; Campus Ministry, Brownsville and Edinburg

Armando Escobedo

Born: June 8, 1936

Ordained: June 6, 1964

Removed from ministry in 2002.

Assignments: Christ the King Church, Brownsville; St.

Luke Church, Brownsville; St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Church, Laredo; Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Lyford; Our Lady of Mercy Church, Mercedes; Our Lady of St. John of the Fields Church, Mission; St. Anthony Church, Raymondville

Terrence Fowler

Born: March 18, 1961

Ordained: June 4, 1988

Faculties removed in 1998. Laicization in process.

Assignments: St. Joseph Church, Alamo; Christ the King Church, Brownsville; St. Luke Church, Brownsville; Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Harlingen; Our Lady, Queen of the Universe Church, San Benito

Frank Gomez

(deceased)

Born: October 28, 1928

Ordained: May 27, 1961

Died: May 20, 2014

Faculties removed in 1994.

Assignments: St. Joseph Church, Alamo; Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Brownsville; St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Church, Laredo; St. Francis Xavier Church, La Feria; Sacred Heart Church, Mercedes; St. Theresa Church, San Benito; St. Mary Church, Santa Rosa; San Martin de

Porres Church, Weslaco;

James Jeffrey

(deceased)

Born: June 15, 1933

Ordained: May 30, 1959 for the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota

Died: May 28, 2017

A priest who was on loan to Diocese of Brownsville. Faculties removed in 1988 and he returned to home diocese.

Assignments: Christ the King Church, Brownsville; St. Francis Xavier Church, La Feria

Basil Onyia

Born: May 22, 1966

Ordained: July 13, 1996 for the Diocese of Aba in Nigeria

On loan from the Diocese of Aba from 1999 to 2001.

Removed from ministry in 2001. He fled the country after he was reported to civil authorities.

Laicized: 2016

Assignments: Immaculate Heart of Mary Church,

Harlingen; Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle-
National Shrine, San Juan

Benedicto Ortiz

(deceased)

Born: September 1, 1930

Ordained: April 13, 1957 for the Diocese of Areciba in
Puerto Rico

Incardinated to the Diocese of Brownsville: June 1, 1974

Died: May 14, 2011

Credible abuse report received in 2016.

Assignments: Good Shepherd Church, Brownsville; Our
Lady of Guadalupe Church, Brownsville; St. Anthony
Church, Harlingen; Our Lady of Sorrows Church, McAllen;
St. Anne, Mother of Mary Church, Pharr; Knapp Memorial
Methodist Hospital, Weslaco; and HCA Rio Grande
Regional Hospital, McAllen

Salvador Rangel, MSF

(deceased)

Born: August 6, 1947

Ordained: September 1, 1973

Died: May 18, 2002

Removed from ministry in 1977, returned to his religious community

Assignments: St. Joseph Church, Donna; Our Lady of Assumption Church, Harlingen; Valley Baptist Medical Center, Harlingen

Ivan M. Rovira

Born: March 26, 1945

Ordained: May 30, 1971 for the Diocese of Rockford

Incardinated to Diocese of Brownsville: June 6, 1977

Faculties removed in 2002.

Assignments: Holy Family Church, Brownsville; St. Mary, Mother of the Church, Brownsville; Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Brownsville; St. Joseph Church, Edinburg; Our Lady of Sorrows Church, McAllen; St. Joseph & St. Peter Seminary, Mission; St. Pius X Church, Weslaco

Salomon (David) Sandoval

(deceased)

Born: October 16, 1950

Ordained: June 30, 1979

Died: Date unknown

Removed from ministry in the Diocese of Brownsville 1986. Allegation fully disclosed to receiving bishop in

Ciudad Victoria.

Assignments: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Brownsville; St. Joseph Church, Edinburg; Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, Mission; San Martin de Porres Church, Weslaco

Marti G. Zuber

Born: May 11, 1950

Ordained: June 26, 1976

Removed from ministry in 1993. Laicization in process.

Assignments: St. Joseph Church, Edinburg; Campus Ministry, Edinburg; St. Anthony Church, Harlingen; St. Joseph Church the Worker, McAllen; Holy Spirit Church, McAllen; Immaculate Conception Church, McCook; Holy Spirit Church, Progreso; St. Anthony Church, Raymondville; San Martin de Porres Church, Weslaco;

List of Clergy with Credible Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a Minor after the Year 2002

Ronaldo Mitchell Chavez

Born: August 13, 1973

Ordained to permanent diaconate: December 18, 2010

He was removed from active ministry in 2012. Pled guilty and sentenced to seven years in prison.

Assignments: San Cristobal Magallanes & Companions Church, Mission

