



Talking Points

For conversations with consecrated men and women in Religious Institutes and Congregations

Vocabulary

Religious Institutes: male religious orders

Religious Congregations: female religious orders

Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM): www.cmsm.org

Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR): www.lcwr.org

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People:

<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.shtml>

National Review Board (NRB): monitors clergy in dioceses for Charter compliance

Praesidium: a vendor of Christian Brothers Risk Management Services, which trains and monitors religious orders for compliance to rigorous child sexual abuse prevention standards

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA): Catholic research service

Conducting the Conversation

1. Summarize the role VOTF has played in addressing sexual abuse. For example:

You may be familiar with Voice of the Faithful (VOTF), which was founded in 2002 in response to the clergy sexual abuse scandal. For five years now, VOTF has been supporting victims of clergy sexual abuse, supporting priests of integrity, and working for structural change to prevent the abuse of power that allowed sexual abuse of children to be covered up. We also have spent a great deal of energy monitoring the work of the National Review Board, which the USCCB set up to monitor diocesan child protection policies.

We realize, however, that the purview of the National Review Board and the Dallas Charter do not apply directly to religious orders of men and women. In our ongoing effort to reduce sexual abuse, we are focusing our attention on the policies of religious orders.



2. Next, convey your trust that the religious order, like VOTF, wants to pastorally address the needs of victims of sexual abuse and effectively prevent future abuse. Tell them it would be helpful to know whether the order uses the Dallas Charter, the Praesidium, or some other credible outside vehicle to guide their response to victims, their interventions with internal perpetrators, and their proactive efforts to prevent abuse. Our questions are designed to help clarify this. As this part of the discussion ends, affirm the efforts that they have made so far to protect children.

3. Questions to ask at this point:

For male institutes:

- Does your order adhere to the 2002 CMSM Statement on Sexual Abuse? (See vocabulary: CMSM is the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.)

For female congregations:

- Does your order belong to LCWR and comply with the 2002 statement on child abuse? (See Vocabulary: LCWR is the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.)

For both male and female groups:

- Does your order comply with the Dallas Charter and/or Praesidium Standards?
- What does your order do to screen applicants for sexual immaturity or dysfunctions?
- What training exists to help members identify children who have been abused or to prevent abuse of children?
- What process does your order follow when a member is accused of sexual misconduct? Is there a written policy and are all members familiar with it?
- What treatment and supervision is given to a member accused of misconduct?
- Under what circumstances might an accused member be returned to ministry?
- Does your order use the NRB, Praesidium, or other credible monitoring agency?
- Is there any part of the Dallas Charter with which your order does not agree?