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## SUMMARY TIMELINE OF ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF CLERGY ABUSE IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES, 1985-2018

*Note: For the full timeline and additional information regarding the programs and policies of the Archdiocese, visit the [Protecting Children page of the Archdiocesan website at protect.la-archdiocese.org](http://protect.la-archdiocese.org)*

The following summary of the timeline details actions taken by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 1985 when the issue of clergy sexual abuse was first addressed nationally by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The chronology includes steps taken in response to the abuse crisis faced in the Catholic Church and in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles that began in 2002 that resulted in the adoption by the U.S. Bishops of the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#). The Charter implemented Essential Norms nationally for addressing sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and deacons and includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, prevention of future acts of abuse and an annual audit process. [Each year, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has been found to be in full compliance with the Charter.](#)

**June 1985** – U.S. Bishops attended presentations at their annual meeting on the dangers and issues of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

**September 1985** – Bishop Mahony was installed as Archbishop of Los Angeles. In view of the discussion at the Bishops' annual meeting, he initiated policies on sexual abuse of minors for the Archdiocese.

**January 1986** – [The Office of the Vicar for Clergy](#) was created in the Archdiocese to oversee all issues of Clergy life more systematically.

**June 1986** – Archdiocesan retreat for priests included discussion of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. Priests with issues were invited to meet with the Archbishop. Michael Baker, met with Archbishop Mahony; lessons of reliance on the unverified word of a priest which were learned from the case of Michael Baker are reported as a case study in the 2004 [Report to the People of God](#).

**June 1989** – A policy on any misconduct involving a priest was formally adopted. These were the first norms on sexual abuse of minors issued in the Archdiocese.

**May 1994** – Cardinal Mahony announced the formation of the Sexual Abuse Advisory Board (SAAB) comprised of laity and clergy, including parents of a child victim and a therapist with expertise in sexual abuse and chaired by a retired Judge of the Superior Court. SAAB was tasked with the responsibility of reviewing all cases of clergy abuse pending in the Vicar for Clergy's office and providing feedback and recommendations to the Vicar and the Cardinal.

**April 2002** – [The Office of Victim's Assistance Ministry](#) was established to deal with allegations of past or current sexual abuse by clergy, religious or any lay person working or volunteering for the Archdiocese. The Office is charged with creating a safe and compassionate environment for victims to come forward while ensuring that civil authorities are notified, and victims are provided with counseling and other assistance in the healing process.

**June 2002** – As the U.S. Bishops approved [The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#), Cardinal Mahony announced a [Zero Tolerance Policy](#) for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, which was later reaffirmed by Archbishop José H. Gomez. The Policy states that no person whether clergy, paid personnel or volunteer, who has been found to have abused a minor, at any time in their lives, may be in ministry in any capacity in the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan policy on Zero Tolerance is more expansive than the standards in the Charter and Norms.

**June 2002** – The Archdiocese transitioned SAAB to the [Clergy Misconduct Oversight Board \(CMOB\)](#), which included an expansion of the number of lay people. CMOB continued to address matters of abuse of both minor and adult victims. All reports of suspected child or adult sexual misconduct were and continue to be handled and reviewed by CMOB with the Board making direct disciplinary recommendations to the Archbishop, including recommendations, when appropriate, that priests be removed from ministry or returned to the lay state.

**Summer 2002** – [The Office of Safeguard the Children](#) was established creating Safeguard the Children Committee in each parish, offers abuse prevention and reporting programs for both adults and minors, is proactive in distributing educational information, and oversees activities and programs to commemorate the annual Abuse Prevention Month in April.

**Spring 2003** – Cardinal Mahony began meeting personally with victim-survivors of abuse. Since 2003, Cardinal Mahony met with 92 victim-survivors to listen to their stories and to offer them a personal apology and counseling for the harm that had been done to them.

**August 2003** – The Archdiocese engaged retired FBI special agents to serve as independent canonical investigators to investigate all matters involving clergy misconduct, regardless of when the incident occurred. Their investigations became part of the CMOB Review process.

**September 2003** – [The Archdiocesan Policy on Sexual Abuse by Clergy](#) was updated to incorporate The Charter and Essential Norms adopted by the Congregation of Bishops for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The Archdiocese Policy also addresses allegations of misconduct with adults as well as children.

**February 2004** – [The Report to People of God](#) was published by the Archdiocese as a public acknowledgement of the scope of the abuse crisis in the Archdiocese and to express regret for shortcomings in the response to abuse that contributed to the scandal.

**July 2007** – The Archdiocese of Los Angeles announced a global settlement of the more than 500 civil cases that had been filed against the Archdiocese and various diocesan priests, religious order men and women, religious orders and other entities as a result of the opening of the Statute of Limitations. Since then, there have been more than 100 pastoral settlements with victim-survivors.

**March 2011** – Cardinal Mahony retired as Archbishop of Los Angeles. Archbishop José H. Gomez was installed as Archbishop.

**January 2013** – The Archdiocese released 128 [clergy files](#) associated with the global settlement, including 88 files for diocesan priests and 40 files for religious orders and extern priests.

**Fall 2019** – The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is participating on a new [Independent Compensation Program](#) for Victim-Survivors of Sexual Abuse as Minors by priests.

**Present** – Since 2004, the [Office of Safeguard the Children](#) of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has trained more than 375,000 adults, including school parents, staff and volunteers, in the [VIRTUS® child abuse prevention adult awareness programs](#). More than 250,000 adults have been fingerprinted as part of a program of background checks for Church and school personnel and volunteers. Also, each year, Catholic school and religious education students are taught boundary awareness and tools for reporting. **The Archdiocese also has a toll-free number (800) 355-2545 to facilitate the confidential reporting of allegations of sexual abuse by Church personnel.**

The Archdiocese continues its commitment outlined in the Report to the People of God to be forthcoming and enforce zero-tolerance by reporting abuse; cooperating actively with law enforcement concerning any abuse and misconduct with minors or adults; participating in the [Independent Compensation Program](#) removing anyone who is found to have abused from ministry; making public announcements to all impacted by any removals from ministry; expanding education and training of seminarians; continuing and expanding protection and prevention programs; assuring that all matters are reviewed and addressed by CMOB; and, most importantly, supporting victims and their families.