

PAST EVENTS AND NEWS

The WATCH Committee met for nearly two hours on November 16 with Fr. Michael DiGregorio, Prior Provincial of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova and with the Liaison for Victim Assistance and Director of Ministerial Conduct and Education for the Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. Fr Michael explained in some detail the significant efforts the Augustinians have undertaken to prevent, investigate, and respond to alleged sexual abuse by its members. While the discussion was too detailed for a full summary here, these key points should be highlighted:

1. Since 2005, the Augustinians have contracted with a professional third party called Praesidium to design a comprehensive sexual abuse avoidance and response plan for the Order, and implementation of this plan is continually audited by Praesidium.
2. Whenever the Order receives any allegation of sexual abuse by its Friars, it immediately notifies law enforcement and restricts the access of the alleged abuser away from the public while a full independent third party professional investigation is conducted.
3. The Order contracts with another independent professional organization in the Washington, DC area to conduct a third-party Review Board of the investigation and its conclusions before any final decision is made. The Order has always accepted the conclusions reached by this independent third party process.
4. Of the 144 current Augustinian Friars, six are currently living under supervision due to a finding of a “credible allegation of sexual misconduct.” In addition, two Friars have been restricted recently while a full investigation has been conducted, and the conclusion was recently reached through the process described above that the allegations are not credible.

The Watch Committee expressed its appreciation for the substantial transparency and information provided during this exchange. The Committee encouraged the Order to publish more information about their extensive and impressive efforts to prevent and respond to this painful issue. In addition, the Watch Committee also asked Fr DiGregorio to consider releasing the names of all those credibly accused of sexual misconduct. This issue remains under consideration. The WATCH Committee will continue to work together with our Church leaders on behalf of all STV parishioners to address the terrible scourge of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

[National Catholic Reporter Article](#)

Parishioners at two Philadelphia-area churches organize on abuse crisis.

Pictured Left to Right: Mia Holman, Augustinian Fr. Joseph Genito, Cara Tripodi and Ann Carr

