

# FOCUS LATIN AMERICA

## Vatican Sends Top 2 Sex Crimes Investigators to Mexico

by Nicole Winfield and Maria Verza

The Vatican is sending its top two sex crimes investigators to Mexico on a fact-finding and assistance mission as the Catholic hierarchy in the world's second-largest Catholic country begins to reckon with decades of clergy sex abuse and cover-up.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna and Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu teamed up in 2018 to investigate the Chilean church and its wretched record of protecting pedophile priests — a bombshell expose that resulted in every active Chilean bishop offering to resign.

Their new mission to Mexico, due to take place March 20-27, was announced Monday in Mexico and at the Vatican. Officials stressed it was not an investigation per se but an assistance mission to help the Mexican church combat abuse.

Nevertheless, the Vatican embassy in Mexico City expressly asked victims to come forward to speak with the two prelates, offering victims an email address to arrange meetings or send their testimony, a phone number to call and total privacy and confidentiality. It stressed that Scicluna and Bertomeu would be “at the disposition of all those who want to share their experiences or to receive direction or assistance.”

When Scicluna and Bertomeu went to Chile in 2018 to investigate a single old case of cover-up, they were stunned as more than 60 abuse survivors came forward to speak with them about a variety of cases around the country, providing enough testimony and evidence to fill a 2,600-page dossier.

Their report was crucial in helping Pope Francis realize he had completely misread the problem of sex abuse and cover-up in the church. The Argentine Jesuit apologized repeatedly and has taken measures in particular to try to ensure more accountability among bishops.

Scicluna and Bertomeu will meet with Mexican bishops, the superiors of religious orders in Mexico, as well as any survivors who choose to speak to them.

The Mexican bishops conference said it asked for the mission, saying it would benefit children and the most vulnerable in Mexico.

“We are certain it will help us respond better to these cases, looking for civil and canonical justice under the principle of ‘zero tolerance’ so that there is no impunity in our church,” the bishops said in a statement.

The mission comes as the Mexican hierarchy is being forced to reckon with decades of sex abuse and cover-up, admitting recently that it had investigated 271 priests in the last 10 years for sexual abuse.

The admission, though, was belated and came as Mexican civil authorities have begun to ratchet up pressure after long deferring to the church, which wields enormous influence in Mexico. But earlier this year, Mexican lawmakers discussed several initiatives including removing the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases. Final approval is still pending.



ESTEBAN FELIX/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Archbishop Charles Scicluna, left, and Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu will meet with Mexican bishops, the superiors of religious orders in Mexico, as well as any survivors who choose to speak to them.

In addition, two senators presented a legislative initiative to create an independent investigatory commission into clerical sex abuse in Mexico. Its fate, however, is unclear. The senators belong to the Morena party of President Andres Manuel López Obrador, but there is no timetable for voting and other party lawmakers have spoken out against the proposal.

Mexico is the second-largest Catholic country after Brazil, and Vatican officials have long known that the number of abuse cases that were being reported to the Vatican were a fraction of the total. The Mexican church though is powerful and well-entrenched, and victims have long been cowed into silence.

They are beginning to come forward, however, none more vocally than Ana Lucia Salazar, a Mexican TV personality who was molested repeatedly as a child by a Legion of Christ priest in Cancun. Her case was covered up for three decades until she went public last year, drawing so much attention to the problem that she forced Mexico's bishops and the Vatican ambassador to denounce the Legion publicly.

Scicluna, the Vatican's longtime sex crimes prosecutor, is intimately familiar with the Legion and the mechanisms of power in the Mexican hierarchy: The Maltese archbishop conducted the 2002-2003 investigation into the Legion's late founder, the Rev. Marcial Maciel, that resulted in him being forced to retire to a life of penance and prayer for having raped and molested his seminarians.

The Legion scandal has resurfaced anew recently, with the Salazar case spurring other Legion victims to come forward. Earlier this year, a group of former Legion priests prepared a list of 30 Mexican Legion priests who were accused of abuse and presented it to the Vatican ambassador. The number far exceeded the 33 priests worldwide that the Legion has admitted were abusers.

In a statement, the Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the mission was one of technical assistance to help the Mexican church “confirm the steps it has already taken in the right direction to provide a correct response to victims of sexual abuse.”

Nicole Winfield and Maria Verza reports for the Associated Press.



## CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **Council Zoning Meeting** on **Wednesday, March 18, 2020 beginning at 6:00 PM**, to consider the following amendment to the City of Doral's Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map. The City Council will consider this item for **FIRST READING**. This meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

**ORDINANCE No. 2020-06**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF DORAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) TO INCLUDE AND GRAPHICALLY DISPLAY THE “DOWNTOWN ARTS REUSE DISTRICT” OVERLAY BOUNDARIES REFERENCED IN POLICY 2.1.2 ENTITLED “INDUSTRIAL” CATEGORY OF THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT; AND AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE MAP AMENDMENT ADOPTION PACKAGE TO THE STATE LAND PLANNING AGENCY IN THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND OTHER REQUIRED GOVERNMENTAL REVIEWING AGENCIES PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

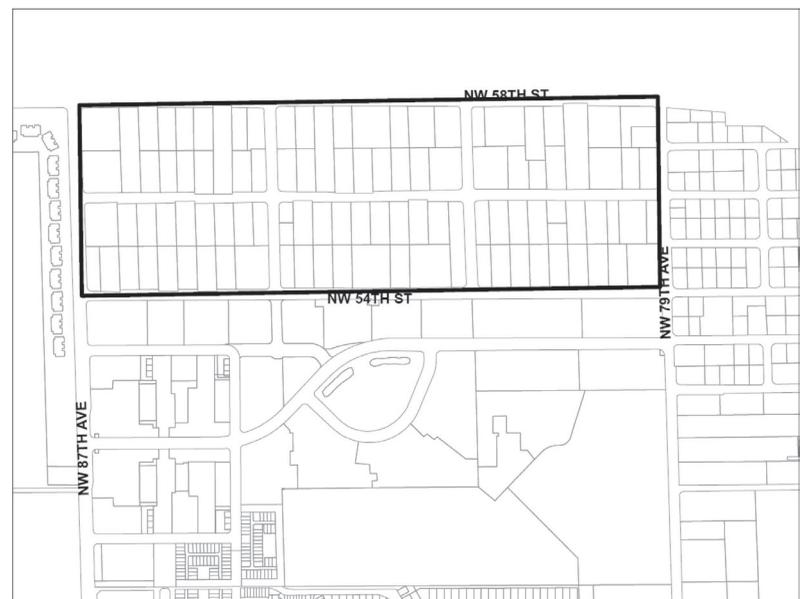
**HEARING NO.:** 20-03-DOR-07

**APPLICANT:** City of Doral

**LOCATION:** Area located north of Downtown Doral, bounded by NW 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, NW 58<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, NW 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the east and NW 54<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.

**REQUEST:** The City of Doral (the “Applicant”) is requesting Mayor and City Council approval of an amendment to the City of Doral Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to include and graphically display the “Downtown Arts Reuse District” overlay boundaries referenced in Policy 2.1.2 entitled “Industrial” category of the Future Land Use Element.

### Location Map



Information relating the subject application is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department Located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. All persons are invited to appear at this meeting or be represented by an agent, or to express their views in writing addressed to the City Clerk, **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Any persons wishing to speak at a public hearing should register with the City Clerk prior to that item being heard. Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

**NOTE:** If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide interpretation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

**NOTA:** Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

Connie Diaz, MMC  
City Clerk  
City of Doral