



Diocese of Salt Lake City

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PRESS RELEASE

Diocesan Determination of Clergy Misconduct

July 31, 2025

The Diocese of Salt Lake City received a claim of sexual misconduct dated December 12, 2024, involving a foreign priest ministering in Utah in the early 1990's, Fr. Heriberto Mejia from the Diocese of Villavicencio, Colombia. This clergy member was permanently removed from ministry in the Diocese and left Utah in later 1992.

After receiving the allegation and speaking with the victim, the Diocese opened a formal investigation into the allegation. The Diocesan retained the services of an independent investigator to conduct the investigation. The investigator was given unfettered access to all of the information the Diocese had in its possession. The investigator interviewed numerous witnesses in his investigation and submitted his report to the Diocese.

In July 2025, the report was given to the Diocesan Independent Review Board, Board members in attendance on the day of the review were a Pediatrician, Family Attorney, Retired Director of Public Schools, Retired Criminal Defense Lawyer, Pastor, Vicar General, and Director of the Office of Safe Environment. Before the deliberations, a member of the Bishops' Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was present and consulted with the Review Board on best practices for conducting the review. The Review Board assessed the information and made recommendations to Bishop Solis.

Bishop Solis, based on the investigator's report and the Board's recommendations, made a final determination on the allegation. The results are as follows:

- 1) Bishop Solis has determined the victim's allegation of abuse against Fr. Mejia is credible.
- 2) The Diocese has offered counseling to the victim and family members.
- 3) The Diocese will share this information with local law enforcement agencies.

- Since Fr. Mejia is from Colombia, his home diocese will be informed of the outcome of this investigation.
 - The Diocese will notify the two parishes in Utah where Fr. Mejia served and notify the members of this determination, inviting them to report any other allegations of sexual abuse.
- 4) The Diocese will update the information about Fr. Mejia's status, that is, his faculties have been permanently removed in Utah and in his Diocese of Colombia.
- 5) These reports will be submitted to the Papal Nuncio in Washington, D.C. and to the Metropolitan Archbishop of Las Vegas for evaluation and further recommendations, if necessary.

"On behalf of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, I, Bishop Oscar A. Solis, want to apologize to William Hambleton for the sexual abuse he received from Fr. Heriberto Mejia in the 1990's, and for the many years of suffering and pain you have endured. No one should experience such trauma, especially from any member of the clergy. I personally pray and hope for your complete healing, peace, and that of your family."

The Diocese remains committed to ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and providing pastoral outreach to victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy. *Let us continue to pray for all the victims of sexual abuse and for their families. We request anyone who has any information regarding this allegation or other sexual abuse of a minor to contact the Office of Safe Environment and the Salt Lake City Police Department.*

For more information about the Diocese's abuse prevention efforts, please visit our website.

<https://dioslc.org/safe-environment>

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