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Commission to listen to victims of Maciel

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Feb. 1, 2011

VATICAN CITY -- The cardinal serving as papal delegate for the Legionaries of Christ has set up a five-man commission to listen to victims of the Legionaries' founder and present their claims to the order.

Members of the "Outreach Commission" will "listen to the people who are requesting a response from the Legionaries of Christ because of Father Marcial Maciel (Degollado) or in relation to him," said a notice published Feb. 1 on the Legionaries' website.

The commission will "deal only with cases having a direct relation to the person of Father Maciel. It will not intervene in cases awaiting decisions from civil or ecclesiastical courts," the notice said.

Pope Benedict XVI named Cardinal Velasio De Paolis papal delegate of the Legionaries after it became clear that Father Maciel, who died in 2008, had fathered children and sexually abused seminarians.

Under Pope Benedict's orders and Cardinal De Paolis' guidance, the Legionaries of Christ have begun a process of reform and the rewriting of their constitutions.

In October, Cardinal De Paolis said he was forming a commission to rewrite the constitutions, another to handle financial matters and a third "to approach those who in some way put forward claims against the Legion."

According to the Feb. 1 statement, the Outreach Commission will be chaired by Msgr. Mario Marchesi, vicar general of the Diocese of Cremona, Italy, and will include two Legionary priests: Father Florencio Sanchez, chaplain at the Legionaries' Francisco de Vitoria University in Madrid, and Father Eduardo Robles-Gil, director of the Legionaries' lay branch, Regnum Christi, in Mexico.

The other members of the commission are Father Silverio Nieto Nunez, a priest of the Archdiocese of Madrid and former judge; and Jorge Adame Goddard, a researcher at the UNAM Juridical Research Institute and a professor of law at the Panamerican University in Mexico City.

The Legionaries' website -- www.legionariesofchrist.org -- lists a postal address in Rome and an e-mail address for people who want to contact the commission.

The members of the Outreach Commission are to write a detailed report on each victim's statement and present the report to Cardinal De Paolis, who will consult his advisers and "then make decisions about what the Legion of Christ should do in each case."

Legionary Father Alvaro Corcuera, director general of the order, said the commission's role is to help the order "continue facing with seriousness and responsibility our recent history as regards Father Marcial Maciel's conduct and the implications and consequences it has had on some people."

"Insofar as it is humanly possible, we want to close this chapter in its more painful aspects, seek reconciliation and allow justice and charity to prevail," Father Corcuera said, according to the published statement.

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