

ACCREDITATION ENSURES HIGHEST STANDARDS

PRAESIDIUM ACCREDITED

Our passion. Your protection.



Fr. Stan De Boe, OSST, and Christy Schiller, MA, of Praesidium, the national leader in abuse risk management, visited the Provincial offices and four communities in St. Louis Sept. 27 and Sept. 29 as part of the Praesidium Accreditation™ process. Visits also were made to communities in Cupertino, Dayton, Honolulu and San Antonio. According to Fr. Stan, Praesidium provides a fresh set of eyes to review Province abuse policies and ensure standards are met. In interviews with Province leadership, Marianist religious and lay employees, Praesidium examined three issues: prevention of abuse; response to allegations; and supervision of members with abuse allegations. When the process is finished, the U.S. Province will be Praesidium Accredited™ and the report can be made public. A letter also will be sent to diocesan offices notifying them of the U.S. Province's accreditation.

Prevention of abuse includes the screening process for men entering the Marianist order and education offered to the brothers on celibacy, child abuse and boundary issues. Response to allegations relates to how the Province communicates with abuse victims, attempts to understand their needs and attempts to keep them informed of Province policies and procedures. Supervision of members with allegations refers to how Province members, the archdiocese, parishes and other institutions are informed of allegations and the methods used to substantiate and investigate claims. Praesidium also reviewed records and documentation relating to these issues and met with the Marianists' independent review board on abuse.

Where possible, Praesidium representatives stayed at the brothers' community houses to validate that what they were hearing is what the brothers were living. "We look for quality, not quantity of response," said Fr. Stan. "We want to ensure victims are treated in a caring, pastoral way. We want to ensure men removed from ministry are getting the support they need, and we want to ensure there is consistency in these policies across the Province."

Now that the visitations are complete, Praesidium is working on a preliminary report to determine if any changes are needed for the Province to comply with

acceptable child protection standards. "The religious taking part in the Praesidium Accreditation™ process hold themselves to the highest standards and are going above and beyond what anyone else is doing," said Fr. Stan. "We're making great changes in the Church and in society."