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Dallas priest suspended over allegations of sexual misconduct at former diocese in Colombia

Oscar Mora's attorney says his client denies abuse and is ready to cooperate with investigators.



The Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe shown behind a guard rail in downtown Dallas, Sunday May 19, 2019. Ben Torres/Special Contributor (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

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By [Charles Scudder](#) and [Diana Duran](#)
3:02 PM on Apr 27, 2020

A Dallas priest has been removed from ministry after allegations of sexual abuse were raised at his former diocese in Colombia.

The priest, Oscar Mora, was among 19 who were suspended in mid-March after an unnamed complainant made the accusations, a news release from Colombia's Archdiocese of Villavicencio said.

The archdiocese said it alerted Dallas Bishop Edward J. Burns that a priest who worked in the Dallas diocese was among the accused.

The Dallas Diocese said in a written statement that Mora arrived in Dallas in 2016 and passed a criminal background check from Colombia then. According to the Colombian archdiocese, the accuser first raised the allegations earlier this year.

“Upon receiving word of the allegation from the Archbishop of Villavicencio in mid-March, the Diocese of Dallas, out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with its Safe Environment policy, immediately removed Father Oscar Mora from active ministry,” the diocese statement said. “There have been no allegations of wrongdoing against Father Mora in his four years of service in Dallas and the Diocese has not

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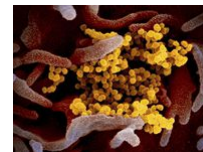
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been informed of any civil or criminal charges filed against Father Mora.”



The Dallas diocese said he would remain suspended during the investigation.

Mora was assigned to the Divine Mercy of Our Lord Catholic Church in Mesquite and the Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe in downtown Dallas, Dallas diocese spokeswoman Annette Taylor said.

The priest’s attorney in Colombia, Jaime Guzmán, said his client denies the accusations. Mora is still in Dallas because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Guzmán has told Colombian prosecutors that Mora will cooperate with the investigation.

“He is the first one surprised with everything that is happening because he found out through the media and not through legal means,” the lawyer said. “He told me that he is completely innocent, that he has never committed abusive acts against anyone, much less minors, or that he has participated with other people in those types of behavior, which he deems despicable and would violate ethics and against what he is compelled to do as a priest.”

Guzmán said that the investigation is in its early stages and that he hasn't been told details of the allegations. The church, he said, has not revealed much, and Colombian officials have not named a prosecutor or lead investigator.

The Archdiocese of Villavicencio announced that the priests in Colombia had been suspended while investigators review the accusations of sexual abuse.

Some of the priests were accused Feb. 14 of “crimes ... when the alleged victim was of legal age,” according to the Colombian archdiocese's statement, while others were accused of “crimes ... when the alleged victim was a minor.” According to Archbishop Óscar Urbina in Colombia, the accuser said the abuse began 20 years ago.

It is unclear how much time the allegations span, including any against Mora.

Diana Duran reported from Colombia.



Charles Scudder, Staff writer. Charlie Scudder is a general assignment reporter and has worked on the features and news desks for five years. He's also an adjunct professor at UNT's Mayborn School of Journalism. Raised in Colleyville, he is a graduate of both Southern Methodist University and Indiana University.

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