

Safeguarding at Taizé

Report 2019–2022

Taizé, December 12 2022

In June 2019, Brother Alois, the prior of Taizé, published an open letter entitled “Ascertaining the truth” in which he explained the accusations that had reached the community concerning acts of sexual assault of which three brothers were accused. Among other things, he said:

“It is possible that this statement may encourage other possible survivors to make themselves known. We will listen to them and will remain alongside them in the steps that they choose to take. We are convinced that it is only by bringing to light these acts that, with the assistance of persons outside the community, we will help to protect effectively all those who show us their trust by coming to Taizé.”

This report, drawn up in December 2022, aims to take stock of what has been undertaken in Taizé since 2019, as a milestone in a process that will continue. It covers the period from June 2019 to November 2022.

In order to implement one of the recommendations expressed by the report of the “Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Church” (CIASE)¹, such a report will be produced on a regular basis in the future.



www.taize.fr/protection

¹ The independent commission, chaired by Jean-Marc Sauvet, set up by the French Catholic Bishops Conference in November 2018 which produced its report in October 2021.

Table of Contents

Some dates.....	3
“Safeguarding Team” at Taizé.....	4
“Reception and follow-up of reports Team”	4
Guidelines for reporting.....	5
Statistics on of reports.....	6
Relationship with the “Recognition and Reparation” Commission.....	6
Transparency.....	7
Audit visit to Taizé.....	7
Appendices.....	8
A Introductory article to the website.....	8
B Our approach Taizé’s safeguarding policy.....	9
C Practices.....	10
D Procedures.....	12
E Health matters.....	13
F Security matters.....	13
G Statement by Brother Alois “Ascertaining the Truth”	15
H New statement by Brother Alois The work of ascertaining the truth must continue in the Church and in Taizé.....	18
I Poster displayed in all public places in Taizé.....	19

Some dates

Here are some important dates concerning what has been undertaken in Taizé in the period covered by this report, since the community took the initiative to bring to public attention the sexual assaults and abuses committed by brothers (see the main page of the website www.taize.fr/en):

- x June 2019 | Publication of Brother Alois' statement "Ascertaining the truth" and the start of the information workshops proposed to the participants of the meetings in Taizé
- x July/August 2019 | Reporting to the Public Prosecutor of the new testimonies received following the initial statement, which concern the period from the 1960s to the 1980s
- x October 2019 | Following a new report which led to the arrest of a brother, publication of an updated note on the Taizé website (see Appendix G)
- x February 2020 | Audit session in Taizé by the "Safeguarding Team" of the Anglican Diocese of York
- x March 2020 | Establishment of the "Safeguarding Team" for the Welcome with brothers, sisters of St Andrew and an external person
- x May 2020 | Publication on the Taizé website of the safeguarding policy (still accessible at www.taize.fr/protection)
- x June 2020 | Training Weekend with a survivor of abuse by a priest of the Church in France, for all the brothers and sisters
- x November 2020 | Training for all the brothers involved in receiving visitors on the principles of safeguarding.
- x April 2021 | From this date onwards, all the young volunteers take part in a training course at the beginning of their stay in Taizé.
- x May 2021 | Beginning of criminal record checks for brothers, sisters, employees and volunteers
- x August 2021 | Training with a psychologist for brothers involved in pastoral accompaniment. Drafting of guidelines for accompaniment.
- x September 2021 | Training in all the workplaces in Taizé, involving brothers, sisters and employees, and raising awareness about places where there may be risks.
- x January 2022 | Meeting in Paris between Brother Alois and the magistrate Antoine Garapon, President of the new National "[Recognition and Reparation](#)" Commission.
- x March 2022 | Visit to Taizé of the two members of the "Recognition and Reparation" Commission and signing of a protocol for collaboration (see below)

- ✘ April 2022 | Participation of six brothers in two days of training led by the association “Stop aux violences sexuelles 71”² at the Nursing College of Mâcon
- ✘ November 2022 | At the initiative of Taizé, visit of an independent team of four people to carry out an audit of the safeguarding policy (see below).

“Safeguarding Team” in Taizé

Since February 2020, a monitoring team has been set up in Taizé to coordinate all aspects of the policy for safeguarding linked with the meetings in Taizé. This team has a dozen members: brothers, sisters of Saint Andrew and an external person, and other people if the subject in question requires it.

This team is responsible in particular for putting in place the information materials to facilitate reporting when necessary (see appendices A to F), as well as the training of all those involved in the organisation and running of the meetings, in particular all the volunteers at the beginning of their stay in Taizé. In February 2022, within this team, four working groups were set up to deal with informing, training, reception, and the organisation of meetings in Taizé.

“Reception and follow-up of reports” Team

The address <protection@taize.fr> has existed since 2011 to collect reports of any act of violence or abuse experienced or noticed in Taizé. Originally, two brothers were the automatic recipients of any new message.

In May 2019, during a conversation with Brother Alois in Paris, Jean-Marc Sauvé, president of the “Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Church” (CIASE), suggested that an outside view should be added, in order to avoid management that is purely internal or “among ourselves”.

Two other people were then added to those receiving the messages: a Sister of St Andrew and a person exterior to the two communities. The period covered by the present report corresponds to the time during which the address <protection@taize.fr> was managed in this way by four people.

In November 2022, the composition of the team changed. From now on, two people from outside the community, Alzira Fernandes (Portugal) and Noël Rosé (France), receive the messages and are responsible for reception and follow-up. This composition will change in future. During this period of transition, one of the brothers ensures the link between this team and the community.

² A French association dedicated to raising awareness of and preventing sexual violence

This team is mandated by the community to undertake legal proceedings directly if necessary. Other people are available to give advice if the team considers it useful, in particular a psychologist living in Germany. Testimonies are transmitted to them without revealing the names of the persons involved.

For several decades now, there has been a team in Taizé, made up of two brothers and volunteers, who deal on a daily basis with the difficulties encountered with or by young people or adults in the context of youth meetings. For several years, it has also had its own emergency telephone number. This team records in writing any serious incidents and passes them on to the “Reception and follow-up of reports” team. This team makes comments or takes initiatives if the situation requires it. Moreover, if a brother of the community is implicated, the “Reception and follow-up of reports” team is immediately and automatically informed.

Guidelines for reporting

To ensure that the words of victims are properly accepted and respected at Taizé, the following guidelines should be followed:

- ✘ To take seriously and carefully receive the testimony of each person who contacts the “Reception and follow-up of reports” team or who reports an incident by any other means.
- ✘ Forward to the Public Prosecutor any report involving a minor – or an adult in cases where French law requires it.
- ✘ In all other situations, encourage the person to file a complaint and facilitate this as much as possible.
- ✘ Suggest that the person contact the independent “Recognition and Reparation” Commission in Paris, with which Taizé has been in contact since it was set up a year ago.

The missions of the “Reception and follow-up of reports” team are defined in a document drawn up in November 2022 as follows:

- To receive reports of spiritual abuse, sexual assault or violence of any kind, as well as situations of manipulation, which may have occurred during meetings in Taizé, or during an international meeting organised by the Taizé Community, and whoever the alleged perpetrators may be.
- Listen without prejudice and take seriously the words of the victims.
- Report the legal authorities in all cases where the law requires it.
- Help victims, if they so wish, to undertake a legal process or a process of reparation and/or reconstruction.
- Always ensure that victims are given friendly and supportive help.

Statistics on reports

Between June 2019 and November 2022, 62 people contacted the address <protection@taize.fr> or got in touch with the community through another channel. The testimonies received concern a wide range of situations, from sexual assaults to remarks perceived as discriminatory.

In the majority of cases, these were situations involving meeting participants bringing into question another meeting participant (adult group leader or young person) for acts of aggression, abuse or some other form of violence.

In 8 cases, testimonies accusing brothers were transmitted to the legal authorities, because they came from minors, or adults in cases where French law requires it. If we add the 7 reports made up to May 2019, we arrive at a total of 15 accusations transmitted to the legal authorities.

The testimonies that have been reported concern 8 brothers: 4 had died before the reports were made, and the other 4 had left the community, either by their own decision, or at the request of the community, or else by mutual agreement. Finally, of these 15 accusations, 11 concern the 1960s to 1980s, 2 the 1990s and 2 the recent period.

Of all these reports, to our knowledge only one has led to a judicial investigation, which is still ongoing. This is also the only accusation of rape made against a brother. It was made by a person who was an adult at the time of the events. The brother left the community in spring 2020, independently of the outcome of the judicial process.

Furthermore, in November 2019, a new testimony made anonymously against a brother was sent to <protection@taize.fr> concerning an incident dating back to the summer of 2009 – a sexual assault in French law, against an adult. In 2022, since the person was now ready to speak under by name, the team encouraged the person to file a complaint with the courts, which was done, and then also put the person in touch with the “Recognition and Reparation” Commission, whose recommendations Taizé is now waiting for in order to implement them.

Relationship with the “Recognition and Reparation” Commission

Following the creation in France of an independent Commission for victims of abuse by members of religious congregations in the Church, the prior of Taizé, Brother Alois, met in January 2022 with its president, the magistrate Antoine Garapon, who agreed to deal with accusations involving brothers of the community and appointed two members of the Commission for this purpose. Anyone wishing to contact them can do so directly by email (victimes@crr.contact) or via [the website](#).

At present, 5 situations involving Taizé brothers are being dealt with by this independent Commission, 3 of which concern the 1970s/80s and 2 the recent period.

Transparency

In order to make every effort to ensure that Taizé is a safe place for all, a special effort is made to inform those who come to participate in the meetings, as well as the general public. To this end, the web page “Ascertaining the truth” will continue to be updated in the event of new reports to the Public Prosecutor or at the request of the “Recognition and Reparation” Commission in the context of protocol signed with them.

In addition, the information workshops, which began in June 2019 at the time of Brother Alois' initial statement, continue to be programmed for young people and adults present in Taizé each week.

Audit visit to Taizé

At the beginning of November 2022, at Taizé's request, an independent team of four people visited to carry out an audit of the safeguarding policy. It included two members of the independent “Recognition and Reparation” Commission and two other people chosen for their expertise in the field of legal assistance and psychological support for victims. They will soon deliver their report, and Taizé undertakes to implement its recommendations.

Appendices

Appendices A to F are articles taken from the website, which are regularly reworked and will therefore continue to evolve.

Specific documents also exist for priests, pastors and religious sisters who are there to listen to people in the evening in the church in Taizé. They contain points of attention and guidelines. These documents are available on request in French, English and German.

A | Introductory article to the website

https://www.taize.fr/en_article27899.html

For many people, Taizé is a place of trust. The brothers of the community, the sisters of St Andrew, the Ursuline sisters and the Oblate sisters of St Francis of Sales, as well as the volunteers³ and all who are associated in the running of the meetings⁴, are committed to making Taizé a safer place for all who visit, especially the under 18s⁵, young people⁶ and vulnerable adults⁷.

At the same time, everyone's vigilance is important so that Taizé can remain a safe space for all.

In this section, you can find information related to:

- our approach – Taizé's safeguarding policy
- practices
- procedures

as well as information concerning

- health matters
- security matters

³ Young adults aged 18 to 29 who stay in Taizé for four weeks or more and help with the practical running of the meetings in Taizé. Young female volunteers are personally accompanied by an Ursuline sister or a sister of St Andrew. Young male volunteers are personally accompanied by a brother of Taizé.

⁴ This includes employees and members of other religious communities or volunteers who have been asked to help in the meetings.

⁵ All minors up to the age of 18, bearing in mind that generally children under 15 should be accompanied by their parents or legal guardian if they are to be present in Taizé. Any minors aged over 15 and under 18 must have the written consent of their legal guardian (you can use this form) giving a named person present in Taizé as being responsible for them, also for medical questions.

⁶ For these purposes, this refers to young adults aged 18 to 29, who take part in the youth meetings in Taizé.

⁷ Any person over 18 who is in a state of vulnerability, be that psychological, physical, moral or social. We recognise that people may move in or out of a state of vulnerability even during their stay in Taizé.

B | Our approach | Taizé's safeguarding policy

https://www.taize.fr/en_article27902.html

In Taizé, we are committed to

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Moving towards a safer recruitment of and supporting all those with any responsibility in the running of the meetings in Taizé.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Showing pastoral concern, taking into account all legal obligations, for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons who may be present in Taizé.
- Showing pastoral concern, taking into account all legal obligations, for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons who may be present in Taizé.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

In Taizé, we will:

- Do everything we can to maintain a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a safeguarding team made up of people from the different communities represented in Taizé and from outside as well.
- Pay greater attention to safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for the running of the meetings in Taizé so that they may have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate organiser liability insurance.
- Display at various points around the site the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children, young people and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, together with group leaders, parents or legal guardians and with the necessary civil authorities.
- Pay particular attention to victims/survivors of abuse, who wish to communicate, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the community, volunteers or anyone involved in running the meetings, who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.

- Ensure that safeguarding policy, procedures and practices, and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually in February.

- Review the implementation of the safeguarding policy, procedures and practices on a regular basis.
- Ensure and review regularly all matters concerning health and security issues linked with the meetings.

C | Practices

https://www.taize.fr/en_article27903.html

This article explains the safeguarding practices concerning participants in the meetings in Taizé, whether they be under 18 or over 18 years of age.

1. Different responsibilities towards young people aged 15-17

- Legal guardians ⁸ of under 18s taking part in the meetings in Taizé must already have given their agreement for the participation of their child in the meetings. They must designate someone over 18 as responsible for this young person. The legal guardian must be reachable to be reached at all times for medical questions or questions of discipline concerning their child.
- Group leaders ⁹ ensure that each under 18 travelling in their group carries with them a document signed by their legal guardian authorising responsibility to an over 18, should urgent questions arise. This person immediately informs the legal guardian in such cases. The group leader must be especially vigilant for the safety of these under 18s. S/he ensures especially that group members do not leave the site of Taizé and take part fully in the program proposed.
- If the legal guardian is not present in Taizé, under 18s are under the responsibility of an over 18 chosen by their legal guardian. This person may be the group leader or someone else. The person with this responsibility should communicate to the legal guardian all difficulties encountered by their children, maintaining a close link with the group leader.
- During times of small group sharing, designated people, preferably 20-29 years old, but over 30 if this is impossible, named as “contact people”, help facilitate the groups together with the person leading the Bible introduction. The group leaders continue to ensure that their youth are participating and retain the safeguarding responsibility for those in their care. They also prepare the contact people for their role and ensure that these people are safe to work with under 18s.

⁸ Legal guardian may be one (if only one parent is the guardian) or both parents (if guardianship is shared), or someone named by the appropriate authorities as the legal guardian.

⁹ A group leader is the person aged over 18 who brings for a group of young people and who is responsible for them during their stay in Taizé ensure.

Some basic rules for accompanying young people aged 15-17 in Taizé

Respect

- Always respect the integrity of the young person in all their diversity.
- Bullying can be manifested in different ways and can also include inappropriate activities or games, which lead to mockery or humiliation even if that was not the primary intention.
- Make sure that the young person feels welcomed also with the frailties they bear.
- Do not pressure youth to reveal secrets, or anything they are uncomfortable with, during the time of sharing.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour – for example, do not smoke during the time of sharing.
- All inappropriate use of internet, including social media, must be avoided at all times.
- Refrain from all harassment, from all sexual harassment, including in the form of sexting¹⁰ all of which are punishable under French law.
- Do not ask for the contact details or social media profiles of young people under 18 outside of the group you travelled with.

Vigilance

- Do not leave the site of Taizé unless the person leading the Bible introduction explicitly suggests this.
- Never be alone with just one young person out of view of the group.
- If you need to listen more especially to one young person, do so while staying within sight of others.
- All consumption of alcohol or drugs must be reported.

2. Different responsibilities towards people aged over 18, especially those who are vulnerable

→ See the webpage https://www.taize.fr/en_article27903.html

¹⁰ Sexting is the sending, receiving, or forwarding of sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images

D | Procedures

https://www.taize.fr/en_article27905.html

You will find in this article the procedures to follow should it become necessary to report a safeguarding concern affecting someone participating in the meetings in Taizé.

General reporting procedure

All participants read the following paragraph on arrival:

We want to do everything we can so that Taizé is a safe place for all. Everyone can help with this.

We take any kind of sexual abuse or any form of violence very seriously. If you subjected to or see anything of this nature, or notice any worrying behaviour, please go immediately to La Morada to ask for the person responsible for safeguarding questions.

This person can be contacted in La Morada or by calling or sending an sms to +33 7 49 04 75 85.

You can also speak someone else you trust: a group leader, one of the sisters in El Abiodh or the person in charge of the first aid point.

Anything that happens, whether recently or not, can also be communicated by writing to protection@taize.fr. You can also contact a hotline number in your own country: (for example: UK +44 800 1111, the Childline service of the NSPCC; US +1-800-422-4453 to reach the ChildHelp hotline).

What should I do if something happens?

Remember that for anyone, it is normal to feel nervous or unsure about mentioning any kind of abuse or suspicious behaviour. Letting us know that you're worried about a something or someone could be the first step to helping protect them.

Whether you want to report something, or aren't sure what to do, by following the procedure above, you will meet people who are there to listen, offer advice and support and can take the next steps if something has happened or someone is in danger.

1. If you become aware, either directly or indirectly, of any sexual abuse or any kind of violence or attack on the integrity of any person, we ask you to follow the procedure described above.
2. Include in the procedure the person concerned, their group leader (if it is not you) and also any other witnesses able to provide relevant information.
3. The brother in charge of safeguarding has a list of the group leaders and can contact the leader of the person concerned if necessary.

4. Do not take any action concerning the alleged perpetrator before following the above procedure. Decisions will be taken together in La Morada, in agreement with the person concerned and if appropriate, their legal guardian.
5. Please note down all possible indices which could enable the identification of the alleged perpetrator, for example their home town, dormitory number, vehicle number plate, etc.
6. This procedure is also valid for reporting any drug-use or excessive consumption of alcohol.
7. If you learn after your stay in Taizé of any incident which needs reporting, please contact us through protection taize.fr. You can also call a help-line in your own country (in the UK +44 800 1111, the Childline service of the NSPCC; in Ireland, you can contact the Children First Advice Officers at TUSLA Child and Family agency; in the US and Canada, call 1-800-422-4453 to reach the ChildHelp hotline; in Australia, call 1800 737 732 to get in touch with 1800 Respect) or the safeguarding team in your own church.

Advice for listening to an incident that needs reporting

- Take seriously what the person is saying. No assault of a sexual nature, no physical violence, no violation of the integrity of a person, no inappropriate gestures, are insignificant.
- Listen carefully to what the person concerned is sharing.
- Reassure the person who spoke that they were right to have spoken and not to have remained silent.
- Encourage the person concerned to come with you and follow the procedure mentioned above.

E | Health matters

→ See the page: https://www.taize.fr/en_article27906.html

F | Security matters

https://www.taize.fr/en_article27907.html

- In Taizé, as part of the security measures taken by the government in France for places of large gatherings, police or military may be present.
- A Taizé brother regularly liaises with the local authorities on security matters.
- All luggage should be labelled and never left unattended in public spaces.

- Participants in the meetings must not bring bags or backpacks into the church. A team of young people at the doors ensure that these instructions are complied with.
- Participants should not go walking alone on isolated paths outside Taizé.
- Around the site, posters give clear indications on procedures in case of
 - terrorist attacks
 - fire
 - safeguarding issues
- Group leaders are responsible for the order of their group members, respecting the instructions given before arriving and on arrival regarding security.
- A safe deposit office exists where valuables can be left.
- Valuables (money, passports), cameras, cell phones or other personal electric devices must not be left unattended in tents, other accommodation or cars, especially when charging.
- During the day, a team of volunteers working in conjunction with the Community is present on site to help maintain order. These volunteers receive appropriate training for their work.
- After evening prayer, a team of volunteers working in conjunction with the Community help to ensure silence and order in the places of accommodation. These volunteers receive appropriate training for their work.

G | Statement by Brother Alois | “Ascertaining the Truth”

https://www.taize.fr/en_article26170.html

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

At a time when society and the Church are attempting to shed light on sexual abuses and assaults, notably towards minors and fragile persons, my brothers and I have judged it necessary to speak out as well. For decades now at Taizé we have been welcoming, week after week, thousands of young and not-so-young people from Europe and from the whole world.

Aware of our responsibility and the trust that is shown to us by these young people, their families and their group-leaders, we have always tried to ensure that this welcome takes place in the best conditions possible, with respect for the convictions of each person and deeply attentive to the safety and integrity of all.

Among the participants in the meetings, however, whether between young people or between young people and adults, violations of integrity have taken place. When we are informed of this, we make a point of listening to those violated, and also of informing the competent authorities, both judicial and ecclesial.

Among other measures, since 2010 a page of our website [*In May 2020, this was extensively revised and can be found [here](#)*] has been dedicated to the protection of individuals and an email address set up to facilitate a possible reporting of offenses. At Taizé itself, a brother and other persons outside the community are responsible for listening to any person aware of an assault that is sexual in nature or any other form of violence, particularly concerning a minor. This is included in the information given to all the participants upon their arrival.

If I am speaking out today, this is because I have become aware with deep sadness of cases involving our brothers and, even if these cases are old, we have felt, in community, that we had to speak about them. There were five cases of sexual assault upon minors, in the years from the 1950s to the 1980s, by three different brothers, two of whom have been deceased for over fifteen years.¹¹

When I was informed of these accusations, my first concern was to listen, with other brothers, to the survivors*, in an absolute respect for their words, to hear their suffering and to remain alongside them to the best of our ability.

In recent years, in the society and in the Church, an understanding of the gravity of every violation of a person's integrity has fortunately deepened. This finds an echo in the evolution of French law, which requires that every case be reported, independently of the date on which the acts were committed.

To continue our work of establishing the truth, and after having spoken beforehand with the survivors, I have just informed the public prosecutor of these five situations.

¹¹ In link with this, please see the note updated in March 2020.

We recognize that these assaults committed in the past by brothers are also part of our history. For us, this reporting is part of an attempt to ascertain the truth that had already begun by listening to the survivors and, still today, our first thoughts go out to them; in hearing what they experienced and suffered, we feel shame and deep sorrow. It is possible that this statement may encourage other possible survivors to make themselves known. We will listen to them and will remain alongside them in the steps that they choose to take.

We are convinced that it is only by bringing to light these acts that, with the assistance of persons outside the community, we will help to protect effectively all those who show us their trust by coming to Taizé. If I am speaking today, it is because we owe this to the survivors, to those close to them, and to all those who seek at Taizé a space of trust, safety and truth.

Brother Alois

**Following current English usage, we have translated “personnes victimes” by “survivors”.*

Every act of aggression, old or more recent, committed against a minor or an adult, whether by a brother abusing his moral ascendancy or by any other person, can be reported to the address protection@taize.fr, to a survivors' association or to national hotlines given on the Taizé website.

Note updated | July 2019

Following the statement by Brother Alois on June 4th, several people have written to the address protection@taize.fr, leading Brother Alois to inform the public prosecutor of two new accusations of sexual assault upon minors which took place in the 1960s and 1970s, by a brother who has been dead for over twenty years and another brother who left the community more than forty years ago. In addition, further testimonies have been received implicating a brother who died over fifteen years ago, who was mentioned in the original statement, describing sexual assault in the form of inappropriate touching of young people over the age of majority.

Note updated | October 2019

Since publishing his letter of June 4th, “Ascertaining the Truth”, Brother Alois recently received the testimony of a woman describing a strong dominance exerted on her by a brother, accusing him of manipulation and spiritual, psychological and sexual harassment lasting several years up until this summer. According to her account, this dominance began in 2003, when she took part in the international meetings in Taizé as a young adult.

Brother Alois immediately notified the relevant authorities and the police received the testimony of the victim. The brother in question has been charged with “rape and sexual assault” and remanded in custody. It is now up to the courts to establish the facts and to determine their legal status.

Brother Alois declared: “My brothers and I are in a state of shock. We want everything to be brought to light. Any kind of dominance or ascendancy over others is totally incompatible with our life. I stand alongside the survivor and we will do all we can to support her.”

To continue this work of ascertaining the truth, the Community reiterates that various measures have been set up to receive any further reports, including the email address protection.taize.fr.

Note updated | March 2020

Note updated | March 2020

Last June, we reported several allegations of sexual assault, two of which involved a brother who is still alive. Since that initial statement, other testimonies involving this same brother have reached the community, also relating sexual assaults on minors, in the form of inappropriate touching. These testimonies have been submitted to the authorities in charge of the investigation.

It is for the judicial authorities alone to qualify the facts in law and to assess the legal consequences in view of the lapse of time since their alleged perpetration. However, there is no reason to doubt the testimony of the victims-survivors, whose suffering remains present after so many years. In view of the seriousness of the acts of which this brother is accused, and their incompatibility with the commitments undertaken by the brothers, Brother Alois has informed him that it was better for him to leave the community. He will live elsewhere and, because of his age, a brother will live with him and others will help to accompany him during this period of his life.

Brother Alois adds: “I know all that with my brothers we have received from him and we are deeply distressed by this. I hope that these decisions, the impact and seriousness of which I fully understand, will help us – and him too – to move forward on this path of ascertaining the truth.”

Note updated | June 2020

Last October, a brother was remanded in custody (see the above note for October 2019). He was released, under judicial supervision, at the beginning of May this year. The investigation is continuing, pending the judicial decision that will be made. Irrespective of the outcome of the judicial proceedings, and by mutual agreement with him, it has been decided to terminate his membership of the community.

Note updated | November 2022

Following the creation in France of an independent commission, “Recognition and Reparation”, for people who are victims of members of religious communities in the Church, Taizé’s prior, Brother Alois, met in January with its president, the magistrate Antoine Garapon. He agreed to deal with allegations involving brothers of the community and appointed two members of the commission for this purpose. Anyone wishing to speak to them can do so directly via email or through the internet site.¹²

In addition, a testimony received at protection@taize.fr was sent to the Public Prosecutor of Mâcon. It again implicates the former brother accused of several sexual assaults (see the June 2019 statement and the updated note for March 2020).

¹² This page will be updated in the event of future reports being sent to the Public Prosecutor or at the request of the “Recognition and Reparation” Commission.

Finally, the community invited an independent team of four people to come to Taizé at the beginning of November 2022 to begin an audit of Taizé's safeguarding policies and make any necessary recommendations.

H | New statement by Brother Alois | The work of ascertaining the truth must continue in the Church and in Taizé

On the occasion of the European youth meeting in Rostock, Brother Alois wrote the following text to give an update on the work of ascertaining the truth begun by Taizé in 2019.

Taizé, 5 December, 2022

My brothers and I are very aware of the suffering of people who are victims of spiritual abuse and sexual assault in the Church. The lack of a clear and swift response in dealing with these situations has often compounded the pain caused by these offences and crimes. In Taizé too, as we explained in 2019, brothers in our community have committed sexual assaults. As I listen to the victims, I become more and more aware of the depth of the wounds. What has happened is intolerable and appalling to us and it keeps us from any form of idealizing our community.

We are also aware of the responsibility that falls to us, the brothers, because week after week we welcome young people who come to Taizé with the hope of finding trust in God, in life and in themselves. For this reason, it is essential that those who have experienced abuse in Taizé have the necessary means (email protection@taize.fr and www.taize.fr/protection) to be able to talk about it and to be heard; that those who have suffered, here or elsewhere, can speak about it; and that the integrity of each person is protected in Taizé as well as in the meetings we organise in other places.

If we are able to make progress on this path, it is thanks to people who have had the courage to tell us about the abuses experienced in Taizé, and to bodies outside our community who give us advice with a critical eye.

We continue the pilgrimage of trust and the meetings now bearing in mind the suffering of those whose trust has been abused, listening to the remarks and suggestions coming from outside, and doing everything possible, both within the community and in our pastoral mission, to make Taizé a safe place for everyone. It is with this attitude that we want to continue to move forward, with a renewed awareness of what is expected of us.

I | Poster displayed in all public places in Taizé

This poster, printed in early summer 2021, will be revised and reprinted in 2023.

Safeguarding | *Protection des personnes*

We take any kind of sexual abuse or violence seriously. If you become aware of anything of this nature, or see any worrying behaviour, please go immediately to La Morada to ask for the brother responsible for safeguarding or call to **+33 749 04 75 85** (Call or sms) or write to protection@taize.fr. You can also speak with another person you trust: a group leader, one of the sisters in El Abiodh or the person in charge at the first aid point.

*Nous prenons très au sérieux toute forme d'abus sexuel ou de violence. Si un acte de ce type venait à votre connaissance ou si vous étiez témoin d'un comportement inquiétant, venez rapidement à La Morada en parler au frère responsable pour la protection des personnes ou appelez-le au **+33 749 04 75 85** (Appel ou sms) ou écrivez à protection@taize.fr. Vous pouvez aussi en parler à une autre personne en qui vous avez confiance : une responsable de groupe, une sœur à El Abiodh ou encore au responsable du poste de premiers secours.*

Health Concerns | *Soucis de santé*

Remember there is a First Aid Point in El Abiodh.
Rappelez-vous qu'un point de premiers secours se trouve à El Abiodh.

Fire Safety | *Sécurité incendie*

Smoking is not permitted in the dormitories, tents, meal areas, or meeting places. Fires and cooking equipment are not allowed anywhere.
Il est interdit de fumer dans les dortoirs, les tentes, les espaces de distribution des repas et les lieux de rencontre. Les feux et les appareils de cuisine personnels sont interdits sur l'ensemble du site.

Valuable Objects | *Objets de valeur*

We remind you not to leave phones or other devices out of sight at any time, especially when charging. Things can be stolen in the rooms, tents, bathrooms and even in the church. There is a safe deposit in La Morada for money, passports and other valuables.
Nous vous demandons de ne jamais laisser les téléphones ou autres appareils hors de votre vue, surtout lorsqu'ils sont en charge. Des objets peuvent être volés dans les chambres, les tentes, les sanitaires et même dans l'église. Il existe à La Morada un lieu sûr pour déposer l'argent, les passeports et autres objets de valeur.



TAIZÉ 