



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of New Mexico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Santa Fe Priest Indicted on Sexual Exploitation Offense

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Alexander M.M. Uballez, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and Raul Bujanda, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office, announced today that Daniel Balizan was arrested on criminal charges of coercion and enticement of a minor, related to his alleged persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child under the age of 18 years of age to engage in sexual activity.

According to court documents, Balizan, 61, of Springer, a former priest at Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Church in Santa Fe, New Mexico and St. Patrick's-St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Raton, New Mexico, allegedly used text messages to coerce and entice a minor victim, identified as John Doe in court documents, to engage in sexual activity with him.

"Abusing children under the veil of religious authority is an attack on the faith itself," said U.S. Attorney Alexander M.M. Uballez. "I am humbled by the bravery of John Doe. With our partners, we will vigorously pursue justice for him and all of our children."

"We have and will continue to do everything we possibly can to protect our children from predators who seek to do them harm by abusing their inherent positions of trust," said Raul Bujanda, FBI Special Agent in Charge.

If convicted, Balizan faces a minimum of 10 years and up to life in prison.

The Santa Fe Resident Agency of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office investigated this case with assistance from the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office and the New Mexico Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory.

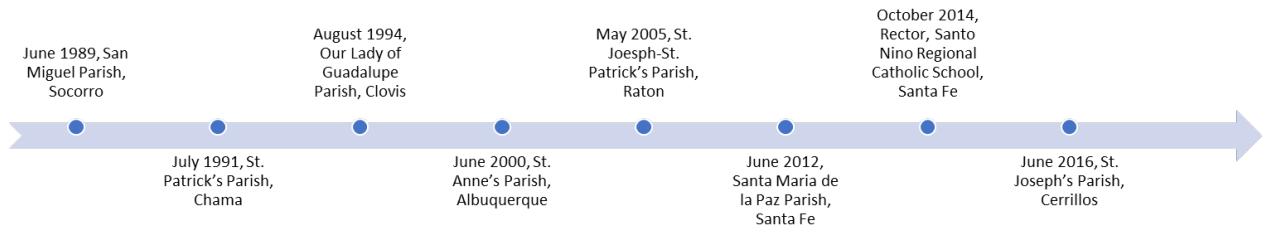
Assistant U.S. Attorney Jaymie L. Roybal is prosecuting the case.

Balizan is being prosecuted as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Justice Department to combat the epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and DOJ's Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <http://www.justice.gov/psc/>.

Starting today, information about the federal prosecution of Balizan, including the indictment, will be available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-nm/priest-prosecution>. Also starting today,

individuals may provide any information related to Balizan's contact with minors by calling the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI or submitting a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.

Below is a timeline of Balizan's assignments from 1989 to 2022:



An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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