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Regarding Fr. James Kurtz, S.J.

From Ned McGrath, Director of Communications | Issued September 29, 2014

Religious orders function in their internal governance separately from the archdiocese or diocese where they are headquartered and/or minister – therefore a matter involving a religious order cleric is handled by the order, not by the archdiocese. We understand from the statement from the Jesuits that they handled the allegations involving Fr. Kurtz in 2001 as they were required to do by Church law. If assistance is requested of the Detroit archdiocese going forward, we will assist them any way we can.

Additionally, upon receiving the statement on the matter from the Jesuits, the Archdiocese of Detroit has published Fr. Kurtz's name on our [Priests and Policy Status Report](#).

- [Sept. 29, 2014: Statement by Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus](#)
- [Sept. 29, 2014: News Release from U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Michigan](#)
- [Nov. 23, 2011: Statement by the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus](#)
- [Feb. 25, 2015: Statement from Karl J. Kiser, S.J., President of U of D Jesuit High School](#)

Creating Safe Environments
Our goal is to empower children, youth and adults to avoid and report unsafe or harmful situations.



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9/29/2014
Contact: Jeremy Langford
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**STATEMENT BY THE CHICAGO-DETROIT PROVINCE OF THE SOCIETY OF
JESUS (JESUITS) CONCERNING RICHARD J. KURTZ, SJ**

The Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus (the Province) is aware that Richard James Kurtz, SJ (Kurtz), a member of the Province, was arrested earlier today on charges related to his alleged production, transportation, and possession of child pornography. The charges were brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. The Province has cooperated fully with the authorities in this case and it remains committed to justice and healing for those involved.

Fr. Kurtz currently is serving a 10-year-to-life term of sex-offense intensive supervised probation after his plea of guilty in Douglas County, Colorado, in 2012. In his guilty plea, Fr. Kurtz admitted to committing a sexual offense in Colorado in 2001. As a condition of the sentence of supervised probation imposed by the Colorado court, Fr. Kurtz resides in strictly supervised confinement in Missouri.

The federal charges brought today are related to materials that were discovered shortly after Fr. Kurtz's arrest on the Colorado charges. Those materials promptly were turned over to federal law enforcement by the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus. The Province continues to cooperate fully with the investigating authorities.

Kurtz has been restricted from public ministry since 2001 when the allegation of sexual misconduct against a minor in Colorado was made against him. That allegation was reported to authorities in Michigan at the time it was received, and the Province later disclosed the allegation to, and fully cooperated with, the prosecutorial authorities in Colorado.

We encourage anyone who has been abused by a member of the Province to contact the appropriate law enforcement or child protection agency, no matter what amount of time has passed since the abuse. Contact information for Province staff, as well as for law enforcement and child protection agencies, is posted on the Province web site at www.jesuitsmidwest.org. In addition, victims may contact Ms. Marjorie O'Dea, the Province Director of the Office of Victim Advocacy at 773-975-6363 or by mail at The Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus, 2050 N. Clark St. Chicago, Illinois 60614.

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**United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan**

**Barbara L. McQuade
United States Attorney**

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 2014**

**Contact: Gina Balaya - (313) 226-9758
www.justice.gov/usao/mie/index.html**

**PRIEST CHARGED WITH PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION,
AND POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Richard James Kurtz, 69, formerly of Clarkston, Michigan, was charged in a criminal complaint with production, transportation, and possession of child pornography, United States Attorney Barbara L. McQuade announced today.

McQuade was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Paul M. Abbate, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Detroit Division.

According to court records, Kurtz, a Jesuit priest and former teacher at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, was arrested in November 2011—while he was residing in Chicago—for “sexual assault on a child by one in a position of trust.” That arrest was based on an arrest warrant issued out of Douglas County, Colorado, for conduct that occurred in 2001. After Kurtz’s arrest in Chicago, two Jesuit priests discovered evidence of possible child pornography crimes among Kurtz’s belongings in Chicago, as well at Kurtz’s former residence in Clarkston, Michigan. The Jesuits provided that evidence to the FBI.

According to court records, the FBI’s investigation revealed that Kurtz surreptitiously videotaped UDJHS hockey players changing in the locker room after games during the 1998-1999 hockey season. Beyond this production of child pornography, the FBI also discovered that Kurtz transferred other child pornographic material from Clarkston to Chicago, and possessed still other child pornography in Clarkston.

Kurtz was arrested today in Missouri where he will face a magistrate judge for removal to the Eastern District of Michigan. If convicted of these offenses, Kurtz faces a term of 15-30 years in custody for the production of child pornography charge, 5-20 years in custody for the transportation of child pornography charge, and up to 10 years in custody for the possession of child pornography charge.

Kurtz was a teacher of chemistry at the UDJHS from 1970-1973, 1978-1983, and from September 1984-May 2001.

McQuade praised the work of the FBI agents for their professionalism and dedication in their aggressive and thorough investigation of these cases.

Assistant United States Attorneys Kevin M. Mulcahy is prosecuting this case for the United States.

STATEMENT BY THE CHICAGO-DETROIT PROVINCE OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS CONCERNING THE ARREST OF RICHARD J. KURTZ, S.J.

November 23, 2011

The Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus (“the Province”) is aware that Richard James Kurtz, S.J., (“Kurtz”), a Member of the Province, currently is in custody on the basis of charges filed in the State of Colorado. These criminal charges allege that Kurtz engaged in criminal sexual abuse of a minor. Because of the serious nature of the charges and the fact that this case is a pending criminal matter, there are prudential limits to what the Province can or should say at this time.



Nevertheless, certain questions have been raised and some information appearing in the media appears to be incomplete. Although the Province is not today in a position to address all the questions posed in light of Kurtz’s arrest, the Province believes that it will be helpful to all concerned to better understand the sequence of events that occurred.

In April of 2001, Kurtz was a Member of what was then the Detroit Province, and he was a teacher at University of Detroit High School (UDHS). That month he accompanied a high school student from UDHS to Colorado for a visit to the Air Force Academy.

The Province believes that the criminal charges brought in Colorado relate to events that are alleged to have occurred while Kurtz and the student were in Colorado. The Province is aware that while he was on this trip in April 2001, the student notified his parents that he wanted to return home immediately.

The parents of the student in question promptly went to Colorado and brought their son back to Detroit. The parents then notified UDHS of allegations relating to Kurtz’s actions toward their son during the Colorado trip.

UDHS immediately removed Kurtz from the school faculty. We understand that UDHS officials, acting on advice provided to them, made a report on May 6, 2001, to the Michigan Family Independence Agency (MFIA), where Child Protective Services is located. UDHS was of the understanding that because the victim of abuse was located in Michigan, the MFIA was the correct agency to which a report should be made of suspected sexual abuse.

In 2002 the Province sent Kurtz to a treatment facility located in Canada for purposes of gaining an evaluation and developing a treatment plan. Kurtz spent five months receiving residential therapy at this facility.

From 2001 until the present, Kurtz has not been provided the faculties required for a priest to engage in public ministry, and the Province has adhered to a policy of not seeking that any archbishop or diocese should permit Kurtz to engage in public ministry. Furthermore, from 2001 to the present, Kurtz’s activities have been subject to restrictions imposed by the Province.

In 2002, a woman contacted the Archdiocese of Detroit alleging an incident of sexual misconduct by James Kurtz with her son while Kurtz was a teacher at the University of Detroit High School and her son was a student. The woman did not specify a date when this incident allegedly occurred. The Archdiocese forward that report to the Wayne County prosecuting authorities and notified the Province of her allegation.

The now merged Chicago-Detroit Province has developed comprehensive policies governing its reaction to allegations of sexual misconduct on the part of a Member in which a minor is involved. One facet of those policies is that when such allegations are known to exist, a report should be made to the prosecuting authority for the jurisdiction in which the abuse allegedly occurred. This policy effectively requires greater disclosures than are required by law. Pursuant to this policy, in April of 2011 the Province sent a letter to prosecuting officials in Colorado. This letter outlined the nature of the allegation against Kurtz and provided information about where Kurtz then was located. Since sending that letter, the Province has cooperated with the investigating authorities in Colorado and provided additional information.

The following list outlines measures the Chicago-Detroit Province has taken to prevent and/or address misconduct by any of its Members:

- Established Policies and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse based on the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- In August of 2007, the Chicago Province received full accreditation from Praesidium, Inc, an organization providing consultation, risk management assessment, policy development, and training materials for use in preventing sexual misconduct and responding to allegations of sexual misconduct by the Province
- Maintain Praesidium Accreditation through periodic audits by Praesidium's independent auditors
- Implemented ongoing training for each Jesuit to establish awareness, prevention, and proper response to allegations of sexual misconduct per Praesidium's Accreditation standards
- Conducted background checks of all Jesuits to identify any past behavior that might suggest future misconduct
- Enhanced our screening process for all applicants to the Jesuits, which includes a criminal background check
- Work with the Province Review Board, consisting of lay and clergy professionals, to provide recommendations to the Provincial regarding specific allegations or policies
- Contracted Dr. Kathleen McChesney and Mr. William Gavin, former executives with the FBI who are experienced in providing guidance and direction to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to conduct a review of all allegations of

sexual abuse received by our Province to ensure that each case has been handled in accord with civil law and the Bishops' Charter

- With these experts, we have reviewed, and continue to review, our policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse to help us to become more responsive and transparent
- In January, 2008, we hired Ms. Marjorie O'Dea, former Chief of Police for the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department as our Director of Victim Advocacy. Ms. O'Dea is responsible for receiving allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor and ensuring that a report has been made to the appropriate prosecuting attorney
- All allegations received by the Province from a victim involving current or former Jesuits have been reported to civil authorities by the Province or have been reported by the alleged victim
- We update our website detailing ways to contact the Province and law enforcement authorities regarding allegations of sexual abuse of a minor

The Chicago-Detroit Province encourages anyone who has been abused by a member of the Province to contact the appropriate authorities, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. The contact information for the Chicago-Detroit Province, law enforcement agencies, and child protection agency resources are listed on the Province website at www.jesuits-chgdet.org. The Director of Victim Advocacy, Ms. Marjorie O'Dea, stands ready to assist anyone who believes that sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual activity involving a Chicago-Detroit Province Jesuit has taken place. Ms. O'Dea can be reached at 773-975-6363 or by mail at 2050 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL, 60614.

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UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT JESUIT
HIGH SCHOOL AND ACADEMY

Statement from Karl J. Kiser, S.J., President of U of D Jesuit High School, regarding today's guilty plea by R. James Kurtz, S.J.

DETROIT, February 25, 2015 – Today, we learned that R. James Kurtz, S.J. pleaded guilty to one count of transportation of child pornography in criminal court at the Federal Courthouse Building in Detroit. Sentencing will take place within the next 90 days.

While these legal proceedings have ended, our prayers and support will always be with the victims and their families.

The safety and well-being of our students is of primary importance to all of us at U of D Jesuit. We do not tolerate any form of abuse, and we absolutely do not support any efforts to protect abusers. We want to communicate our unwavering support for victims of abuse, no matter when it may have occurred.

Founded in 1877, University of Detroit Jesuit educates young men to be “Men for Others” through academic excellence, faith formation, and community service. Located in Detroit, it serves the entire metropolitan region with a culturally diverse, 900-member student body representing more than 80 communities in six counties.

Contact:

Karl J. Kiser, S.J.
President
313.862.5400

For more information about the U of D Jesuit: please visit www.uofdjesuit.org
The Jesuit Experience. More than an Education.

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