

## **Statement Regarding Fr. Robert Harrison, OFM Cap.**

5 January 2015

The Capuchin Province of St. Joseph reports that Fr. Robert Harrison, OFM Cap. Has been removed from public ministry. On Monday, 22 December 2014, the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph learned that Fr. Harrison had abused minors in Milwaukee WI, and New York NY.

To the province's knowledge, that sexual abuse occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. The province has not received any allegations from victims. The province learned this information on 22 December 2014 during an investigation into Fr. Harrison's finances. When confronted by the province, Fr. Harrison then admitted to abuse of minors. Fr. Harrison informed the province that, to the best of his knowledge, no one ever reported any of the abuse to the province.

During the June 2013 audit of the Capuchin files, Fr. Harrison's files were reviewed by the auditors. The auditors reported no evidence that suggested that Fr. Harrison may have been involved with the abuse of minors.

Immediately upon receiving the information on 22 December 2014, Fr. Harrison was removed as teacher and basketball coach from Cardinal Hayes High School, The Bronx NY. He is barred from public ministry as required under the terms of the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. He is currently at a professional facility where he cannot have any contact with minors.

Per Capuchin Province of St. Joseph policy, the abuse was reported to the district attorney offices in Manhattan NY, The Bronx NY and Milwaukee WI. The province will continue to work cooperatively with civil authorities in this matter.

We are deeply saddened and sorry for what has occurred. The province is committed to helping those who have been harmed by Fr. Harrison. We will be reaching out to all of the ministries where Fr. Harrison served.

The Capuchin Province of St. Joseph is dedicated to creating a safe environment for everyone in our ministries. The province's misconduct policies and procedures can be accessed with the following link: <http://www.sjpcommunications.org/pastoral-care-conciliation>.

We ask that you keep everyone involved in this matter in your prayers.

The abuse of any child is a crime and a sin. We know that there have been times when children and youth entrusted to our care have been harmed; for that we are deeply sorry. While we cannot undo the harm that was done in the past, we are committed to doing what we can to prevent any future harm and to assisting those who have been hurt by a Capuchin Friar.

If you have concerns or are in need of assistance, please contact the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph's director of Pastoral Care and Conciliation, Amy Peterson, (414) 374-8841, Ext. 22. Other inquiries should be directed to Capuchin Province of St. Joseph's Public Relations office, Colleen Crane, (414) 254-2808.