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FEATURED

Conception Abbey releases list of priests accused of abusing minors

By GEOFFREY WOHLK The Forum
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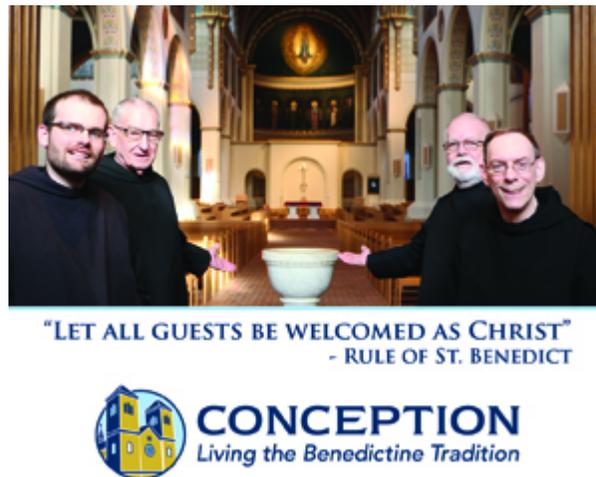
Conception Abbey released a list Monday of eight priests credibly accused of sexually abusing minors. The Abbey retained retired FBI agents to comb through 70 years of personnel files and used a "more likely than not" standard.

FORUM FILE PHOTO

CONCEPTION ABBEY, Mo. — Conception Abbey released a list of priests and brothers Monday who have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor, following a trend across the country of Catholic parishes and dioceses releasing such lists.

“On behalf of the monks of Conception Abbey, I offer my unconditional apology to all victims and their families affected by the evil of clergy sexual abuse,” said Abbot Benedict Neenan in a letter posted to the Abbey's website and sent to local media. “It is my prayer and hope that publishing this list will aid in the healing of victims and will serve as a lasting reminder of our responsibility to do everything in our power to protect all minors and vulnerable adults from abuse.”

According to the Abbey, the list was compiled by retired FBI agents who reviewed the personnel files of all Abbey priests and brothers over the past 70 years. In order to make the list, the allegation had to involve sexual abuse of a minor, had to involve a priest or brother who was a member of Conception Abbey and the allegation had to be considered more likely true than not.



The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph has not yet released a similar list, but said work had begun on compiling it in April.

Conception Abbey's list includes eight former members of the Abbey, seven of whom are deceased:

Fr. Vincent Barsch

1919-2010

Alleged incident(s): 1955-1962, South Dakota

Barsch's misconduct does not appear to have been previously made public. Joined the Abbey in 1945, and became a priest for many parishes. He voluntarily left the priesthood in 1973, moved to Pennsylvania and married.

Fr. Bede Parry

1942-2013

Alleged incident(s): 1982-1987, Missouri

Parry admitted in 2011 that he molested members of the Abbey's boys' choir, which he led from 1982-1987. He underwent counseling in New Mexico after an incident was reported in 1987, and was never assigned as a Catholic priest again. In 2000, he became a priest at the All-Saints Episcopal Church in Las Vegas, and resigned in 2011 after a lawsuit in Missouri was filed by his 1987 accuser against Conception Abbey. It was settled for \$415,000 in 2017.

Fr. Edgar Probstfield

1927-2007

Alleged incident(s): 1976-1977, Missouri

Probstfield's name previously appeared in a list released by the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in April, which indicates that he was working in Springfield during that time. Probstfield worked in at least five other towns including Burlington Junction, Parnell, Princeton, Tarkio and Trenton.

Fr. Regis Probstfield

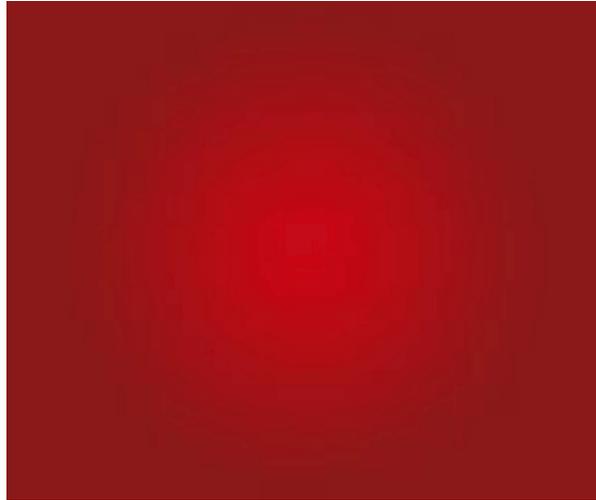
1931-2008

Alleged incident(s): 1976, Missouri

No other details about the incident appear to have previously been made public, but he worked at various times at Conception Abbey prior to 1981, when he became the pastor in Parnell. In 1996 he returned to the Abbey from North Dakota, where he remained until he died in 2008.

Fr. Gilbert Stack

1913-2007

Alleged incident(s): 1949-1953, South Dakota

In 2003, a bishop in Rapid City said he received a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by Stack while he was a priest in Sturgis, South Dakota. Stack had also been dean of Conception College seminary and served in several other roles at the Abbey during his career. His name was included in the Diocese of Rapid City's list of priests who had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct in March.

Fr. Hugh Tasch

1930-2017

Alleged incident(s): 2003, Missouri

The incident involving Tasch had not been previously made public, and no other details were available. Tasch became a monk in 1951 and a priest in 1957, and was at various times employed at Conception Seminary College and later, as chaplain for the Benedictine Sisters in Clyde and the Sisters of St. Francis in Savannah.

Fr. Paschal Thomas

1934-2015

Alleged incident(s): 1993, Connecticut

Thomas was listed by the Diocese of Norwich in February (with his first and last name transposed), but no other details were available. Thomas was reportedly reassigned after the incident in Connecticut. He also worked at Conception Seminary College in various positions.

Fr. Isaac True

1937-

Alleged incident(s): 1979, Missouri

A relative alleged in a 2011 lawsuit that he had been molested by True several times at the age of 9 while True was a priest in Independence. True was the president-rector of Conception Seminary from 1973-1988. The lawsuit was settled for \$125,000. True's most recent assignment was as pastor in Bethany from 2008-2011.

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