

CAPUCHIN PROVINCE OF ST. CONRAD PUBLISHES NAMES OF FRIARS ACCUSED OF ABUSING MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

March 28, 2019 - The Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Conrad today released a list of names of friars with credible accusations of the sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. The list includes the names of 13 members or former members.

Of the 13, two are deceased and five have since left the order. None are in active ministry.

Provincial Minister, Fr. Christopher Popravak, O.F.M.Cap, who commissioned the release, stated, "As friars and followers of St. Francis of Assisi, our vocation is to serve as lesser brothers. Therefore, the abuse of a minor by someone in such a sacred position of trust is all the more egregious. I have personally met with numerous victims and can attest to the devastation wreaked upon their lives and those of their families. Though the words may ring hollow as many other Church leaders are voicing similar sentiments, I can only say that I am sorry from the depths of my heart. I have asked the friars of our Province to commit to serious penance and reparation on behalf of the misdeeds of our brothers and for the healing of victims. The results of the audit we are releasing today is only the first step in a new age of transparency. We are striving to be vigilant and have taken serious steps in the last fifteen years to ensure the careful and diligent screening of candidates to our way of life. We must persevere in our efforts to ensure that such a scandalous series of violations never occurs again."

The territory of the St. Conrad Province, which was established in April 1977, comprises the States of Colorado, Kansas and Missouri and the Diocese of Belleville, Peoria and Springfield, each in the State of Illinois. The Province also has two houses outside of the Province territory in San Antonio, TX.

The release followed an independent audit of the Province's personnel files and other relevant documents by an outside group of qualified professionals.

The audit consisted of a review of the personnel and other files retained by the Province, including a total of 226 personnel files reviewed. Of note, the auditors also reviewed the five active Safety Plans of Capuchin members under supervision for credible allegations of abuse, consulted with the Provincial Minister and the Safe Environment Coordinator. Of note, no significant areas of concern were noted with supervision over and compliance with the Safety Plans. The auditors also found a marked increase and improvement in documentation regarding allegations and attention to issues related to training and sharing of information with the Province's leadership team.

An allegation is deemed credible if an administrative investigation determines that in the opinion of the investigators it is more likely than not based on the facts presented that the alleged abuse occurred. Inclusion on this list does not imply that the allegations are true or that the accused member has been found guilty of a crime or is liable for civil claims. Every effort has been made to ensure the list is accurate. In most instances, the claims were made many years after the alleged abuse, making it difficult to conduct a complete investigation.

The list below is broken down into three categories: members with a single, credible accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor; members with more than one credible accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor; and, members with credible accusations of the sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult. All three categories include the individual's name, birth date, current status, and former assignments.

All allegations of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult are reported to the appropriate authorities.

One credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor:

Gregory Beyer

Birth: 1935

Status: Deceased (2010)

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1970s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- Sacred Heart Friary, Atwood KS
- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS
- St. Conrad Friary, Lawrence KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- Annunciation Friary, Denver CO
- Solanus Casey Friary, Colorado Springs CO

David Jones

Birth: 1962

Status: Dismissed from Order in 1987

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1986

Pastoral assignments:

None

Benignus Scarry

Birth: 1944

Status: Left the Order in 2016

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1980s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- St. Crispin Friary, St. Louis MO
- St. Conrad Friary, Lawrence KS
- San Damiano Friary, Denver CO
- San Antonio Friary, Denver CO
- St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver CO
- Our Lady of Angels Friary, Colorado Springs CO

Felix Shinsky

Birth: 1941

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1977

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Mary Friary, Herman PA
- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS
- St. Conrad Friary, Annapolis MD
- Mother of Divine Shepherd Friary, Mendi Papua New Guinea
- Queen of the Friars Minor Friary, Kagua PNG
- St. Fidelis Friary, Nipa PNG
- Santa Clara Friary, Denver CO
- St. Elizabeth Friary, Denver CO
- St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver CO

Charles Wolfe

Birth: 1949

Status: Dismissed from Order in 1987

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1976

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- Good Shepherd Friary, Shawnee KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- Holy Cross Friary, Thornton CO

More than one credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor:

Bennett Colucci

Birth: 1930

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1970s-1980s

Pastoral assignments:

- Fraternidad San Conrado, Ponce Puerto Rico
- Fraternidad San Miguel, Utuado Puerto Rico
- Fraternidad Santa Cruz, Trujillo Alto Puerto Rico
- Fraternidad San Joaquin, Adjuntas PA
- Fraternidad Santa Maria de los Angeles, Rio Piedras Puerto Rico
- Annunciation Friary, Denver CO
- Alverno Friary, Denver CO
- Holy Cross Friary, Thornton CO

Ron Gilardi

Birth: 1947

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1990s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS

Santa Clara Friary, Denver CO
St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS

David Gottschalk

Birth: 1943

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1970s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS
- St. Francis Friary, Pittsburgh PA
- St. Francis Friary, Washington DC
- Good Shepherd Friary, Shawnee KS
- St. John Friary, Lawrence KS
- St. Conrad Friary, Allison Park PA
- St. Francis Friary, Denver CO
- Our Lady of Angels Friary, Colorado Springs CO

Julian Haas

Birth: 1938

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1970s-1980s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Mary Friary, Herman PA
- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- St. Lawrence of Brindisi Friary, Rome Italy
- Annunciation Friary, Denver CO
- Capuchin Historical Institute Friary, Rome Italy
- St. Crispin Friary, St. Louis MO
- St. Patrick Friary, St. Louis MO
- Solanus Casey Friary, Colorado Springs CO
- General Curia Friary, Rome Italy
- St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver CO
- Our Lady of Angels Friary, Colorado Springs CO

Finian Meis

Birth: 1936

Status: Left Order in 1992 (Deceased)

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1960s-1970s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- Good Shepherd Friary, Shawnee KS
- St. Conrad Friary, Kansas City MO

Thaddeus Posey

Birth: 1944

Status: Deceased (2013)

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1980s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Francis Friary, Washington DC
- Annunciation Friary, Denver CO
- Alverno Friary, Denver CO
- St. Conrad Friary, Kansas City MO
- St. Patrick Friary, St. Louis MO
- University of St. Thomas, St. Paul MN
- St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria KS

Daniel Schartz

Birth: 1942

Status: Left the Order in 1980

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 1970s

Pastoral assignments:

- St. Bonaventure Friary, Hays KS
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS

More than one credible allegation of sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult:

Matthew Gross

Birth: 1935

Status: Removed from ministry / Under supervision

Estimated timeframe of abuse: 2000s-2010s

Pastoral assignments:

- Our Lady of the Angels Friary, Erave Papua New Guinea
- St. Conrad Friary, Burani PNG
- St. Francis Friary, Tari PNG
- Mary Queen of the Friars Minor Friary, Kagua PNG
- St. Clare Friary, Ialibu PNG
- Mother of Divine Shepherd Friary, Mendi PNG
- St. Joseph Friary, Hays KS
- Annunciation Friary, Denver CO
- Solanus Casey Friary, Colorado Springs CO
- St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver CO
- Our Lady of Angels Friary, Colorado Springs CO

Note: There were two credible accusations of the sexual abuse of a minor committed by members of the St. Augustine Province in our current jurisdiction prior to our establishment as the St. Conrad Province in April 1977.

The full text of the "Audit of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America (aka Province of St. Conrad)" is available on the website at: www.capuchins.org/protecting-children

The Province encourages anyone who has been abused by a Capuchin member to contact the appropriate civil authorities and the Safe Environment Coordinator, Jason Faris, at 303-477-5436 or jason.faris@capuchins.org
Please direct questions about the audit report and this list to Fr. Joseph Elder at joseph.elder@capuchins.org