

Office of Communications

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOUR FORMALLY DISMISSED FROM CLERICAL STATE

ST. LOUIS — Archbishop Raymond L. Burke has announced that four suspended priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis have been laicized, or permanently removed from the clerical state. The archdiocese received notification from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that decrees of laicization had been issued for James A. Funke, James L. Gummersbach, Bryan M. Kuchar, and Michael L. Seidel.

All four men had credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against them. Additionally, their priestly faculties had been suspended by the archdiocese, in virtue of which they were forbidden to function or represent themselves in any way as priests. After a careful examination of each allegation, the archbishop asked that these proceedings be undertaken to return these men to the lay state.

Archbishop Burke expresses his deepest regret to all who have been harmed by these men and to anyone who has been abused by a member of the clergy. The archbishop deplores the grave evil of sexual abuse of a minor and reiterates his and the archdiocese's concern for the welfare of all children. Anyone who has been harmed by a member of the clergy is encouraged to contact either the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, at (314) 633-2279, or the civil authorities.

James Funke, 58, was ordained in 1974. His priestly faculties were suspended by the archdiocese in 1986.

James Funke's parochial assignments included St. Cecilia Parish, St. Louis (1974-1975); St. Rose of Lima Parish, St. Louis (1975-1976); Visitation Parish, St. Louis (1976-1977); Nativity of Our Lord Parish, St. Louis (1977-1978); St. Patrick Parish, University City (1978-1979); St. Martin of Tours Parish, Lemay (1979-1983); and St. Bernadette Parish, Lemay (1983-1986).

In addition to these parish assignments, James Funke was a member of the teaching faculties of Mercy High School, St. Louis (1976-1979), and Bishop DuBourg High School, St. Louis (1979-1986).

James Gummersbach, 78, was ordained in 1954. His priestly faculties were suspended by the archdiocese in 1994.

James Gummersbach's parochial assignments included St. Patrick Parish, Rolla (now a parish of the Diocese of Jefferson City) (1954-1956); Immaculate Conception Parish, Union (1956-1959); St. Gregory Parish, St. Ann (1959-1963); Immaculate Conception Parish, St. Louis (1963-1968); Annunziata Parish, Ladue (1968-1972); Immaculate Conception Parish, Park Hills (1979-1981); St. Rose of Lima Parish, St. Louis (1981-1987); St. Agnes Parish, St. Louis (1987-1993); and Little Flower Parish, Richmond Heights (1993-1994).

In addition to these parish assignments, James Gummersbach also was resident chaplain at St. Joseph Hospital, St. Charles (1972-1979), and a chaplain at St. Louis Children's Hospital, St. Louis (1981-1982) and Deaconess Hospital, St. Louis (1982-1994).

Bryan Kuchar, 41, was ordained in 1993. His priestly faculties were suspended by the archdiocese in 2002.

Bryan Kuchar's parochial assignments included Assumption Parish, Mattese (1993-1996); St. Timothy Parish, Affton (1996-1997); Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis Parish (New Cathedral), St. Louis (1997-2001); and St. John the Baptist Parish, St. Louis (2001-2002).

In addition to these parish assignments, Bryan Kuchar was also a member of the faculty at Rosati-Kain High School, St. Louis, from 1996 to 1999, and was associate director of the Archdiocesan Office of Vocations from 1999 to 2002.

Michael Seidel, 51, was ordained in 1987. His priestly faculties were suspended by the archdiocese in 1998.

Michael Seidel's parochial assignments included Holy Family Parish, St. Louis (1987-1991); Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish, St. Charles (1991-1995); Basilica of St. Louis, King of France Parish (Old Cathedral), St. Louis (1995-1997). Michael Seidel took a leave of absence from active ministry in 1997.

An article about these laicizations appears in the November 3 issue of the *St. Louis Review*, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, for the information of Catholics throughout the city of St. Louis and the ten surrounding counties that make up the archdiocese. This article is also available on the *St. Louis Review* Web site, www.stlouisreview.com.

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