

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

A Message from Abbot John
Klassen, O.S.B.

More than three decades ago when Saint John's Abbey first learned of allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior by some of our monks, emotions within the community ranged from shock, rage and bewilderment to immense pain and embarrassment. This community and I share a deep compassion and concern for those persons who were victims and are now survivors.

As a community we hold any form of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to be morally reprehensible and a violation of our vow to a celibate and chaste life committed to mutual respect among all persons. This commitment was central to our task as we acted quickly to develop policies and procedures to respond responsibly in a manner that included a pastoral focus.

I believe we have been faithful over the years in our determination to do all we can to help survivors of abuse to achieve healing and reconciliation. Some have suggested that we turn the page, move ahead and not look back. While we are determined to move ahead, we know that we must also continue to look back. Sinful things happened in our midst and people were profoundly hurt. It is not enough simply to acknowledge what occurred as a result of our flawed human nature, or as a reminder of our frailty and vulnerability. We will continue to address the wrongs that were done.

Life, work and prayer continue at the Abbey. As we pursue important work in many areas, I am determined that this ugly stain become a permanent part of our collective memory so that we are ever mindful of our commitment to do everything possible to assure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. We will continue to learn from our experience and use that learning for healing, renewal and reconciliation. We must continue to do all we can for survivors of abuse by Saint John's monks even as we deal with our own healing.

This section of the Abbey's website continues our commitment to honesty and transparency. I invite all visitors to these pages to join the monastic community in its continuing prayers for all survivors of sexual abuse.

ABBAY RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Benedict's Rule for Monasteries Recognized Human Strength...and Frailty

When he wrote his Rule for Monasteries, Saint Benedict clearly presented monasteries as communities of individuals seeking conversion of life. (The phrase "conversion of life" implies a strong personal commitment among Benedictines to strive for a truly Christ-like life.)

But Saint Benedict also recognized that members of religious communities are human beings dealing with all of the human frailties of people outside the monastery. The sins within a monastery are familiar in the human condition and include pride, envy, chemical dependency and sexual impropriety. Saint Benedict was the first Benedictine monastic superior and his Rule expresses his commitment to assist his followers as they sought to rise above human frailty and achieve true conversion of life.

Over the centuries monastic superiors and communities have been guided by their founder's Rule as they continue the quest. It remains a

challenging, life-long struggle. Each decade and century has brought social and cultural changes that have affected the ongoing struggle to rise above human weakness and to achieve true transformation of life.

Evolution of Psychotherapy

During much of the last half of the 20th century many religious superiors nationwide received professional advice from psychotherapists that persons guilty of sexual abuse would benefit from a period of intensive psychotherapy and be able to return to a new assignment in the workplace. Many superiors in dioceses and monastic communities accepted the diagnostic opinion of psychotherapists and assigned those who had completed therapy to new positions in ministry and education. Although well-intentioned, such assignments often proved to be mistakes.

As the 1980s came to an end, professional opinion changed. A change began to occur in the way therapists responded to sexual abuse. Suddenly there seemed to be universal agreement among psychotherapists that the risk of recidivism was too great to justify confidence in therapy as a control or a cure.

This new school of thought regarding sexual abuse was central to Saint John's Abbey's actions in

response to sexual misconduct by some of its members. It also affected subsequent decisions by the Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) about how to respond to credible allegations of sexual misconduct. Zero tolerance became the standard in the U.S. Bishops' 2002 Charter dealing with the protection of children and young people. The Charter called for clergy facing credible allegations of sexual abuse to be removed from any form of ministry immediately and permanently.

Despite our awareness of Saint Benedict's wisdom regarding human frailty, despite our own experience that included referring members of the community for treatment for a variety of reasons over the years, the Saint John's monastic community was shocked and saddened when accusations of improper sexual behavior by some members of this monastic community came to our attention in the late 80s and early 90s. It was indeed painful to learn that some of our brothers who had committed their lives to helping others had also harmed others. It was difficult to believe and more difficult to understand this sin in our midst. In compliance with the USCCB Charter and Norms, all monks credibly accused of sexual abuse have been removed from the ministry.

Prompt and Ongoing Response

In 1988 Abbot Jerome Theisen, O.S.B., directed the monastic community to begin work at once on initiatives to reach out in pastoral support to persons harmed in any way by any persons from Saint John's. Abbot Jerome and the community also drafted and, in 1989, implemented a Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Policy that established a zero tolerance for sexual improprieties and immediate removal from ministry of any monk facing credible allegations of abuse. The guidelines and protocols, revised and strengthened in 1992, 1993, 2002 and 2008, have been used by other religious as a model for their own policies.

Shortly after his election in 1992, Abbot Timothy Kelly, O.S.B., began to explore how the Abbey might contribute to a national discussion/analysis of sexual abuse issues. In doing so, he expressed the determination to serve victims' needs. Guided by the recommendations of a group of professionals representing a diversity of denominations and professional experience, Abbot Timothy established the Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute (ISTI) to foster discussion and analysis of clergy abuse issues. ISTI hosted several conferences and workshops, including one for Linkup, a national survivors' organization at which Bishop Jerome Hanus of St. Cloud apologized publicly to a group of victims (the first U.S. bishop to do so).

The work of ISTI continued at Saint John's for a time under the sponsorship of the graduate School of Theology. Though enrollment in its offerings gradually declined and the ISTI program was discontinued early in 2008, the resources developed through its work remain available at ISTI.

Since his election as Abbot in 2000, Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B., has continued the Abbey's commitment to openness and asserted his determination to assure that "no remnants of the veil of secrecy remain."

In May 2002, Abbot John issued a public apology on behalf of the Abbey, and in June of that year he announced his intention to implement the directives of the U.S. Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (published 6/2002, revised 6/2011).

Saint John's contracted with Praesidium Religious Service to develop (1) educational programs for prevention of sexual abuse, (2) a set of national standards to serve as a benchmark for the commitment to education and prevention, and for responding to allegations of sexual abuse, and (3) guidelines for the care and supervision of individual offenders in the religious community. Praesidium developed a system of accreditation for each religious organization that included documentation of the education of members and an onsite visit of each religious community.

Saint John's Abbey completed Praesidium's first onsite accreditation visit in 2008, including a thorough review of all credible charges of abuse and the response since 2002 to each allegation. In addition, the reviewers met with each monk on a Safety Plan, the monk's supervisor and members of the Abbey's independent External Review Board. In May, 2008, Saint John's Abbey was accredited by Praesidium Religious Services, documenting that the Abbey is in full compliance with Praesidium's 25 Standards of Accreditation which were adopted by CMSM in 2003 and then updated and revised in 2013..

Accreditation for Saint John's Abbey was renewed in June 2011 and again following a site visit in 2014 and a thorough attorney-review of all abbey personal files in 2015. Saint John's current accreditation by Praesidium Religious Services for meeting or exceeding all standards for safeguarding children and young people runs from 2015 through 2020.

Over the years all members of the monastic community have participated in several conferences, workshops and lectures dealing with issues related to healthy sexuality, celibate chastity and appropriate interpersonal boundaries. Examples include a workshop on healthy boundaries by a professional staff member of St. Luke's Institute, a treatment center in Silver Springs, Maryland, and continuing annual presentations by Abbot John to new members of the monastic community about the

history of abuse at the Abbey and the monastery's ongoing work to ensure effective policies and accountability. The Abbey's external accreditation by Praesidium Religious Services requires ongoing training on appropriate boundaries in ministerial and personal relationships.

Abbot John's continuing leadership is also shown in the following sections.

External Review Board

The seven-member External Review Board (ERB), established in June 2003, continues to meet as requested by the Abbot, usually on a quarterly basis. As a confidential, consultative body, the responsibilities of the Board include providing counsel to the Abbot in the following areas:

- * Affirming decisions regarding the credibility of allegations brought against a monk of Saint John's Abbey.
- * Ensuring that a proper investigation is conducted in response to an allegation of sexual abuse.
- * Determining the kinds of work and other activities that are suitable for a monk accused of sexual abuse of a minor.
- * Evaluating the appropriateness of the Abbey's response to a person who survived sexual abuse as a

minor.

- * Reviewing educational programs within the Abbey dealing with healthy sexuality and appropriate boundaries.

- * Reviewing the Abbey's Policy on Sexual Abuse of a Minor.

- * Reviewing Safety Plans of monks who have faced credible allegations of abuse of a minor and making recommendations to the Abbot for modifications the Board considers necessary.

Abbey policy provides that there are to be seven members of the Board, and stipulates that one member be selected from the monastic community and that one member have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors. In addition, the Abbey has consistently had a survivor of sexual abuse as a member of the board. After consultation with the members of the ERB and others whom the Abbot chooses, the Abbot, with the consent of the Senior Council, appoints the members of the Review Board.

Screening, Training Candidates for Monastic Life

During the 1980s Saint John's Abbey took steps to strengthen policies and practices for accepting and training applicants for the monastic life. More

recently it has made a commitment to honor or exceed the Accreditation Standards of Praesidium which includes a rigorous review of all candidates considering the monastic life.

The first standard requires a rigid program of screening for new candidates for monastic life. Following are the standard's specific requirements:

- * Candidates are screened for a history of sexually abusing minors or violating the boundaries of minors.
- * Each candidate must undergo a criminal background check.
- * Each candidate must have a minimum of three documented personal references (including at least one from a family member) and two professional references for a total of five references.
- * Each candidate must have a face-to-face interview with more than one representative of the Abbey.
- * Each candidate must have a psychological evaluation conducted by a licensed psychologist.
- * Each candidate must undergo a psycho-sexual history conducted by either a licensed psychologist or a licensed mental health professional with skills in conducting psycho-sexual histories and in assessing psycho-sexual health in preparation for a life of celibate chastity.

* A candidate with an established allegation of sexually abusing a minor in his past or who has acquired/intentionally viewed child pornography will not be permitted to continue. By education, training or experience, the Vocation Director and the Formation Director must develop the skills needed to identify behaviors in candidates who may be at higher risk to sexually abuse a minor.

Saint John's also strengthened training of candidates for the priesthood in Saint John's seminary. The novitiate program for first-year monks already included classes on celibate chastity, but the Abbey introduced an additional semester course on celibate chastity for Junior monks in the spring of 1993. The seminary offered its first full course on celibate chastity in January 1993. Both programs explored a variety of issues dealing with celibate sexuality and healthy boundaries in relationships.

Support for Survivors

Saint John's Abbey has reached out proactively to survivors during the last 20 years to begin or contribute to the process of healing and the possibility of reconciliation. The Abbey has also agreed to several financial settlements with survivors. Often financial compensation to survivors has included continuing support for the therapy that is an important part of the healing process.

Names of Current and Former Monks Likely to Have Offended Against Minors

Release of Names of Current and Former Monks Likely to Have Offended Against Minors

Saint John's Abbey has voluntarily released the names of current and former monks who likely have offended against minors. Most of the names previously have been made public. The list includes 21 names: six monks who are living at Saint John's Abbey under supervised safety plans, thirteen monks who are deceased and two men who have been dispensed from their religious vows and no longer are connected to the Abbey.

The claims against each of those named were reviewed either by the Abbey's External Review Board or by the Abbot himself. In each case, it was determined that there was sufficient evidence to include the person on the list. In some cases, however, all the facts could not be completely substantiated. Claims against some of those named on the list, for example, were not brought to the Abbey's attention for decades after the accused monk's death. It is in several of these cases where the Abbot made the determination to include the name of the monk on the list despite the lack of corroborating evidence.

The External Review Board was created in 2003. The seven-member panel includes those who have

expertise in the treatment of sexual abuse of minors, judges, attorneys and current and former members of law enforcement. In addition, the Board consistently has included a survivor of sexual abuse. The Board is charged with evaluating allegations of sexual abuse against members of the Abbey and making recommendations for action to the Abbot, as well as conducting annual reviews of individual monks' safety plans.

This list reflects our best efforts to identify those who likely have offended against minors. That task often is complicated by the passage of time, the deaths of some of those involved and sometimes incomplete accounts of the past. Even so, we are including all 21 names to provide as complete of a list as we can to acknowledge the pain suffered by victims. This list underscores our commitment to being transparent in our policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse.

Our commitment is reflected in the policies and procedures implemented over the past decade, particularly the External Review Board. This Board gives victims the assurance that allegations of abuse against minors will be investigated objectively, sensitively and thoroughly.

* Bennett, Andre†

* Bik, Michael

* Blumeyer, Robert†

- * Dahlheimer, Cosmas†
- * Eckroth, Richard†
- * Gillespie, Thomas
- * Hoefgen, Francis*
- * Hohmann, Othmar†
- * Maiers, Brennan
- * McDonald, Finian†
- * Keller, Dominic†
- * Kelly, James*†
- * Kelly, John*
- * Moorse, Dunstan
- * Phillips, James
- * Schulte, Francisco
- * Plakut, Casimir*†
- * Strub, Augustine John*†
- * Tarlton, Allen†
- * Wendt, Pirmin†
- * Wollmering, Bruce†

† = deceased

* = no longer a monk of Saint John's

Safety Plans for Those Credibly Charged

In 2003, the Abbey contracted with Project Pathfinder in Saint Paul, an organization skilled in assessing an individual's risk of re-offending. Assessments done by Project Pathfinder led to the development of individual Safety Plans for each monk who has sexually abused a minor. ("Safety Plan" is the title used by Praesidium in its Accreditation Standards for such agreements. As one of several monastic communities pledged to conform to the Praesidium Standards, Saint John's Abbey has adopted the label "Safety Plan" for its use.)

The plans include professional counseling, supervision and regular meetings with a supervisor. Individual plans are reviewed annually by external professionals and the independent External Review Board.

The voluntary Safety Plans are a requirement for monks who have offended if they choose to remain members of the monastic community.

John Jay Report Explores Abuse Causes

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice report issued in May 2011, *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, revealed a disturbing, broad cultural phenomenon of sexual abuse by professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and members of the Catholic and other denominations of clergy. The report described a pattern - across all professions - of sexual abuse of adolescents that began in the 1950s, increased through the 1960s and 1970s and then declined sharply after the mid-1980s.

Accusations of sexual abuse by monks of Saint John's Abbey reflected the pattern reported in the John Jay findings. Although some accusations were proven to be without basis, rigorous investigations deemed that a number of allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct* against members of the Abbey were credible. All credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors were for behavior before the mid-1980s.

Of monks credibly accused of sexual abuse or misconduct, many have died, or left the Abbey. All who remain at the Abbey follow Safety Plans monitored by in-house superiors, an external professional, and the External Review Board.

From 1989, the year the Abbey established the first sexual abuse policy, until the present, no credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been made against members of the Saint John's monastic

community. The last sexual abuse of a minor for which an allegation has been made against a member of Saint John's Abbey occurred in 1986.

The Abbey has also had to defend and support some monks who have faced false and malicious allegations of sexual abuse and who must now live with this grossly unfair stigma.

The principal investigator for the John Jay Report stated that "the increased frequency of abuse in the 1960s and 1970s was consistent with patterns of increased deviance of society during that time," and went on to state that "social influences intersected with vulnerabilities of individual priests whose preparation for a life of celibacy was inadequate at the time."

The investigator noted that implementation nationwide of various plans in the 1990s to respond to victims and the harms of sexual abuse was not consistent or thorough at times but, nonetheless, said "the decrease in incidence of sexual abuse cases by clergy was more rapid than the overall societal patterns."

Invitation to Survivors

Survivors of any form of sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the Saint John's monastic community or an employee of The Order of Saint

Benedict, Inc., are invited and urged to come forward to begin a process of healing. Survivors may contact Abbot John Klassen at Saint John's Abbey or an authorized Survivor Advocate.

The Walk-In Counseling Center in Minneapolis, MN, which has been engaged by Saint John's Abbey to offer assistance to anyone who may have experienced abuse by a monk of the Abbey. Contact Mr. Gary Schoener. Telephone (612) 870-0565.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator for the St. Cloud Diocese is Roxann Storms, MSW, LGSW, FT. Telephone (320) 248-1563.

Survivor Advocates are available nationwide and may be located by contacting area social service offices or, in most areas, diocesan officials.

Because survivors of abuse have a variety of options available to present allegations, Saint John's Abbey will not take action on anonymous or third-party reports of abuse.

Under the leadership of three abbots (Jerome Theisen, Timothy Kelly and John Klassen), Saint John's Abbey has sought to honor its commitment to respond responsibly and pastorally to credible allegations of misconduct. For more than 20 years the Abbey has reached out to survivors and established internal policies and procedures to diminish the chances of abuse happening again. Some mistakes have occurred along the way and the Abbey has acknowledged them, learned from them

and used the experience to strengthen its continuing response.

Although the Abbey continues to receive occasional allegations of abuse that occurred 40 to 60 years ago, there have been no reports of abuse that occurred after 1986.

Saint John's Abbey's response will be an ongoing component of the community's culture as it continues to expand its work in a variety of important apostolates. In the public manner of this website the Abbey once again renews its determination to remain vigilant, with a continuing overriding concern for survivors of sexual abuse.

[0]: <http://www.usccb.org/>

Establishing Allegations of Sexual Abuse

How is an Allegation Established as True?

The Abbey's Policy on Sexual Abuse of a Minor states that if a person makes an allegation of child sexual abuse against a member of the monastic community, the abbey will report the allegation to law enforcement and civil authorities as required by Minnesota state law. Depending upon circumstances, including the length of time that has

elapsed between the alleged act and the allegations being brought forth, these authorities may or may not elect to investigate the allegations.

The Abbey will engage an independent professional investigator to conduct a thorough investigation and make a confidential report to the Abbot. The Abbot forwards this report to the seven-member External Review Board, which makes a recommendation indicating whether or not they find that the fact of sexual abuse by the monk has been established.

Saint John's Abbey is guided by the CMSM/Praesidium document, *Instruments of Hope and Healing*. These standards state that an allegation is deemed to be established if, based upon the facts and circumstances, there is objective certainty* that the accusation is true and that an incident of sexual abuse of a minor has occurred.

* "This is a definition which keeps it in line with the concept of moral certainty required by canon law. The judgment of the major superior must be objective, i.e. based upon facts and circumstances discovered in the course of the investigation. It is not based upon percentage of the evidence, i.e. most likely true or most likely occurred, which implies 50 + 1% of the evidence. It allows for the canonical principle in moral certitude which states that the judgment of the major superior admits that the contrary (the falsity of the accusation) is indeed possible but highly unlikely or improbable, to the

extent that the major superior has no fear that the contrary (the falsity of the accusation) may be true."

Abbey Policy on Sexual Abuse

Synopsis

Saint John's Abbey has had a clear and definitive policy on addressing allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the Abbey since 1989. The policy is comprehensive and specifies the responsibilities of the Abbey and the Abbot to persons who may have been victims of sexual abuse as minors, to their families and to monks who may be accused of sexual abuse involving a minor. You may read the complete policy [here](#).

The foundation of Saint John's Abbey's Policy on Sexual Abuse of a Minor:

The monks of Saint John's Abbey are vowed to a chaste celibate way of life and mutual respect among persons with whom they come in contact, as they seek to imitate the love and respect Jesus showed to all. Saint John's Abbey views sexual abuse of minors by its members to be morally reprehensible. In addressing an incident or allegation of child sexual abuse by a monk, the Abbey maintains a primary concern for the victim's safety and well-being.

A synopsis of key points:

- Every allegation is reviewed, regardless of its initial plausibility or the identity of the monk named in the allegation.
- If an allegation is denied by the accused monk, an independent investigator will be retained in a timely manner to gather information and to make a confidential report to the Abbot. The report will be forwarded by the Abbot to the External Review Board (ERB) which has 30 days to review the findings and make a recommendation to the Abbot on whether it finds the fact of sexual abuse by the monk to be established.
- During the time the allegation is being investigated, the alleged victim and/or family will be offered pastoral support such as counseling and will be provided with the names of Assistance Coordinators to assist in advocacy and pastoral support.
- The Abbot may temporarily remove the monk from his work and/or residence pending the completion of the investigation. Removal will always be done if the allegation appears plausible and the monk works with minors.
- The Abbot and monks are required to report known or suspected abuse of a minor to the appropriate civil authorities in compliance with state law. If at any point civil authorities assume conduct of the investigation into the allegation,

the Abbey will suspend its independent investigation pending the outcome of civil or criminal investigations. The Abbey will cooperate fully with appropriate state and federal authorities.

- If the fact of sexual abuse by a monk is not established, the case will be closed, the monk will be reinstated to any responsibilities and duties from which he was removed and the Abbey will make every effort to restore the good name of the accused monk.
- If the allegation of sexual abuse is substantiated through the monk's admission or the process outlined above and the monk is not subject to confinement or other restrictions under criminal law, a Safety Plan will be developed to supervise the monk's work, travel, campus activity and associations and to reduce any risks posed to minors by the monk.
- The Abbey will inform any organization – including schools, parishes or civic groups – in which the monk has abused a minor. If the allegation arose in the context of ministry or employment in a diocesan entity, the Abbey will follow the policies of the diocese on pastoral responses to communities affected by the allegation.

*The policy is periodically updated to reflect changes in civil, criminal and canonical law. The current revision was approved in 2018.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What has the Abbey done to improve screening/preparation of candidates for admission to the monastic community?

Saint John's Abbey has agreed to meet or exceed the standards set forth by an abuse-prevention accreditation service, Praesidium, Inc. Praesidium's Accreditation for Religious sets forth rigorous standards for prevention, response and supervision. The first standard requires a rigorous program of screening for new candidates for monastic life, including the following:

Each candidate must undergo a criminal background check, a psychological evaluation conducted by a licensed psychologist, and be screened for a history of sexually abusing minors.

No candidate with an established allegation of sexually abusing a minor in his past or who has acquired or intentionally viewed child pornography will be accepted.

2. Why are persons charged with abuse of a minor allowed to continue to live on campus?

When men enter a Benedictine monastery they take vows of obedience, stability and conversion of life.

Briefly stated, they promise to listen openly to Holy Scripture and the Rule of Benedict and to their abbot, to remain a member for life of the monastery entered and to pursue a Christ-like positive and ongoing transformation of life – even if it means beginning again and again. At the same time, Benedictine communities have always perceived the vows taken as mutual promises of the person making the promises and the monastic community. The community also promises that so long as a monk remains a member, the monastic community will support him in his quest for conversion of life. This pledge remains true even if – and perhaps especially if – a monk's human frailty has become an obstacle in his lifelong conversion process.

It is important to note, however, that this promise of support in no way provides legal immunity for a monk or shelters a monk from prosecution in legal or criminal courts. Saint John's Abbey cooperates fully with legal authorities.

This lifelong commitment remains a challenge for individual monks and for the monastic community. On the one hand, it is painful for one who has sinned to begin again after recognizing the harm done another person, to himself and to the monastic community. It is perhaps no less difficult for members of the monastic community to offer forgiveness and support to a fallen brother as he renews his commitment to conversion of life.

For monks who have faced credible allegation of sexual abuse but are not subject to criminal prosecution, Saint John's Abbey has developed individual, supervised Safety Plans. Such a plan is required for any offending monk who wishes to remain a member of the monastic community. Monks living under safety plans meet with a monastic superior regularly to review and, if necessary, to update the safety plan. The safety plans and monks' compliance with them are also reviewed annually by the External Review Board. The plans impose appropriate safeguards on these monks' activities and ability to move about on and away from Saint John's property. While the plans are not tantamount to "house arrest," they do place significant restrictions on the monks.

Some members of the Saint John's monastic community have lived within the boundaries of safety plans for more than twenty years and the Abbey has responded decisively in the event of re-offense, removing the reoffender to a secure off-site facility.

The safety plans are mutual contracts between an accused monk and the Abbey. No monk living with the restrictions of a safety plan has been the subject of criminal prosecution. Each such monk is free to withdraw from the monastic community, effectively terminating the plan, and begin life anew wherever he might choose to live with the same freedoms as any citizen. Some former monks have chosen the option of leaving the monastic community to live

and work in the larger community. Others believe they can find the support they need for the transformation of their lives within the community to which all monks profess vows of obedience, stability and conversion of life.

3. Is the Abbey harboring persons who would be arrested if they were not living in the Abbey?

No. Monks are subject to criminal charges and prosecution just like any other citizen. There is much confusion about the legal status of monks with individual safety plans. None of the accused monks under safety plans at Saint John's Abbey has been charged with or convicted of a criminal act.

Although each offender has been barred by the Abbey from serving as ministers of the Church, legally each retains all of the rights and privileges of any citizen. And although the safety plans include strict, ongoing accountability, they are not tantamount to house arrest.

The individual safety plans are significantly more rigid than the legal restrictions included in Minnesota State law for those who have been convicted of a crime, "served their time" and completed probation. There are no restrictions for such persons under Minnesota criminal law. If an individual monk were to choose to leave the monastery there is no federal or state law that could interfere with his decision to do so. He would be

allowed to move freely anywhere in the broader community with the full legal status of a U.S. citizen.

Canon law of the Catholic Church would continue to impose a permanent restriction on such an individual's ability to serve in any ministerial capacity.

4. How many members of the community are living with safety plans?

Six.

Names of Current and Former Monks Likely to Have Offended Against Minors

- Bennett, Andre†
- Bik, Michael
- Blumeyer, Robert†
- Dahlheimer, Cosmas†
- Eckroth, Richard†
- Gillespie, Thomas
- Hoefgen, Francis*
- Hohmann, Othmar†
- Maiers, Brennan
- McDonald, Finian†
- Keller, Dominic†
- Kelly, James*†

- Kelly, John*
- Moorse, Dunstan
- Phillips, James
- Schulte, Francisco
- Plakut, Casimir*†
- Strub, Augustine John*†
- Tarlton, Allen†
- Wendt, Pirmin†
- Wollmering, Bruce†

† = deceased

* = no longer a monk of Saint John's

5. How can a person report abuse that occurred?

Survivors of sexual abuse by a member of the Saint John's monastic community or an employee of The Order of Saint Benedict, Inc., are invited and urged to come forward to begin a process of healing and reconciliation. Survivors may contact Abbot John Klassen at Saint John's Abbey or an authorized Survivor Advocate.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator for the St. Cloud Diocese is Roxann Storms, MSW, LGSW, FT. Telephone (320) 248-1563.

The Walk-In Counseling Center in Minneapolis, MN, has been engaged by Saint John's Abbey to

offer assistance to anyone who may have experienced abuse by a monk of the Abbey. Contact Mr. Gary Schoener, telephone: (612) 870-0565.

Survivor Advocates are available nationwide and may be located by contacting area social service offices or, in most areas, diocesan officials.

By policy, the Abbey considers anonymous or third-person allegations to the extent feasible based on known information.

6. Are monks with safety plans permitted to interact with students at Saint John's?

Monks are able to interact with students on a very limited basis. Safety plans include significant restrictions that ensure appropriate boundaries. Monks with a safety plan may not have social relationships or individual contact with any minors on the Saint John's campus or off-campus, in any setting. Monks who are living with a safety plan are generally free to move about campus with some exceptions. They are free to use the library, the bookstore and to walk the roads and byways on the campus, and to attend public campus events such as athletic contests and concerts.

7. How does the Abbey find no-risk employment for men living with safety plans?

There are many jobs within the monastery at which monks can serve and keep from contact with minors.

8. Have charges of sexual misconduct against members of the monastic community had a negative effect on University and Preparatory School enrollment or fundraising for the Abbey and its enterprises?

It is very difficult to assess the impact of the abuse crisis on fundraising or enrollment. Some donors may have decided against making a gift because of the crisis. Others have continued their gifts to support Abbey, University or Preparatory School programs during this difficult and challenging time. Overall, fundraising for Saint John's Abbey as well as the University and Preparatory School have reached and exceeded goals, and each entity has completed successful capital campaigns during recent years.

University and Preparatory School enrollments have routinely met and sometimes exceeded goals, and enrollment projections for the University and Preparatory School do not differ from peer institutions.

9. Have any monks of Saint John's Abbey been falsely accused of sexual abuse?

Yes, some monks of Saint John's have been falsely accused of sexual abuse. All accusations, whether

false and credible, have undergone thorough review and investigation.

[updated March 2016]

Safety Plans

- The Abbey contracted with Project Pathfinder in Saint Paul, an organization skilled in assessing an individual's risk of re-offending. In addition, this assessment led to the development of individual Safety Plans for each monk who has sexually abused that includes supervision and regular meetings with a supervisor. These Safety Plans are reviewed annually by external professionals and an independent, external Review Board.
- Monks who are living with a Safety Plan do so voluntarily as a condition for remaining a monk of Saint John's Abbey. These Safety Plans are not court-ordered.
- As part of an individual Safety Plan, an ordained monk who has sexually abused a minor cannot officiate at Mass or any sacrament in public. He may not preach, teach, or associate with students, staff, or parishioners in a ministerial relationship. This restriction on ministry also applies to non-ordained monks.

- Monks with a Safety Plan may not have social relationships or individual contact with vulnerable persons of any age on the Saint John's campus or off-campus, in any setting.
- Monks who are living with a Safety Plan are generally free to move about the campus with appropriate restrictions, including prohibition from areas and situations that might foster social interaction with minors. Monks with Safety Plans are free to use the library, the bookstore and to walk the roads and byways on the campus.
- Monks with a Safety Plan are generally allowed unescorted trips off campus, provided they inform their supervisor of their destination and return time. The supervisor has the authority to deny such a request. As a result, a monk with a Safety Plan could visit family or friends away from the campus, go for a medical appointment, or conduct other business. Monks with a Safety Plan are allowed to eat with friends and/or family members in the student dining room.
- Most Saint John's monks on a Safety Plan are engaged in one or the other of ongoing therapy, spiritual direction, and group work, for the sake of their emotional and spiritual health.

In conclusion,

- The Abbey has worked with external professionals for risk assessment, for the

creation and ongoing review of Safety Plans, and for the approval of Safety Plans. The Abbey has made a diligent and conscientious effort to supervise monks on Safety Plans.

- The Abbey's safety program provides significantly more support and supervision of monks accused of sexual offenses than is provided for under Minnesota state law for many persons who have abused minors.
- Saint John's takes the issue of sexual misconduct very seriously, and over many years has worked to ensure that policies and procedures on human rights are followed and enforced. Saint John's policies are clear and longstanding: we do not tolerate sexual misconduct in any form.

Praesidium Standards for Accreditation

Following a three-day site visit in the summer of 2014 that reviewed an audit period from June 2011 through June 2014, Praesidium found Saint John's Abbey "in full compliance" with all 25 of the organization's Accreditation Standards. Each standard includes a number of Requirements that must be met for accreditation as well as detailed Clarifications of these Requirements. The entire current set of Praesidium's Standards for

Accreditation as adopted by CMSM is available [here](#).

NB: Praesidium uses the word “Institute” to represent the organization being evaluated. In this instance, the Institute is Saint John’s Abbey.

Standard 1

The Institute will screen new Candidates for membership in the Institute.

Standard 2

At each stage in the initial formation of Members, the Institute will assist in their ongoing growth toward a healthy sexuality as a foundation for celibate chastity.

Standard 3

The Institute will identify and utilize systems of support and accountability for its Members.

Standard 4

The Institute will establish and publish clear policies for boundaries with minors.

Standard 5

The Institute will educate its Members regarding the prevalence, identification, and prevention of sexual abuse of minors, giving special attention to topics that are of unique relevance to religious.

Standard 6

The Institute will interrupt and intervene when a Member violates the Institute's policies regarding boundaries with minors.

Standard 7

The Institute will offer to provide support and assistance to any Member who discloses to leadership concerns about his own attraction to minors or about potential boundary violations with minors.

Standards for Responding (Standards 8 –18)

Standard 8

Representatives of the Institute will respond pastorally and compassionately to any person who alleges sexual abuse of a minor by a Member of the Institute.

Standard 9

Representatives of the Institute who are responsible for assisting individuals who have alleged sexual abuse as a minor will be educated regarding the nature of their role.

Standard 10

Representatives of the Institute will make a significant effort to promote the healing process for individuals who allege being sexually abused as a minor.

Standard 11

The Institute will adhere to written protocols for responding to reports and allegations of sexual abuse of a minor.

Standard 12

The Institute's policy will state the obligation of each of its Members to report to civil authorities all allegations of known or suspected sexual abuse of a victim who is currently a minor.

Standard 13

The Institute will report known or suspected sexual abuse of a minor by a Member when the victim is no longer a minor, as obligated by the civil laws of the state where the sexual abuse of the minor allegedly occurred.

Standard 14

The Institute will investigate all reports and allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a Member, to the extent possible, based on the information provided.

Standard 15

The Institute will cooperate with civil authorities that are conducting an investigation of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

Standard 16

The Institute will document all reports and allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a Member, and its responses to the reports and allegations, including anonymous allegations and reports.

Standard 17

The Institute will utilize a Review Board for the purpose of providing consultation to the Major Superior on the response to all reports and allegations of sexual abuse of minors.

Standard 18

In cases where an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor committed by a Member has been established, the Institute will inform the leadership of any organization or ministry in which the Member has admitted to, or is suspected of, having sexually abused a minor, to the extent possible.

Standards for Supervisions (Standards 19-25)

Standard 19

The Institute will maintain a written, individualized Safety Plan to guide the supervision of any Member against whom an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been established.

Standard 20

When the sexual abuse of a minor by a Member has been established, the Member will not be permitted to work in any position which allows access to minors, or in any ecclesiastical ministry, in accordance with the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons.

Standard 21

The Review Board will review each Safety Plan at

least annually and offer recommendations to the Major Superior.

Standard 22

Individuals who supervise Members who have Safety Plans will be physically and emotionally capable and adequately trained to perform the duties involved in supervision.

Standard 23

Those who supervise Members who have Safety Plans will have access to all pertinent information about the Member that is not otherwise privileged.

Standard 24

The Major Superior or his delegate will annually evaluate compliance with all Safety Plans.

Standard 25

Communities that house “high-risk” Members will be visited by outside auditors on an unannounced basis to ensure consistent implementation of Safety Plan protocols.

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Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Minors

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2019-2020 Academic Year

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