

Capuchin Franciscan *Province of St. Joseph* Office of the Provincial Minister  
1820 Mt. Elliott Street, Detroit MI 48207

*Statement on the Public Release of the Names of Friars with  
Confirmed Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*

*Updated: 6 June 2019*

Several years ago, the Province of St. Joseph announced the initiation of an independent audit or review of our provincial files regarding the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. The audit process has been completed and today we release the auditors' report. The full report, an executive summary, and a number of other helpful documents, including our provincial policies and procedures, are available by clicking the green "Safe Environment" button at the Capuchin Communications website, <http://sjpcommunications.org>.

Upon the recommendation of the auditors, and with the support of our Provincial Review Board and Audit Work Group, we have also made the decision to publicly release the names of current, former, and deceased friars who have allegations of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult that have been confirmed by their own admission, an investigation, or what the auditors have determined to be other sufficient evidence. This is not a decision that we make lightly. It is the product of years of periodic reflection, conversation, deliberation and prayer.

We acknowledge that in today's environment the public disclosure of even an allegation of abuse can have a negative and perhaps irreparable effect on a friar's reputation. This is an important consideration (though not the only one) when a friar must be placed on administrative leave pending an investigation. It is even weightier for those who are deceased and will never have the opportunity to defend themselves. A number of the friars on the list below were previously publicly identified, chiefly by prior media reports, court filings or other matters of public record.

The Province's policies require that a member of the Province who has been found to have sexually abused a minor or vulnerable adult have a Supervision Plan (SP). This plan is reviewed annually by our Provincial Review Board and revised where necessary. As part of the process of developing a friar's SP, our Office of Pastoral Care and Conciliation (OPCC) also employs the services of professionals to conduct risk assessments.

Research suggests that the risk of re-offending is lowered by creating communities of support and accountability. Friars who have been found to have sexually abused a minor or vulnerable adult are assigned to communities that are not located at a parish or school. They are assigned a local supervisor who receives training and support through the OPCC. Unless advanced age or illness prevents them from working, they engage in internal ministries (e.g., maintenance, care for elderly members) to keep them productively occupied. In addition, they are asked to lead

lives of prayer and penance. The friars listed below who are members of the Province and have received professional assessments have been deemed to be at low or very low risk of re-offending.

Our decision to publicly release these names is rooted in several hopes:

(1) We hope that the release of these names might help some victims/survivors by validating their experiences and encourage them and others to come forward for help.

(2) We hope that along with the transparency in the audit report itself, greater openness about our brothers who have confirmed allegations of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults can underscore the seriousness of our efforts to prevent and better respond to abuse and thus aid the process of healing and the restoration of trust.

(3) We hope that releasing these names may aid in accountability and community support, and thus lower the risk of re-offending.

We express these hopes with some caution. For some, releasing these names might trigger painful experiences and memories that they had hoped to leave behind. We are also aware that it may deeply trouble others who love, respect and have good memories of the friars who have been named. In an ideal world, these decisions would hurt no one. However, we acknowledge that both the decision to release the names of those who have confirmed allegations of abuse and the alternative decision not to release those names will cause some to suffer. We are sorry for any suffering we have caused, both in previously not releasing these names and in doing so now.

In reaching this decision we also pass no judgment on whether other religious orders should do the same. As with our decisions to conduct and release the results of the audit, we believe that its ultimate wisdom will depend upon the fruits that it yields in the coming months and years, as we learn the lessons of the audit report and continue to implement its recommendations.

The Capuchin Province of St. Joseph is dedicated to creating a safe environment for everyone in our ministries. If you or someone you know are in need of assistance, please contact Amy Peterson, Director, Office of Pastoral Care and Conciliation, at (414) 374-8841 Ext. 22. Media inquiries should be directed to Tim Hinkle, Director of Public Relations at 313.579.2100, Ext. 158.

*List of Friars\* of the Province of St. Joseph with  
Confirmed Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors or Vulnerable Adults  
January 2019*

\*Friars are listed by the titles (Fr., Br.) and names by which they are/were commonly known. Those listed as deceased are only those whose deaths the Province has been able to confirm. This list will be reviewed and revised by the Province as necessary to ensure its accuracy.

*Current Members*

(Fr.) Arthur Cooney  
(Fr.) Leopold Gleissner  
(Fr.) Mel Hermanns

*Deceased Members*

(Fr.) Benedict Adams (2002) (Fr.)  
Baldwin Beyer (1999) (Fr.) James  
Buser (1979)  
(Fr.) Clarence Grosser (1989)\*\*\*  
(Fr.) James LaReau (1987) (Fr.)  
Gale Leife1d (1994)  
(Br.) Matthew Migan (1958)\*\*\*  
(Fr.) Austin Schlaefer (1992) (Fr.)  
Wendelin Shafer (2005) (Fr.)  
Hilary Zach (1997)  
(Fr.) Bertold Ascher (1967)  
(Fr.) Roman Ament (1984)  
(Br.) Francis Mary Sparacino  
(Fr.) Elmer Stoffel (1992)

(Fr.) Joseph Smetana  
(Fr.) James Wolf  
(Fr.) Robert Harrison

*Former Member (Deceased)*

(Fr.) Jude Hahn (2008)  
(Fr.) Emmet Hoffman

\*\*\**Transferred to Province of St. Mary (NY) in  
1952.*

*Former Members*

(Br.) Thomas Gardipee  
(Br.) Leonard Gibeault  
(Fr.) Donald (John Baptist) Kurcz  
(Fr.) Robert Spader  
(Fr.) Kenneth Stewart  
(Fr.) Dennis Druggan *The finding regarding D.  
Druggan was made upon a preliminary  
investigation by the Province (2013). He has  
maintained his innocence.*