

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Resources on clergy sex abuse
 • For more information on the response by St. John's Abbey to clergy sex abuse or to report abuse, call Robert Timothy Kelly at 363-2544. Or call the abbey's advocate for victims, Maurice Barnes-Cormier, at 323-6900.

• A copy of St. John's Abbey policy on the subject is at the information desk at Great Hall, Collegeville.

• "Lead Us Not Into Temptation" by New Orleans journalist Kelly Barry (Collegeville, 368 pages, \$27.95), explores in detail sex abuse cases throughout North America. The book, published last fall, also looks at the rising number of homosexuals entering seminaries in the last three decades and the Catholic Church's struggles with the policy issue.

• There are a number of support groups for victims of sexual abuse by clergy. One group is Victims of Clergy Abuse, Inc. (VICA), PO Box 1200, Wheaton, Ill. 60090. Phone: 708-205-0247.

• "A Sacred Word: Sexuality and the Search for Godliness" by John J. Sipe, who teaches at John's Hopkins University School of Medicine's clinic on celibacy, based on interviews with more than 1,000 priests.

• "Other people's sins: 'Lithium Sacrament' by the Rev. Wade Fortson, published in 1989 by Harper & Row (New York), is a handbook for clergy and laypeople. Published in 1987 by Harper & Row, "Sex in the Forbidden Zone," by Peter Butler, primarily intended for priests, published in paperback in 1991 by Bantam Books. "Misery Sexuality," by G. Lloyd Borge, published in 1992 by Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

• "Psychological Sexual Postscript with Clergy: Transmission and Prevention," was published in 1989 by the Walk in Counseling Clinic, Minneapolis. Though produced for professionals, the clinic's executive director and one of the book's authors, Gary Schorner, says many clergy have found it to be useful. The \$27-page book costs \$23.95 and can be purchased through the clinic.

QUOTE

(Former Abbot Jerome Thiesen isn't) evil or bad. That's just loyal ... and that caused him to disregard — even unintentionally — the needs and protection of the most vulnerable: there, the students and the children.

— Jeffrey Anderson, *abbey advocate*

ABOUT THE WRITER

John Welch, 27, has covered agricultural and environmental issues for the Times for three years, before that he worked at newspapers in Iowa and Ohio. He is a graduate of St. John's University.

Collegeville

St. John's Abbot Timothy Kelly stood before his fellow monks for the first time since his election as their leader. He thanked them and asked for their prayers.

A harrier, plunger monk to his left nervously directed the brief ceremony. After his talk, Kelly endorsed each monk at the altar of the Abbey Church as the nervous young monk tugged at the massive robes of office, shifting them into their proper place.

The monk hovering near the altar was the Rev. Dunstan Moore, a man accused of sexually abusing four students at St. John's Preparatory School.

The month later in January, Kelly was ceremoniously blessed by the local bishop and the pope and as a member of the episcopate of St. John's, he was not in doubt.

The Markers, a 27-year-old grade school teacher, had threatened the abbot days earlier that, if Moore took part, he would disrupt the ceremony or pass out during today's Mass.

Through he made no sense at the time, Kelly said, he was sure the way Moore had been able to remain part of the abbot.

The abbot says pastoral care for the victims is to first find out what happened. But victims such as Markers say St. John's is more interested in protecting those within its monastic family.

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Then, echoing the words of many monks since the first of the sex abuse lawsuits was filed, Kelly said the monks of St. John's are like family. Though a number may be accused of sexual abuse, he still has no doubts about the rest of the family.

His ally was a nun, standing before the public with Moore at his side.

"She's my brother," Kelly said. "She's my brother," Kelly said.

That attitude shows why the accusations contained in the lawsuits have wounded the monastery as much. It should light on how the abbot has responded to the crisis, from the first readings more than 10 years ago to the current lawsuits.

What happened at St. John's? The allegations of sexual abuse by monks became public only in August 1991 with the first lawsuit. To all but one of the cases outlined in court documents, the alleged abuse took place between 1961 and 1986.

The defense taken by the abbot's lawyers at that time show the officials thought they were responding to the problem, but those actions are considered inadequate by some given today's standards for dealing with pedophilia, or sexual attraction to children.

Abbey officials declined to discuss specific cases because of the litigation. But the lawsuits have produced studies of dioceses, including allegations by many of those involved that the victims' attorney allowed the defense to review the files.

Attorney Jeffrey Anderson said the defense is a double-edged sword. It is a double-edged sword. It is a double-edged sword.

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Times photo by Mike Kneak

The Rev. Dunstan Moore stood to Abbot Timothy Kelly's left during a service following Kelly's election in November.

THE ABBOT

Here is a summary of the lawsuits filed against St. John's Abbey. All are civil lawsuits. None of the monks in the cases has been charged criminally for the alleged incidents. No admission of guilt has been made in cases settled out of court.

The Rev. Dunstan Moore

Filed Aug. 6, 1992

Other defendants: Diocese of St. Cloud

Allegation: The Rev. Dunstan Moore, a monk at St. John's Abbey, sexually abused four students at St. John's Preparatory School from 1961 to 1984, according to the lawsuit.

At the time, Kelly was a school counselor.

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The Rev. Brennan Maier

Filed March 24, 1992

Other defendants: Diocese of St. Cloud

Allegation: The Rev. Brennan Maier, a monk at St. John's Abbey, sexually abused four students at St. John's Preparatory School from 1961 to 1984, according to the lawsuit.

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Brother John Kelly

Filed Aug. 25, 1992

Allegation: Kelly, a monk at St. John's Abbey, sexually abused four students at St. John's Preparatory School from 1961 to 1984, according to the lawsuit.

At the time, Kelly was a school counselor.

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The Rev. Allen Tarrant

Filed Oct. 21, 1992

Allegation: Tarrant, a monk at St. John's Abbey, sexually abused four students at St. John's Preparatory School from 1961 to 1984, according to the lawsuit.

At the time, Kelly was a school counselor.

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The Rev. Fran Hoefgen

Filed Oct. 21, 1992

Allegation: Hoefgen, a monk at St. John's Abbey, sexually abused four students at St. John's Preparatory School from 1961 to 1984, according to the lawsuit.

At the time, Kelly was a school counselor.

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the abbot's office. Thiesen removed the monk from the prep school.

Moore told others he was pursuing his master's degree at St. John's. Thiesen remained at Hastings until October 1992, when the lawsuit was filed.

Only one person has reported being abused by a monk after the abbot's leadership ended.

But Anderson takes a harsh view toward the actions taken by St. John's. The St. Paul attorney, who has handled more than 100 lawsuits involving clergy sexual abuse across the country, says the actions taken by Thiesen showed more concern for the abbot than the victims.

"It's not evil or bad. It's just loyal," Anderson said. "And by the way the culture is set up, he is loyal and responsive to his own monks and that caused him to disregard — even unintentionally — the needs and protection of the most vulnerable: the students and the children."

Office as the archbishop, where each of the priests was assigned, are not openly critical of St. John's.

The abbot at St. John's recommended the three priests in question in good faith. Search in a statement. "If this were to happen today, our questions would be found that we would not specifically any information having to do with any evidence of sexual misconduct."

Anderson has provided the names of four of the six victims who filed suits. Each was critical of St. John's, saying the abbot did not do enough to protect them or help them when they came forward.

But not all victims are unhappy with the way they've been treated. St. John's, said Maurice Barnes-Cormier, executive director of the Central Minnesota Task Force for Battered Women. She has been appointed by the abbot to serve as a victim advocate, a non-paid position that she brought her own experience with sexual abuse to the role.

Barnes-Cormier also has had discussion groups for monks on their feelings about the lawsuits. She agrees with abbot officials that the impact of the cases is not unlike how it would be in any family. There's a sense of anger, but it's not a sense of outrage.

But Barnes-Cormier said the abbot is taking the proper steps regarding the crisis. Four years ago it adopted a policy of openness and transparency, and she has been a vocal advocate of that policy.

When the allegations surfaced the next year, Hoefgen was removed from the parish and sent to St. Luke's Institute in Maryland. The widely respected facility handles priests with psychological problems.

In 1986, he was reassigned to the St. Paul, Minnesota.

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