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## Abbey Information, Contact, and Official Statements

*From time to time [news releases \(/news/\)](#) are prepared about persons, items, or events that involve Saint John's Abbey. [Obituaries \(/monastic-life/history/obituaries/\)](#) are filed separately. Illustrated feature articles appear three times a year in [The Abbey Banner \(/our-work/publishing/abbey-banner/\)](#). For historical information, contact [Abbey Archives \(/monastic-life/history/ar/\)](#), 320-363-2699.*

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## Questions and Answers Regarding Saint John's Abbey's Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse

### Allegations against the Rev. Thomas Andert, OSB, are found to be unsubstantiated; February 4, 2016

Allegations of sexual abuse brought last year against the Rev. Thomas Andert, OSB, have been found to be unsubstantiated. The conclusion comes at the end of a six-month-long, comprehensive investigation into the claims.

Fr. Andert is a monk of Saint John's Abbey. At the time the allegations were brought forward last year, Abbot John Klassen, OSB, following abbey policy, asked Fr. Andert to step back from public ministry and from his work as prior of the abbey until an investigation was completed. Fr. Andert willingly agreed to step back from public ministry and from his position as prior.

The allegations were made in July by a former student of Saint John's Preparatory (SJP). The former student claimed he was abused by Fr. Andert while attending the school in 1979-80.

In response to the allegations, Abbot Klassen retained independent, expert counsel to investigate. The investigator's inquiry included a complete review of the contemporary records and documents. He also obtained testimony from the claimant's former classmates and SJP faculty, staff and residence hall prefects as well as other campus officials at the time the incidents are alleged to have occurred.

The investigation did not find any support for the claimant's allegations that he was sexually abused by Fr. Andert.

The investigator's findings and the claimant's allegations were submitted to the Saint John's Abbey External Review Board (ERB). After careful review and extensive discussion, the ERB recommended that the claimant's allegations were not substantiated by the facts.

Abbot Klassen reviewed the evidence and concurred with the ERB's recommendation that the allegations were not supported by evidence.

Fr. Andert has been fully restored to ministry by the abbot. After the ERB made its findings, Fr. Andert, who was at the end of his term as the abbey's prior, voluntarily chose to resign from this position in order to move forward. The abbot accepted his resignation, and granted Fr. Andert a sabbatical, which he has decided to spend at Saint John's.

Allegations were also brought by the same claimant against Rev. Allen Tarlton, OSB, a monk of Saint John's Abbey. These allegations were also unsubstantiated. Fr. Tarlton passed away in January.

## A Conversation with Abbot John Klassen Regarding the Transparency Initiative

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