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Media Advisory
April 28, 2016

St. Paul News Conference Today

Two Lawsuits Filed Against Recently Reinstated Priest and Monk of St. John's, Father Timothy Backous

Backous Worked in Prominent Roles at St. John's and Duluth after St. John's 'cleared' him of allegations in 1991 and 2015

What: At a news conference today at 11:00 in St. Paul, attorneys Jeff Anderson and Mike Bryant will:

- Announce the filing of two civil lawsuits naming St. John's Abbey and Father Timothy Backous as defendants. One suit is being brought by Doe 413, a survivor who was sexually abused by Backous at St. John's Prep School in approximately 1982-1983 when he was 16 years old. The second lawsuit is being brought by Doe 188, a former member of the St. John's Boys Choir who was abused by Backous on a choir trip to Europe in 1990 when Doe 188 was 12 to 13 years old.
- Discuss St. John's internal investigations into Doe 188's allegations. St. John's cleared Backous of Doe 188's allegations after investigations in 1991 and 2015.
- Encourage survivors of sexual abuse by Fr. Timothy Backous, and others, to come forward safely and confidentially before the Child Victims Act window legislation expires on May 25, 2016.

WHEN: Thursday, April 28, 2016, at 11:00 AM CT

WHERE: Jeff Anderson & Associates

366 Jackson Street, Suite 100
St. Paul, MN 55101

Notes: The event will be live-streamed online with links available on our homepage shortly before the event at www.andersonadvocates.com

Timothy Backous has been a long time priest and monk of St. John's Abbey with prominent positions as Prep School Headmaster director of campus ministry, and athletic director, and who has been heavily involved in the St. John's Boys Choir over the years. Backous was most recently assigned by St. John's to work as Vice President of Mission Integration and Benedictine Sponsorship for Essentia Health in the Diocese of Duluth. When the parents of a child he abused in 1990 made their son's allegations public in 2014, St. John's placed Backous on temporary administrative leave pending an investigation. In November 2015 St. John's announced they finished a "thorough and complete investigation" and found that the allegations were "unsubstantiated." This was the second time St. John's cleared Backous of the 1990 abuse allegations. The first was in 1991 when it initially learned of them from the boy's parents.

St. John's Abbey, Timothy Backous, and many of his colleagues including Reverend William Graham of the Diocese of Duluth made much fanfare about the fact that Backous had been 'falsely' and 'wrongfully' accused. Graham wrote in the Duluth News Tribune that Backous had been 'victimized' by his accuser, and that St. John's 'comprehensive' investigation proved the allegations were nothing but lies.

During the pendency of the 2015 investigation, while Backous was on leave, Jeff Anderson, one of the attorneys representing the two survivors filing the new lawsuits, brought forward information from an independent witness that walked in on Backous lying on a bed with a child in a dark room during a trip with the St. John's Boys Choir in 1990. The witness was a chaperone on the trip. It was the same trip the 1991 allegations against Backous stemmed from. However, nobody from St. John's ever spoke to the chaperone in 1991 before finding the allegations against Backous "unsubstantiated," and Backous was placed back in ministry with no restrictions. In fact, the chaperone didn't learn of the allegations until she read about them in 2015. St. John's Abbey chose not to thoroughly investigate Backous in 1991, and chose to again reinstate Timothy Backous to ministry in 2015 after a second internal "thorough and complete investigation" cleared him again.

"This is a repeat performance of gross malfeasance by St. John's," Anderson said. "Two investigations in one year, Tom Andert and Tim Backous, and two findings that allegations were 'unsubstantiated.' St. John's chose to believe the wrong people again, the offenders, and chose to protect them again.

Survivor Doe 413's complaint also refers to Brother John Kelly, who is on the list of credibly accused and was a monk of St. John's until 2011. In addition to sexual abuse by Backous, John Kelly attempted criminal sexual conduct upon Doe 413 when he was a student at St. John's Prep

School in the early 80's. At the press conference on Thursday, Anderson will discuss the fact that John Kelly continues to seek and pursue contact with the victim.

Also to be released will be the complaints, pictures of Backous, and the statement of the independent witness who came forward to report that she had walked in on Backous lying on a bed alone with a child.

- A copy of the complaints will be available at the press conference and on our website and the event will be live-streamed online with links available on our homepage shortly before the event at www.andersonadvocates.com.

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