



Dear Parishioners at St. Dominic Parish,

It is with sadness that I share the following with you. The Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great, which staffs St. Dominic Parish, having informed the Archdiocese of Denver, wishes to share with you as well the following information regarding Fr. Michael Winkels, O.P., who served as an associate pastor at St. Dominic Parish from 1976-1979. It was his first assignment.

The Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, has been in contact with a person who reported having been sexually abused in 1978 when he was a minor by Father Michael Winkels, OP. In 1978 Father Winkels was an associate pastor at St. Dominic Parish in Denver, Colorado. The abuse is not alleged to have occurred at the parish.

In accord with the Province's policy on the protection of children, Father Winkels was removed from all public ministry and his priestly faculties were revoked. The allegations have been reported to civil authorities in the jurisdictions where the alleged incidents are said to have occurred. After consultation with the Province's Sexual Misconduct Review Board, a professional investigative firm was engaged to conduct a preliminary investigation regarding the alleged incidents.

Based on the results of this preliminary investigation, we have determined the allegation has a semblance of truth. This initial determination is not a definitive judgment regarding the guilt or innocence of Father Winkels. Father Winkels has repeatedly denied the allegations. In the canonical and civil penal processes, the accused is entitled to the presumption of innocence and has the right to present a defense to any charges. Prior to this report, there had been no other allegations against Father Winkels.

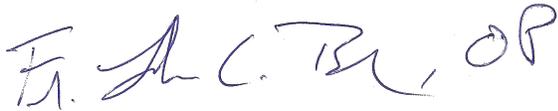
Canon law requires that this matter now be referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in Rome for further direction as to how it will be adjudicated. In the interim, Father Winkels will remain out of public ministry and prohibited from unsupervised contact with minors.

The Province of St. Albert the Great will cooperate in any investigation by civil authorities and will continue to do all that we can to keep young people in our ministries safe, now and in the future. The Province's policy on ethical ministry to minors can be found on our website, at www.opcentral.org, under "Protecting Children."

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It saddens me to share this information. All questions or concerns should be directed to Fr. Marchionda, OP, the Provincial, or Fr. Goergen, his assistant, at the Provincial Office of St. Albert the Great. They can be reached at the Provincial Office, 312 243 0011, or by email at j.marchionda@opcentral.org or d.goergen@opcentral.org Let us keep each other in prayer. Thank you for your understanding.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Luke C. Barder, OP". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "L" and "B".

Fr. Luke C. Barder, OP
Pastor, St. Dominic Catholic Church