



THE CAPUCHIN FRANCISCANS

Province of Mid-America
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February 9, 2017

Dear Rodger and Jean Faherty,

This is a difficult letter to write, not because it's hard for me to say I'm sorry, but because I feel sadness and grief for the hardships you've suffered at the hands of Finian Meis. I don't think I can begin to comprehend the pain he has caused you and your family.

No one can adequately know what another has suffered. I have an idea, though, of the trauma that can result from sexual abuse of a minor. When I was in my second year of high school, a classmate came to me and revealed that he had been abused by a groundskeeper at the school we attended. I helped the young man speak to the authorities. I saw how poorly the school responded to his trauma, and the effects it had on his later life. That event has remained firm in my consciousness.

When I became provincial minister of the Capuchins' Denver Province three years ago, I made an effort to change the culture of the community with respect to abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. I believe it is necessary to speak openly of what was done, not to sweep it under the proverbial carpet. I revised our safe environment policies, instituting an advocate position for those who came forward to report criminal behavior. It is our policy to contact the authorities whenever we have an accusation and exercise due diligence in keeping the community safe from perpetrators.

I learned through the Kansas City Archdiocese about the abuse of your son, Rodger, Jr. I discovered that Rodger is very angry with us and the church in general. I have heard of the way you were treated by Capuchin Fr. Vincent Rohr when you first reported the abuse. His response is to be condemned in the strongest terms. You had a right to be heard and should have been treated with sympathy. We should have helped provide therapy for your son, and counseling for your family.

My apology now may sound empty because of our previous failure to help you in your need. Allow me, however, to express my deep regret for what has happened. Finian's behavior was criminal. I condemn it in the strongest terms. No priest or consecrated religious should engage in such behavior. It is a clear violation of religious vows and betrayal of trust at a most profound level. What Finian has done irreparably injured your son, your family and your lives.

I had hoped to accompany Archbishop Nauman to express in person my apology on behalf of the Capuchins. I thoroughly understand, however, your son's objections to such a meeting. Please know, though, that I am willing to act on your wishes should this become possible in the future.

Sincerely,

Fr. Christopher Popravak OFM Cap
Fr. Christopher Popravak, OFM Cap Provincial Minister