



**Cosmas Dahlheimer**

**Began abusing less than a year after first assignment with children**

**Archdiocese: Disclosing abuse allegations “not good common sense”**

**Church officials didn’t tell police because of teen victim’s “behavioral problems”**

After working as a World War II Military Chaplain and professor of classics, he spent almost 16 years as the Novice Master at St. John’s Abbey, where he was in charge of ensuring that the novice monks spent their time in prayer and were properly progressing towards becoming well-rounded monks and priests. At the end of the 16 years, Dahlheimer underwent 4 rounds of electric shock therapy for depression.

After spending a few more years as a professor and a chaplain at a convent, Dahlheimer received his first assignment as a pastor with access to children in 1969. He began abusing almost immediately.

The Abbey and the Archdiocese learned about Dahlheimer’s crimes in 1987. Because of the passage of time and the behavioral problems that the victim was suffering, Fr. Kevin McDonough and the Archdiocese did not think that they had the duty to report the abuse to the police. The first civil suit was filed in 1990.

By 1997, a memo to Archbishop Flynn said that disclosing the lawsuits to the parishes where Dahlheimer worked was not good common sense, explaining that abuse allegations should not be a part of public record and that the media will only sensationalize the issue. They also feared that other victims would come forward. Dahlheimer died in 2004 after almost 70 years in the priesthood. There are at least nine known male and female victims.

## COSMAS DAHLHEIMER OSB TIMELINE

11/20/08	Born
7/11/30	Professed Monastic Vows at Saint John's Abbey
6/6/36	Ordained a priest
1936-1942	Professor of Classics at Saint John's University
1940	Studied in Muenster Saskatchewan, Canada
1942-1947	Served as military chaplain in the Air Force in North Africa, India and Burma.
1946	University of Iowa, Masters in Classics
1947-1963	Novice Master of Saint John's Abbey who worked with young monks entering the monastery and also taught part-time at the University.
1963	Sent to St. Maur's Priory in Kentucky where he underwent psychological counseling and received electric shock therapy at least 4 times for depression.
1963	Prior at St. Maur's Priory in Kentucky
1963-1966	Classics Professor, SJU Collegeville
1966-1969	Chaplain College of Saint Benedict and St. Benedicts Convent in St. Joseph, MN
1969-1973	Associate Pastor Saint Augustine's in Saint Cloud, MN

### **CD abuses AV**

### **CD abuses Victim 2**

1973-1978	Saint Bernard's in St. Paul, MN
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### **CD abuses AV and MV**

### **CD abuses Victim 4**

### **CD abuses Victim 5**

### **CD abuses Victim 6**

### **CD abuses Victim 7**

### CD abuses Victim 8

1978-1980                Pastor at St. Joseph's in St. Joseph, MN

### CD abuses Victim 9

1980-1988                Chaplain College of Saint Benedict and St. Scholastica's Convent

10/23/87                Memo from Chancellor Kevin McDonough to Archbishop John Roach-  
Parents of victim 5 report abused by Dahlheimer that occurred  
approximately ten years ago. Because the parents have no direct  
knowledge of the abuse and it occurred more than 10 years ago,  
**McDonough recommends against reporting to civil authorities.**  
(ARCH-21114)

10/30/87                Letter from McDonough to Abbot Jerome Theisen following up on a  
phone conversation regarding a written complaint and allegations against  
Dahlheimer. McDonough is going to meet with parents in near future.  
Archbishop Roach gave personal directive that McDonough be of any  
service to Theisen that St. John's may require. (ARCH 21109)

11/11/87                Letter from McDonough to Theisen about his meeting with the parents of  
one of the victims. The parents "are convinced that many of REDACTED  
teenage behavior problems stem from the alleged incident with Father  
Cosmas." (ARCH 21105)

11/20/87                Letter from McDonough to Abbot Theisen: "From a pastoral point of  
view, it seems to me that REDACTED concerns have been adequately  
addressed for the present. **From my perspective, it seems unnecessary  
for you to be in touch with them about their concerns.**" (ARCH 21091)

1988                      Dahlheimer retired at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville

1992                      Allen Vogel, Ray & Arlene Vogel, and two others meet with Abbot  
Timothy Kelly regarding child sexual abuse by Dahlheimer.

2/26/97                Memo from Timothy Anderson to Archbishop Flynn. "The lawsuit filed  
against Benedictine Fathers Dahlheimer and Gillespie has reached a key  
juncture at which we as an Archdiocese must consider whether it is in our  
best interest to notify the members of St. Bernard's, St. Paul, and St.  
Mary's, Stillwater about the matter. **Normally common sense would  
dictate that we withhold the information from the public** for at least  
two good reasons. First, the lawsuits may be settled out of court and not  
become a matter of public record. And second, an early release of the

information gives the media a longer period of time to sensationalize the story.” (ARCH 21141)

2/21/04

Dahlheimer dies

12/9/13

Cosmas Dahlheimer named as one of 18 monks who likely offended against minors released by Saint John’s.