

**CONTACT**

Jim Accurso
Media and Public Relations Manager
T: 651-291-4480
M: 651-261-6070
accursoj@archspm.org

**STATEMENT
OF BISHOP ANDREW COZZENS REGARDING
FATHER TIMOTHY BACKOUS, O.S.B.
June 11, 2014**

Approximately a week ago, Archbishop John Nienstedt received a letter from a couple who claimed their son was abused by Rev. Timothy Backous, O.S.B., a priest of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN. The parents claimed their son was abused while on a youth choir trip while they were members of a parish in Saint Cloud. The accusation indicates the alleged abuse occurred more than 20 years ago, and the parents stated they contacted the police. The family wrote that it was contacting the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis because they had recently seen Rev. Backous, O.S.B. celebrating Mass at the Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis, and were disappointed with the way St. John's Abbey handled their complaint. The O.S.B. is an order of priests separate from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and operates out of Saint John's Abbey in Saint Cloud, MN.

Immediately after receiving the letter, we checked our priest files and found a letter from Saint John's Abbey (which is part of the Order of Saint Benedict) had been sent to us indicating Rev. Backous was a priest in good standing before he was granted permission to minister in the archdiocese.

We seek to obtain more information surrounding this accusation and how it was addressed by the Order of Saint Benedict. We believe this is a prudent response and is consistent with our commitment to protect children and help in healing.

Any further questions about Rev. Backous should be referred to Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN.

We continue to pray for all involved.

###