

# Franciscan Brother Accused of Sex Abuse Commits Suicide in Pennsylvania

A Franciscan brother killed himself with a knife on Saturday at a monastery in western Pennsylvania, after a lawsuit accused him of sexually abusing 11 boys at an Ohio high school where he once worked, police said.

Brother Stephen Baker, 62, was found dead on Saturday morning at Saint Bernardine Monastery in Hollidaysburg, Penn., Blair Township Police Chief Roger White said in a statement. An autopsy later determined the cause of death to be suicide, White said.

Baker lived at the monastery, police said.

Earlier this month, Boston attorney Mitchell Garabedian said he had reached a legal settlement last year over allegations Baker sexually abused 11 boys at an Ohio school where he worked as a teacher, according to the advocacy group Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

The abuse is alleged to have occurred between the mid-1980s and early 1990s when Baker worked at John F. Kennedy High School, a Catholic institution in Warren, Ohio, just outside of Youngstown, according to local media.

"I am deeply sorry for the pain the victims of Brother Baker endured while at John F. Kennedy High School in Warren," Bishop George Murry of the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown told reporters on Thursday, according to Youngstown television station WFMJ, an NBC affiliate.

"Brother Baker betrayed the trust these young men placed in him as a spiritual leader," Murry told reporters at the news

conference.

Murry could not be reached for comment late on Saturday.

Baker also faced allegations that he had committed abuse at a Catholic high school in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, after he left John F. Kennedy High, SNAP said in a statement on Wednesday.

During Baker's residency at Saint Bernardine's Monastery in Hollidaysburg, supervisors said he was kept under strict watch, according to Youngstown TV station WKBN.

A representative for Franciscans, Third Order Regular, the group to which Baker belonged, could not be reached for comment late on Saturday.

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*Reporting by Alex Dobuzinskis in Los Angeles; Editing by Eric Walsh.*

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