

DIOCESE
of NEW ULM

Catholic Pastoral Center

NEWS

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NOTICE TO AREA MEDIA
For Immediate Release
Release #533
Jan. 25, 2019

Joint Statement from Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota and Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas

NEW ULM - In December 2018, as part of preparation for a clergy sexual abuse disclosure report, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, became aware of allegations of sexual abuse of two minors made against Fr. William Sprigler in 1976. At the time of the allegations, Fr. Sprigler was a priest of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

In 1983, Fr. Sprigler entered the Diocese of New Ulm where he was assigned in parishes until his retirement from assigned ministry in 2016. In 2002, when gathering information for the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Study (a national report on clergy sexual misconduct) commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Diocese of New Ulm contacted the Archdiocese of San Antonio asking if there was any record of allegations of sexual misconduct made against Fr. Sprigler. In response, the archdiocese indicated that there was no documentation of sexual abuse or other sexual misconduct in Fr. Sprigler's personnel file.

Since his retirement in 2016, Fr. Sprigler continued to celebrate Mass and provide other ministry within the Diocese of New Ulm while pastors were on vacation or otherwise needed assistance. For the past two years, he has provided similar temporary ministry at parishes in the Diocese of Orlando and the Diocese of Venice in Florida during the winter months.

On Dec. 26, 2018, the Archdiocese of San Antonio reported their discovery of sexual abuse allegations against Fr. Sprigler to the Diocese of New Ulm. The Diocese of New Ulm immediately instructed Fr. Sprigler not to engage in any public ministry. Then, on Jan. 3, 2019, following further investigation, the Archdiocese of San Antonio informed the Diocese of New Ulm that it had determined that the 1976 allegations against Fr. Sprigler were credible. The Diocese of New Ulm has not received any allegations of sexual abuse of minors against Fr. Sprigler during the time he has provided ministry within the diocese.

The Diocese of New Ulm Review Board, which consists primarily of lay professionals with experience or training in law enforcement, health care, mental health treatment, and law, has reviewed the information as reported by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. They have recommended to Bishop LeVoir that Fr. Sprigler be permanently removed from public ministry. Bishop LeVoir has accepted the recommendation. Accordingly, Fr. Sprigler will be included on the list of priests who have a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against them. This list is posted on the [disclosures page](#) on the Diocese of New Ulm's website and includes Fr. Sprigler's parish assignment history within the Diocese of New Ulm. Letters will be mailed to all parishes

where Fr. Sprigler was assigned in the Diocese of New Ulm. The Dioceses in Florida where Fr. Sprigler has provided ministry have also been notified.

Because the sexual abuse is reported to have occurred within the Archdiocese of San Antonio, any law enforcement investigation would need to be undertaken in Texas. The Archdiocese of San Antonio has communicated what it knows about the allegations to local law enforcement in Texas and has offered to cooperate fully in any investigation.

The Diocese of New Ulm and the Archdiocese of San Antonio are sharing this information in the interest of full transparency and accountability. Both Bishop John LeVoir and Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller express their remorse for the grievous harm resulting from clergy sexual abuse. They are committed to preventing sexual abuse within the Church, holding abusers accountable, and aiding in the healing of victims and survivors. They invite any victim of sexual abuse by clergy to meet with them so that the bishops may not only properly understand and respond to the suffering, but most importantly ensure that the victim's voice is heard in a personal way.

Please pray for all those harmed by sexual abuse.

