



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**New sex abuse lawsuit against Baker Diocese, Capuchin Order**  
**Priest was sent to Hermiston after allegations in L.A.**  
**Mother told not to call cops; she would suffer shame, scorn, and potential damnation**  
**Priest sent abroad to escape prosecution**

Pendleton, OR — A man in his mid-30s brought a lawsuit today in Federal District Court alleging sexual abuse by a Capuchin priest who had been accused of child abuse before being transferred to Hermiston, Oregon, and claiming an effort by church officials to silence the family, allowing the then-admitted pedophile cleric to escape the country to avoid criminal prosecution.

The complaint alleges that the victim was abused by Capuchin Franciscan priest Fr. Luis Jaramillo (har-a-ME-o), who was born and ordained in Colombia, South America. The abuse took place from 1988 to 1989 at Our Lady of Angels Parish in Hermiston, Oregon, located in the Diocese of Baker. At the time, the victim was between the ages of nine and ten. Before the Capuchins transferred him to Oregon, Fr. Jaramillo had been accused of abusing boys in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

According to personnel files obtained from the Los Angeles Archdiocese and the Capuchin Franciscan Order, Capuchin officials sent the priest to remote Hermiston in 1987. Consistent with the Diocese of Baker's practice at the time, Jaramillo, then known to be an accused child molester, was accepted by the Diocese of Baker to work at Our Lady of Angels Parish. Within a few weeks or months of his arrival, the lawsuit says, Jaramillo began abusing the victim and threatened to kill him if he resisted.

The boy eventually told his mother, who reported the abuse to Capuchin officials in 1989. The complaint states that a Capuchin supervisor immediately interviewed Father Jaramillo, who admitted to the abuse. Despite the priest's admission, the provincial—or "chief executive" of the Capuchin order—allegedly told the boy's mother that if she attempted to have Father Jaramillo prosecuted, it would be her son's word against the priest, and she would cause her family and son to be shamed and scorned. The complaint states that he also told her that she would have to "answer to her Maker" for any souls lost to God if she reported the abuse.

"This is a tragic case of a parent being threatened with eternal damnation if she reported a crime against her son," said Anthony M. De Marco, of Pasadena, California, an attorney for the victim. "The Capuchins knew that

Jaramillo was molesting kids before he even came to Oregon. He admitted to molesting this boy. Then afterwards, they did everything in their power to protect Jaramillo from going to jail, or from the truth coming out. This brave victim deserves justice.”

After the victim’s mother reported the abuse, Fr. Jaramillo was immediately sent to a church-run treatment facility for child molesting priests in New Mexico. Members of Hermiston community were not notified of the allegations or risk. Later in 1989, the lawsuit says, Fr. Jaramillo was sent to Mexico because he was not responding to treatment. Since then, lawyers for the victim believe that he has been transferred to Argentina and Mexico.

“Fr. Jaramillo has hurt children in numerous states and as far as we know, he is still in active ministry to children,” said Kristian Roggendorf, another lawyer for the victim. “Capuchin and Diocese of Baker church officials need to do everything in their power to prevent Fr. Jaramillo from further harming children, bring him to justice, and give his victim the resolution and closure that he deserves.”

The complaint also cites other accused priests who worked in the Diocese of Baker, including Fr. Franklin Buckman, Fr. John Kenny, Fr. Jocelyn St. Arnaud, Fr. Dennis Strachota, and Fr. Donald Hazen. “It seems that in the past, for decades, the Baker Diocese acted as a type of dumping ground for abusive priests from California and elsewhere,” said Roggendorf. “Hopefully, those days are long gone.”

Copies of the complaint are available from Mr. Roggendorf or on [www.demarcolawfirm.com](http://www.demarcolawfirm.com) under “Case Resources.” Fr. Jaramillo’s file from Los Angeles is available at:

[Link to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles File on Fr. Jaramillo](#)

[Link to the Capuchin File on Fr. Jaramillo](#)

[Link to the Most Significant Documents from both Files](#)

Mr. Demarco is available by phone or email, and Mr. Roggendorf is available for in-person interviews as well as by phone or email.

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