

OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY  
John J. Choi, County Attorney



---

345 Wabasha Street, Suite 120, St. Paul, MN 55102-1432  
Telephone 651-266-3322 Fax 651-266-3015

## NEWS RELEASE

July 20, 2016

Contact: Dennis Gerhardstein, 651 266-3074  
(Cell) 651 600-1830

### **Archdiocese admits wrongdoing in its failure to protect three children abused by priest**

*Civil Settlement Amended, Criminal Case Dismissed, Files Released to Public*

Saint Paul, MN – Today in Ramsey County District Court, the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office (RCAO) and the Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis (Archdiocese) presented substantial amendments to the civil settlement agreement reached between the parties and approved by the Court on December 18, 2015. Judge Teresa Warner received the legal amendment, which most notably contains a direct and specific admission of wrongdoing by the Archdiocese pertaining to its failure to protect three children from sexual abuse by former priest Curtis Wehmeyer.

The record in the civil case will now reflect the following:

Curtis Wehmeyer was a priest in this Archdiocese. The Archdiocese admits that it failed to adequately respond and prevent the sexual abuse of Victim 1, Victim 2, and Victim 3. The Archdiocese failed to keep the safety and wellbeing of these three children ahead of protecting the interests of Curtis Wehmeyer and the Archdiocese. The actions and omissions of the Archdiocese failed to prevent the abuse that resulted in the need for protection and services for these three children.

“Today, the Archdiocese has publicly admitted that it contributed to children being sexually abused by putting the interests of the institution and its former priest above its duty to protect children,” said Ramsey County Attorney John Choi. “We have insisted upon this direct admission of wrongdoing from the beginning. Now that it has been made and we have secured additional legal safeguards to prevent such failures from ever happening again, we have achieved all our goals in bringing forth this legal action.”

“As this case comes to a close, it is important to recognize that it was the people of the Archdiocese – the laity and clerics – who made our legal action possible by coming forward and telling the truth. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to them, along with the staff in our office and the Saint Paul Police Department; without their hard work and the honesty of the

people involved, we would not have achieved justice in this case,” Choi continued.

In light of the admission of wrongdoing and the additional requirements that are now part of the amended civil settlement agreement, the RCAO chose to dismiss the pending criminal case against the Archdiocese. As the criminal case is now closed, legal documents that have been exchanged between the parties in this case will be disclosed this afternoon at [www.ramseycounty.us/archdiocese](http://www.ramseycounty.us/archdiocese).

### **Highlights of the Legal Amendment to the Settlement Agreement**

The December 18, 2015 civil settlement agreement called for numerous provisions, including oversight by both the RCAO and the Court. Both entities will now have increased oversight of the Archdiocese until February 2020 to ensure these child protection efforts continue.

In addition, the Archdiocese will be now subject to the following new conditions and requirements as a part of the amended civil settlement agreement:

1. Extended audit and oversight by an additional year;
2. Ramsey County Attorney designates a seat on the Ministerial Review Board, to be filled by National child advocate Patty Wetterling;
3. Archbishop Hebda’s direct participation in three restorative justice sessions as convened and determined by the RCAO;
4. Strengthened role of the Director of Safe Environment so it will endure long beyond the completion of the settlement agreement; and
5. Ensured ongoing counseling resources for our three victims and immediate family, if necessary.

At the hearing this morning, the Judge set a hearing date of December 20, 2016 to report back to her for a six month review of compliance with the agreement. If the Archdiocese breaches any of the provisions in the settlement agreement, the RCAO will take further legal action to hold it accountable.

---

###