

## +HEBDA STATEMENT TO MEDIA REGARDING RAMSEY COUNTY AGREEMENT AND DISMISSAL

Good morning.

Traditionally, at the beginning of each Mass, Catholics stand and ask God and their brothers and sisters to forgive “what [they] have done and what [they] have failed to do.” It is a humbling prayer. Today, I, as the leader of this Archdiocese, stand before you to say: we failed--in what we have done and in what we have failed to do. In our statement filed in court this morning, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis admitted to wrongdoing in the handling of Curtis Wehmeyer. We failed to give priority to the safety and wellbeing of the children he hurt over the interests of Curtis Wehmeyer and the Archdiocese. In particular, we failed to prevent Curtis Wehmeyer from sexually abusing children. Those children, their parents, their family, their parish and others were harmed. We are sorry. I am sorry.

Words alone are not enough. We must, we will, and we are doing better. Far-reaching changes are underway. The Archdiocese has added lay personnel with relevant experience and solid expertise to help create the safest environments possible. The Civil Settlement Agreement with the Ramsey County Attorney, which today we expanded and also extended for a total of four years, holds the Archdiocese accountable and ensures that our actions will continue to match our words. In court this morning, we presented our first progress report to Judge Warner and laid out to her and to this community our progress so far and our commitment going forward.

When I arrived here about a year ago, criminal and civil charges against the Archdiocese had just been announced. A decision had to be made: do we fight the charges in court – which would have taken years of time and resources -- or do we work with the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office to try to make amends to those harmed and achieve justice for all in the broadest possible way. We chose the latter. I am grateful to God for the guidance I believe he has provided (thanks to the prayers of many), and I thank our lay leadership and leadership within the clergy for their wise counsel. Cooperation was the right avenue to achieve a just resolution.

Today, the Ramsey County Attorney dismissed the criminal charges. More importantly, through our Civil Settlement, John Choi and I have committed to a course of action that will keep kids in our parishes and schools as safe as possible. His office will hold us accountable. Over the past year, we worked with Mr. Choi and his team to define how the Archdiocese can best create and maintain safe

environments for children in our parishes, schools and communities. Over the past six months, we have demonstrated our commitment to that path. Today, we humbly acknowledge our past failures and look forward to continuing down that path to achieve those vital, common goals that together we all share.

To victims and survivors, the faithful and the entire community, we pledge to move forward openly, collaboratively and humbly, but always mindful of our past. We will never forget.

Thank you.

At this time, I would like to introduce Janell Rasmussen, who is the Deputy Director of our Office of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment.