



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

July 20, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Traditionally, at the beginning of each Mass, we stand and ask God and each other to forgive “what we have done and what we have failed to do.” It is a humbling prayer.

Today has been a day of asking for forgiveness for what we have done and what we have failed to do. In our statement filed in court this morning, the Archdiocese admitted to failures in the handling of Curtis Wehmeyer, who once served as priest of this Archdiocese. We failed to give priority to the safety and wellbeing of the children he hurt over his interests and those of the Archdiocese. In particular, we failed to prevent him from sexually abusing children. Those children, their parents, their family, their parish and others were harmed. We are sorry. I am sorry.

I know that words alone are not enough. We must do better. Far-reaching changes have already been 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 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 Teresa Warner and laid out to her 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. I am grateful that the Lord seems to have offered guidance in many different forms. I am particularly appreciative for the advice that was provided by our lay leadership at the Archdiocesan level, as well as for the wise counsel and support of my brother priests and deacons.

Cooperation seems to have been the right avenue for achieving a just resolution. Today, the Ramsey County Attorney dismissed the criminal charges. More importantly, through our Civil Settlement Agreement, John Choi and I have committed to a course of action that will keep kids as safe as possible. I am grateful that 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.

I pledge to all victims and survivors, to the community, and to you, my brothers and sisters of this local Church, to move forward openly, collaboratively and humbly, and always mindful of our past. We will never forget.

I ask that you continue to pray for all victims of sexual abuse and their families. Please also pray for me and know of my daily prayer for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Bernard A. Hebda". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis