

## SUMMARY OF RAMSEY COUNTY HEARING ON JULY 20, 2016

In June 2015, the Ramsey County Attorney's Office brought civil and criminal charges against the Archdiocese alleging a failure to protect children in the handling of a former priest. That former priest, Curtis Wehmeyer, is in prison after pleading guilty to abusing three young people while the pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Saint Paul.

In December 2015, the Archdiocese settled the civil claims and entered into an agreement with the Ramsey County Attorney. Under that Civil Settlement Agreement, the Archdiocese agreed to take additional steps to protect children, including the following:

- Consulting and working with the Archdiocese's Board of Directors, Ministerial Review Board, parishes, schools, priests and communities served – to make sure we have the most up-to-date and effective policies, protocols and procedures in the country.
- Ensuring that all priests, teachers, volunteers, seminarians and others who have regular contact with children undergo background checks, attend regular child protection training and abide by a stringent code of conduct.
- On-site parish audits to ensure that environments are safe and staff and volunteers are effectively supervising young people.
- Notifying law enforcement of all allegations of sexual abuse and not take any action involving priests or Archdiocesan employees until given permission.
- Notifying the public when a priest or deacon accused of sexual abuse of a minor is removed from ministry and hosting parish meetings to make sure those impacted have the most complete information.
- Making full use of the talented and experienced members of the Ministerial Review Board. This month, County Attorney Choi recommended well-known child-safety advocate Patty Wettlerling to the MRB. The Archdiocese is thankful she has agreed to be part of the ten lay members and two clergy members who help assess priests' fitness for ministry.

Today, the Archdiocese appeared in Court for its first update regarding its progress implementing the Settlement Agreement. Its publicly filed report was accepted by the Judge and the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. The Archdiocese will make updates under the Civil Settlement Agreement every six months.

The Archdiocese also announced an amendment to the Civil Settlement Agreement that, among other things, extends the agreement until February 2020 and acknowledged its failure to prevent the abuse that occurred by the former priest.

During the hearing, the Ramsey County Attorney's Office announced the dismissal of the criminal charges brought against the Archdiocese Corporation in June of 2015, ending the criminal proceedings. The Archdiocese will work with the Ramsey County Attorney to implement the Settlement Agreement and to conduct Restorative Justice sessions to address the abuse that occurred.

For more information on how the Archdiocese is creating and maintaining safe environments, go to <http://safe-environment.archspm.org/>