

RAMSEY COUNTY AGREEMENT JANELL RASMUSSEN MEDIA STATEMENT

Thank you, Archbishop Hebda.

Good morning.

Today is a day of solemn reckoning and self-assessment. While we are thankful that the Ramsey County Attorney's office and Judge Warner agree that we have made "significant progress" since the Settlement Agreement was reached last December, all of us know that our work will never be done. Today, tomorrow and every day we will ask ourselves, "Are we doing all we can to make sure children are safe?"

Six months ago, work began on implementation of the Settlement Agreement - an agreement that holds the Archdiocese accountable for its actions to keep children safe.

The Archdiocese today has a Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment [Team] comprised of experienced former law enforcement, victim services and child protection professionals. A structure has been established for reporting abuse, holding individuals accountable, and creating safe environments for children.

We have worked closely with the Ramsey County Attorney and his staff and will continue to seek their advice and assistance.

We also work closely and consult with the Archdiocese's Board of Directors, Ministerial Review Board, parishes, schools, priests and communities served – to make sure we have the most effective policies, protocols and procedures in the country.

Our Ministerial Review Board consists of talented and experienced members. This month County Attorney John Choi recommended well-known child safety advocate Patty Wetterling for membership on the Board. We are thankful she has agreed to be part of the ten lay members and two clergy who review allegations of misconduct and make recommendations about a priest's fitness for ministry.

We notify law enforcement of all allegations of sexual abuse and do not take any action unless given permission by law enforcement. In addition, we notify the public when a priest or deacon is removed from ministry and facilitate parish meetings to make sure those impacted have the most comprehensive and accurate information on the situation from Archdiocesan leadership.

We will continue to reach out to those who have been harmed and offer to have them meet with Archbishop Hebda and members of our victims services team when they feel the time is right. Restorative Justice, done right – with openness and sincerity, can have a powerful, positive effect.

And we will continue to provide counseling services to those who have been harmed to try and promote healing.

Nothing we can do will ever be able to take away the pain inflicted on so many people. But we stand here today committed to a way forward. Through new leadership and as a result of our work with the Ramsey County Attorney, you have an Archdiocese in St. Paul and Minneapolis that will do all we can to create an environment where every child will be safe.