

For Immediate Release
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Archdiocese announces settlement agreements

Following mediation, the Archdiocese of Dubuque announces that it has reached settlement agreements with several persons who reported that they were sexually abused as minors by priests of the Archdiocese.

Eighteen individuals retained the services of a Waterloo law firm to present their cases. All of the abuse, according to the claims, took place before June 1996. Some took place in the 1940s, with the remaining instances in the decades after that.

Of the priests named by the claimants, seven had been named previously and are already included on the "Table of Accused Priests" found on the Archdiocesan Web site. Reverend John Reed (deceased 1976) and Reverend Louis Wendling (deceased 1969) are priests who have been publicly accused for the first time.

Archbishop Jerome Hanus studied all the information concerning the allegation against Father John Reed and concluded that it was founded. Therefore, the name of Father John Reed will be added to the Table with the indication that the abuse took place in the 1960s in St. Mary's church and school in Dubuque and that the claim was settled through this mediation.

After reviewing all the information developed by the Archdiocesan counsel and the counsel for the plaintiff making the claim against Father Wendling and after receiving the advice of the Archdiocesan Review Board, Archbishop Hanus decided that the allegation against him had not been substantiated. This claim was included in the mediation and settlement.

Other priests accused of sexual abuse of minors and named in this mediation are the following: the Reverends Albert Carman (deceased 1980), Timothy DeVenney (removed from ministry 1996), William Goltz (deceased 2006), Robert Reiss (dispensed 1997, deceased 2005), Robert Saunders (deceased 2007), Allen Schmitt (removed from ministry 2002), and Robert Swift (deceased 1980). More than one victim made claims against DeVenney, Saunders, and Reiss.

To settle all eighteen claims, the Archdiocese agreed to pay the sum of 4.7 million dollars to the law firm representing the plaintiffs.

Besides the financial settlement, the Archdiocese committed itself to several activities, many of which it has been doing for years, to raise awareness of the effects of sexual abuse of minors and to invite victims to come forward and seek help. Among these commitments are the following:

1. The Archdiocese will continue to publish periodic notices in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Witness*, and in several secular papers inviting persons who as minors were sexually abused by church personnel to come forward and encouraging them to contact law enforcement personnel. Throughout the Archdiocese there are about three thousand icons

(sacred depictions) of St. Raphael the Archangel with information on how to reach the Archdiocesan Victim Assistance Coordinators.

2. The Archdiocese will allow victims whose claims were found credible the opportunity to speak at their home parish or in the parish where they were abused, if they wish to do so. This would take place following a Sunday Mass.
3. The Archbishop will continue his long-standing practices of writing to victims and of visiting privately with victims who request such a meeting.
4. The Archdiocese will pay for counseling and therapy for victims for up to twelve sessions during the rest of this calendar year.

As he has done frequently in recent years, Archbishop Hanus apologizes to the victims and their families. It is his hope that this settlement will be supportive of them. He assures all the victims of his prayers for them and their families. He expresses his commitment to support them in their efforts to achieve spiritual and emotional well-being.

Priests who abused are a disgrace to the vocation and a scandal to the faithful. In contrast, the vast majority of priests are good and holy servants of God and God's people. They give of their energy and time most generously. They abhor sexual abuse and work hard to ensure that the parishes, schools, and other institutions of the Archdiocese are safe. The priests want to help victims experience reconciliation, healing, and justice. Many have contacted and supported victims of sexual abuse.

The same can be said for other members of the Church. The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* calls all to heed Jesus' call to show mercy and compassion to the least ones. "Jesus extended this care in a tender and urgent way to children, rebuking his disciples for keeping them away from him: 'Let the children come to me'" (Mt 19:14).

The Archdiocese of Dubuque continues to commit itself to the protection of children, striving always to make the way safe for them.