



OFFICE OF RADIO & TELEVISION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

Archdiocese of Hartford Reaches Settlement Agreement

Hartford, Connecticut, Monday, October 31, 2005: The Archdiocese of Hartford has now reached a settlement agreement on 43 claims of sexual abuse of minors against 14 priests for a total of \$22 million. The settlement concludes an extended mediation process that lasted over two years and was conducted by U.S. Magistrate Judge William Garfinkel and involved attorneys representing the Archdiocese and the individual claimants. The total settlement amount will be allocated by the judge to the individual claimants in varying amounts.

The settlement will be funded through a combination of outside insurance payments, monies from an Archdiocesan self-insurance fund and long-term savings of the Archdiocese. None of the funding is coming from the Archbishop's Annual Appeal.

The misconduct was reported to have occurred primarily during the 1960s and 1970s with seven cases extending into or occurring in the first half of the 1980s. Of the 14 priests against whom claims were made, 6 are deceased, 4 are retired and no longer in active ministry, 3 are no longer in active ministry and 1 has been allowed to remain in active ministry.

The one priest who has been allowed to remain in active ministry, had two claims made against him by individuals alleging misconduct back in the 1970s. Upon receiving a report of those claims in the year 2003, the Archdiocese notified the State Department of Children and Families. Thereafter, the Archdiocese conducted its own investigation of the claims but has not been able to find any independent corroboration. The Sexual Misconduct Review Board of the Archdiocese of Hartford, the majority of whose members are lay people not in the employ of the Archdiocese, has reviewed the circumstances of this matter on several occasions and supports the priest's continued ministry, especially considering that the priest has served for over 30 years in an exemplary manner mostly in schools or in parishes with schools, that there have been no other such claims against him and that the priest adamantly denies these allegations. Archbishop Mansell also supports the priest's continued ministry.

According to Archbishop Mansell, the settlement of these 43 claims is part of a healing process for the persons whose lives have been severely harmed by the evil of sexual abuse and for the Church

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itself. While past events cannot be changed, they can and must be acknowledged and dealt with justly and compassionately.

Archbishop Mansell thanks Judge Garfinkel for his diligent and tireless efforts in bringing about a successful conclusion to the mediation. The Archbishop also expresses his gratitude to all of the attorneys involved and to the claimants for their cooperative efforts in resolving these difficult claims.

Archbishop Mansell expresses his deep sorrow for the destructive behavior that has been committed by a relatively small number of priests from the Archdiocese of Hartford and apologizes sincerely to those who have been harmed, seeks their forgiveness and reaches out to them with compassion. In attempting to move forward, the Archdiocese has renewed its commitment to doing whatever it can to protect the safety of children and young people and prevent such misconduct from happening again.

The Archbishop also points out that, through the adoption of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the bishops of this country have taken positive steps to address the issue of child sexual abuse. The Archdiocese of Hartford has fully implemented the terms of the Charter which work to promote healing and reconciliation of victims, guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors, ensure the accountability of its procedures and protect the faithful in the future. Three independent national audits have been conducted in the last three years by The Gavin Group, Inc., a Boston-based independent firm headed by William A. Gavin, a retired FBI official, and all have shown the Archdiocese of Hartford to be in full compliance.

Some of the examples of the positive steps taken by the Archdiocese include the sponsorship of mandatory training sessions for its clergy, conducted by an expert from the State Department of Children and Families, designed to educate them about and sensitize them to a variety of issues relating to the recognition of signs of child sexual abuse or neglect, how to respond properly to knowledge of child sexual abuse or neglect, etc. The Archdiocese has also appointed a victims' assistance coordinator to facilitate a proper response to persons who, as minors, were harmed by clergy sexual abuse. It has also initiated a mandatory safe environment program for its clergy, religious, seminarians, lay employees, and volunteers who have regular contact with children and young people and for parents, guardians, children and young people themselves, to help educate and sensitize them about a variety of important issues concerning child abuse and its prevention. It has also conducted and continues to conduct background checks on all such personnel who have regular contact with children and young people. These are but a few of many examples that could be given of steps that have been taken by the Archdiocese to address the issue of sexual abuse of minors in a responsible manner.

The Archdiocese of Hartford remains committed to promoting and protecting the safety of children and young people. It will continue to work with government officials and others in a concerted effort to minimize and, ideally, to prevent any recurrence in the future.

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