

News Advisory

To: All News Editors, Assignment Desks and Other Interested Persons
(Two-Page FAX)
From: Ned McGrath
(w) 313-237-5943 / (h) 313-886-4114
Date: April 25, 2002

2 p.m. Press Conference at Frank Murphy Hall of Justice

**RE: Archdiocese of Detroit enters into Voluntary Agreement
with County Prosecutors to turn over Files on Sexual Misconduct**

Consistent with what Cardinal Adam Maida said in his recent letter to the people of the Archdiocese of Detroit, the archdiocese is announcing today (April 25) that it has reached a voluntary agreement with the prosecutors from the six counties within its boundaries (Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Lapeer and St. Clair Counties) to share its case files of priests accused of sexual misconduct.

The agreement calls for the archdiocese to turn over its files dating back 15 years and to report to civil authorities all future accusations of sexual misconduct brought against priests.

Additionally, as it relates to civil cases involving the Archdiocese of Detroit, the archdiocese will permit and encourage the complainants to discuss their allegations with authorities. To facilitate this process, the archdiocese has agreed to release these complainants from any confidentiality agreement entered into for such purpose.

The following is a statement from Monsignor Walter Hurley, cardinal's liaison for misconduct policy review:

“On behalf of Cardinal Maida and the archdiocese I want to thank the prosecuting attorneys for the various counties in the archdiocese for coming together today to finalize this agreement. I especially want to thank Mr. Duggan for facilitating this agreement.

“We believe this agreement will greatly assist us in our common efforts to serve the community and protect young people and for the church to do what we do best, i.e. provide pastoral care.

-- More --

Page 2 – Monsignor Hurley’s Statement (continued)

“I want to make some comments regarding the information we will be turning over to the respective county prosecutors for allegations made to the archdiocese in the last 15 years. This is beyond the normal scope of the statute of limitations on these cases. But, we do so willingly to eliminate any perception that we are trying to hide or protect those who have acted criminally and to restore any trust in the Church that may have been lost.

“The information falls into a variety of categories and should not be considered as all being of the same nature:

---Some of the information relates to clergy who have died and the allegations go back as far as the 1940’s. (We are concerned and hope these names will be kept confidential since the dead cannot defend themselves.)

---Some files will reflect situations where the archdiocese judged the allegations, in consultation with others, to have sufficient merit that they warranted the removal of the priest or deacon from the active ministry and have in fact done so. Most of these are currently part of the public record.

---In other instances the archdiocese, after consultation and investigation, has judged the allegation to be without merit or lacking in credibility.

“It should not be assumed that these cases are all of either the same merit nor should we presume the guilt of anyone. If the review of the prosecutors offers a different conclusion we are prepared to act on their findings.

“We are grateful to the prosecutors for their willingness to have us produce these records under an investigative subpoena, which means that the names of those accused and other information will only be released if criminal charges are brought. In this way, those who are innocent or cannot defend themselves will be protected.

“Additionally, as it relates to those civil cases, which have been mutually settled out of court during this time, the archdiocese will permit and encourage the complainants to discuss their allegations with authorities. We have agreed to release these complainants from any confidentiality agreement entered into for such purpose.

“Once again, we welcome this opportunity to work together for the protection of the children in our community. Without the greater burden of conducting the initial investigation of these allegations to determine their merit since civil authorities will be doing that, we as a Church will be better able to concentrate on assisting victims and addressing the situations of those who may have perpetrated these criminal and immoral acts.”

**Monsignor Walter Hurley
Cardinal’s Liaison for Misconduct Policy Review
April 25, 2002**