



*Archdiocese of Saint Paul
and Minneapolis*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

September 27, 2013

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we approach the time when we gather as a family of faith and share the Sunday Eucharist, I want to share with you my personal feelings and thoughts on an important matter that has been in the news this week in our community. It has weighed heavily on my heart.

I am deeply saddened by the Curtis Wehmeyer case. In hearing the news, my heart ached for these children and their family. I am sorry that they have had to endure such pain and suffering. I have reflected on this at great length, and I have questioned my own judgment in dealing with the situation.

At the time I named Curtis Wehmeyer pastor, I did not know, nor did I suspect, that he was a risk to children. When we did receive the allegation of abuse against Wehmeyer, we immediately contacted law enforcement.

It is clear that Curtis Wehmeyer should not have been in active ministry. Understanding those facts today, I must conclude that I should have handled this matter more aggressively and I am sorry that I did not. I tried to do the right thing, but it wasn't enough, and I deeply regret that I couldn't prevent this horrible crime from occurring. I will always feel the weight of that burden.

Our standard is zero tolerance for child abuse by priests and absolute accountability. We never want this to happen again. We all must work together to protect children. For the past year, the archdiocese has been reviewing all of our policies and procedures. I am also calling for the formation of a Task Force to review our work in order to ensure the highest standards of child safety and security. The Task Force, soon to be formed, will have full authority and I will make their recommendations public.

As the leader of this local Church, I bear a special responsibility for the actions of the priests in our Archdiocese. I am deeply committed to do all in my power so that no one is harmed by priestly misconduct.

Our shared mission as Christian disciples is found in the inestimable worth and dignity of every human being. Please join me with renewed resolve to create and maintain safe environments where the Gospel of Jesus Christ can flourish.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Archbishop John C. Nienstedt