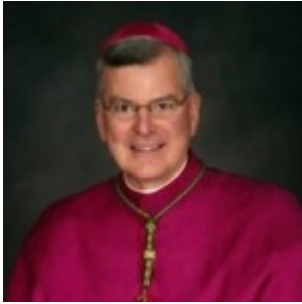


# KUDOS TO ARCHBISHOP NIENSTEDT



Bill Donohue comments on the way St. Paul and Minneapolis Archbishop John C. Nienstedt is handling priestly misconduct:

On Sunday, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced it was putting a priest on leave after a woman said he inappropriately touched her. The priest denies the accusation; the allegation was reported to the police. Yesterday, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) ran a story on a previous case: it said the archdiocese knew of the misconduct of Fr. Curtis Wehmeyer before he abused two boys in 2010.

In early June 2012, the mother of the abused boys told a priest about the molestation. He urged her to call the police. On June 14, she provided details and was told to report this to the archdiocese. On June 19, she met with officials and one of the boys was questioned. On June 20, the police were contacted; the authorities were told that the priest would be relieved of his duties on June 21. He was. In September, the Ramsey County Attorney commended the archdiocese saying, "They did the right thing."

Some critics are saying the archdiocese should have dealt with Wehmeyer before the abuse occurred. In 2004, three years after being ordained, Wehmeyer made sexually suggestive remarks to two men, 19 and 20, but they never complained. The archdiocese found out anyway, and sent the priest to St. Luke Institute for counseling. Two years later, he was found cruising in an area known for gay sex; no law was violated. In 2009, he was arrested for drunk driving. Fr. Kevin McDonough, a former vicar general, said last week that "[N]othing, nothing, nothing in this man's behavior known to us would have

convinced any reasonable person that he was likely to harm kids.”

These are not easy decisions. To be sure, workplace misconduct cannot be ignored—red flags are important. But when treatment is afforded, and no laws have been broken, the “innocent until proven guilty” rule applies. The burden is on those who disagree to say exactly what should be done in instances where there are no complainants. Kudos to Archbishop Nienstedt for handling these matters with justice for all.