

# NIENSTEDT EXONERATED

On March 11, 2014, the Ramsey County Attorney's Office announced that they would not file charges against St. Paul and Minneapolis Archbishop John Nienstedt; he was accused in December of "inappropriately touching" a young man in 2009.

When the charges were first made in December, Bill Donohue said, "Archbishop Nienstedt has been the subject of a non-stop crusade orchestrated by ex-Catholics, and Catholics in rebellion against the Church, simply because he stands for everything they are not: he is a loyal son of the Catholic Church." Donohue noted that "out of the blue" came an unidentified male who claims he was touched on his buttocks in 2009 by the archbishop while posing for a group photo.

After the accusation was made, the police identified and interviewed everyone who was in the photograph when the archbishop allegedly touched the boy's buttocks. No one at the Confirmation ceremony reported seeing anything like this happening. The photo shows Nienstedt standing behind the boy, one step up, meaning that he would have had to bend down to touch the boy's behind. Moreover, the photo shows Nienstedt with one hand on his crozier and the other on the boy's left shoulder.

The police asked if anyone recalled a touching episode meant as a joke, or saw any touching between people, or remembered if someone was startled during the photo session. The answer to all three was unanimous: No.

Archbishop Nienstedt is a good man who was unfairly accused. We never doubted his veracity.