

Office of Communications

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS REGARDING DONALD J. STRAUB

ST. LOUIS — It is our understanding that two lawsuits were filed against the Archdiocese of St. Louis today in the city of St. Louis related to allegations of sexual abuse by Donald J. Straub, a suspended priest of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Straub, 54, was removed from ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Louis in 1987.

Straub was ordained a deacon in 1974, and assigned to St. Martin of Tours Parish in Lemay. He was ordained a priest in 1975, after which he was assigned as associate pastor at St. George Parish in St. Louis County. In 1978, the archdiocese received complaints related to sexual abuse, and he was removed from the parish to undergo treatment. After completing treatment in 1979, Straub was returned to ministry. He was assigned associate pastor for a year at Our Lady Queen of Peace in House Springs and, from 1980 to 1986, as associate pastor at St. Charles Borromeo in St. Charles.

In 1986, while Straub was at St. Charles Borromeo, the archdiocese received complaints against him relating to that parish. Straub was immediately removed, and sent to a psychiatric institute for extensive treatment. After three years of treatment, Straub was discharged in 1990. With the consent of Archbishop John May, Straub arranged with the Diocese of Dodge City, Kansas, for assignment there. Full disclosure of Straub's background was provided to the diocese. In January 1991, within months of Straub's arrival in Dodge City, he returned to St. Louis because of problems he was experiencing in the diocese, unrelated to abuse. When Straub returned, Archbishop May re-imposed the suspension, and it remains in effect. Laicization procedures against Straub have been initiated by the archdiocese and forwarded to Rome for decision.

The reassignment of Straub after therapy would not occur today. Unfortunately, in the past, there was a different understanding in society and among professionals of the danger that a person will again abuse, even after treatment.

The archdiocese apologizes to anyone who was harmed by Straub, and urges any person who has been harmed by him to contact Monsignor Richard F. Stika, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, at (314) 633-2222 or the Circuit Attorney for the City of St. Louis.