



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statements from Diocese of Green Bay relating to Merryfield lawsuit settlement

GREEN BAY, Wis. (March 22, 2013) – “We reaffirm our statement from Tuesday, March 19,” says diocesan spokesperson, Justine Lodl, Director of Communications. “Following today’s news conference, Bishop Ricken reached out to the Merryfields in the hope of meeting with them personally.”

Statement from Bishop David L. Ricken:

“First and foremost, I would like to say I am truly sorry to Todd Merryfield and Troy Merryfield, as well as their families, for the pain they have endured from child sexual abuse and the lawsuits that followed. I hope and pray that they can experience God’s healing presence within their hearts.

Not only do I offer my sincere apology to the Merryfields, but to all of God’s children who have been impacted by child sexual abuse, especially the victims/survivors. Each time I have personally met and listened to their experiences and concerns, I am reminded of the profound effects this abuse has on their lives. I recognize the suffering of those who have been harmed and promise to work with all those interested in rebuilding their trust in the Church. As the current shepherd of the Diocese of Green Bay, I am genuinely sorry and will continue to keep them close in prayer as they heal.

It has been 10 years since the implementation of the United States bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in June 2002. During this time and continuing into the future, it has been our pledge to create an environment that protects our children and individuals at risk from harm. The faithful of the Diocese of Green Bay deserve to be treated with dignity, charity and respect, and to be served by men and women who fully reflect the love and protection of Jesus Christ.”

Statement from Deacon Tim Reilly, General Director of the Diocesan Curia:

“I want to apologize to Todd Merryfield and Troy Merryfield for the abuse that they suffered at the hands of John Feeney in 1978. I also want to extend my heartfelt compassion to them for the difficult years of this litigation as both parties searched for the truth. I hope and pray that this settlement will give them and their families some degree of peace.”

Diocesan policies for keeping children safe are and will continue to be rigorous. The policies include:

- Mandated background checks and abuse prevention training of all staff and volunteers in our parishes, schools and diocesan offices (approximately 25,000 people)
- Barring from ministry any clergy who have a credible allegation of abuse of a minor against them
- Mandatory reporting of all credible allegations of abuse to local law enforcement authorities. This has ensured that due process within our legal system takes place. Year after year, the diocese has demonstrated its compliance with its policies, with national standards, and adherence to state law.

More information is available on the diocese’s Web site (www.gbdioc.org) under the section titled “Protecting Our Children.”

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Who we are: The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay works to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by helping people in need and by providing academic, leadership and spiritual formation opportunities to parish and school leaders. Established in 1868, the diocese is composed of 324,000 Catholics in 16 counties: Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago.

Contact: Justine Lodl, director of communications, at 920-272-8213 or jlodl@gbdioc.org; or Amber Backus, communications coordinator, at 920-272-8209 or abackus@gbdioc.org.