

Archdiocese of Detroit / NewsRelease

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Rulings from State and County Courts

Archdiocese Responds to Cases Involving Clergy Sexual Abuse

This month, the Archdiocese of Detroit has been involved in two separate court rulings relating to the issue of clerical sexual abuse. On Tuesday, December 21st, in a two-to-one ruling, the [Michigan Court of Appeals](#) rejected an effort to suspend the statute of limitations in a case involving the Detroit archdiocese. The lower court ruling, if allowed to stand, would have impacted not only Catholic clergy, but possibly any number of institutions and professions, including doctors, lawyers and teachers. The following is a statement from the archdiocesan director of communications on the Appeals Court ruling:

“We are grateful the Court of Appeals accepted the legal argument presented. Our state and its citizens have been well served by the statute of limitations; it provides a reasonable amount of time for individuals to pursue civil complaints.

“In the specific ‘John Doe’ case involved here, we note that the complainant has not yet contacted the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the archdiocese, but is certainly welcome to. In the Detroit archdiocese, our policy on sexual abuse involving members of the clergy was first published in 1988; it contains no time restrictions or ‘statute of limitations’ on bringing forward a complaint. The archdiocese is willing to provide—and is currently providing—assistance to those who have been victims of clerical sexual abuse. And, we remain firmly committed to providing a safe environment for our children and our communities. Information on our policy and practices— along with additional resource material— is posted on the archdiocesan web site: AODonline.org, select *Promise to Protect. Pledge to Heal.*”

Ned McGrath
Director of Communications
Archdiocese of Detroit
December 22, 2004

On December 3rd, an attempt to have a lawsuit brought by four plaintiffs against the Detroit archdiocese certified as a class-action suit was rejected in Wayne County Circuit Court. In [The Michigan Catholic](#) newspaper of December 9th, McGrath stated: "Our attorneys argued successfully that it makes no sense to have a class-action suit where a mini-trial would have to be conducted on the validity of each plaintiff's allegations."