



**Archdiocese of Boston Serves Motion Citing First Amendment Defense  
Action triggered by court-mandated deadline  
Bishop Lennon renews call for moratorium with plaintiff's attorneys**

**Boston (Monday, December 23, 2002)** - The Archdiocese of Boston today served a motion in the pending sexual abuse cases raising the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as a defense. The motion contends that the First Amendment does not permit the government to define how established religious bodies should conduct their ministries of discipline and governance.

The Archdiocese was required to serve this motion today to comply with a December 23 deadline set by Superior Court Justice Constance M. Sweeney.

“Although serving this motion today is necessary, I wish to emphasize that the Archdiocese remains firmly committed to reaching a fair and equitable settlement for those who have been harmed by clergy sexual abuse,” said Bishop Lennon. “I believe that these cases are best resolved through a comprehensive settlement and so I renew my request that all parties agree to a moratorium on all discovery and court proceedings in order that all parties may actively pursue such a settlement.”

Bishop Lennon added that he has given authorization for certain properties owned and operated by the Archdiocese to be marketed, in order to make funds available for the compensation of those harmed by clergy sexual abuse. He also stated that the Archdiocese is continuing to meet with its insurance companies concerning the payment of claims, so that a fair and equitable resolution may be completed as soon as is possible.

“I firmly believe that such a resolution will help us to move forward in a new beginning for the Catholic Church of Boston,” Bishop Lennon stated. “Because we are Church, our first and strongest desire is to resolve the issues before us through a mediated settlement so that we can go forward united in fulfilling our mission.”

“To all of the faithful who have endured the horrible events of the last year, I once again ask for your prayers for all involved, most especially the those who have been harmed by sexual abuse,” Bishop Lennon stated.

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