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Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Archdiocese to Pull Names from Two Diocesan Buildings

MILWAUKEE — The names of former Milwaukee archbishops William E. Cousins and Rembert G. Weakland, will be removed from buildings in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as part of the Catholic Church’s continuing response to the clergy sexual abuse of minors.

The Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center was named after Archbishop Cousins in 1983, when the archdiocesan offices were consolidated into the location of the former DeSales Preparatory High School, which closed in 1979.

The Weakland Center, on the Cathedral block just north of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Milwaukee, houses parish offices and outreach initiatives and was named after Archbishop Weakland following the Cathedral Project, which renovated the Cathedral and surrounding block in 2000.

“We hope that changing the names of these two buildings will continue to bring healing to abuse survivors and their families,” Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI said. “For a number of years there has been talk of changing these names. As the Church continues to restore trust in its response to clergy sexual abuse, the timing seemed right to do so now.”

In the past year, decisions of bishops across the country have come under closer scrutiny, as both Catholics and law enforcement have questioned decision-making that left priest-perpetrators in active ministry despite allegations of sexual abuse of minors. Although these decisions span decades, archdiocesan records show that both Archbishop Cousins and Archbishop Weakland reassigned priests after substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were received.

“It is easy to criticize decisions made decades ago, through the lens of today,” ListECKI said. “Whether it be clericalism, a misguided intent to protect the institutional church or the desire to avoid scandal, regard for priest-offenders often trumped care for victims. For this, I apologize to abuse survivors and to the faithful of this archdiocese.

“Our motivation is not to heap judgement on those decisions,” ListECKI said, “but rather to simply acknowledge the pain incurred by abuse survivors. If making this small change can aid healing and reconciliation, then I want to move forward.”

The current sign for the Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center will be taken down on Tuesday, March 19 at noon. Archdiocesan staff will be present to answer any media questions. The new name will be announced at 10 a.m., on Friday, March 22, with the installation of a temporary sign. Archbishop ListECKI will be present for the installation, and will be available for individual interviews.

The Cathedral parish offices are being moved to another part of the Cathedral block, and the Weakland Center space will now be used to house both parish and other social outreach initiatives in the community.

Please contact Amy Grau, Communication Director, with any questions. Phone: 414.769.3461 or email: graua@archmil.org.

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