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STATEMENT on GLOBAL SETTLEMENT of OUTSTANDING CIVIL LAWSUITS

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony

Archbishop of Los Angeles

July 15, 2007

After much prayer, time, and effort by all of the parties involved, I am able to announce to you today that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has reached an agreement in principle with attorneys representing clergy sexual abuse victims in the 508 civil cases that remain filed against us.

While there is still work to be done to finalize the formal agreement, I believe that this agreement in principle represents a significant step toward final resolution of all of the sexual abuse claims filed against the Archdiocese these past few years.

The funding for the global settlement will be shared by the Archdiocese, Insurance Companies, various Religious Orders, and other named parties. I am grateful to the several Religious Orders which have stepped forward to take financial responsibility for cases in which their priests or brothers were accused. However, some Religious Orders and other defendants have declined to participate in the global settlement, and therefore, will be excluded from it.

At this time, I again offer my personal apology to every victim who has suffered sexual abuse by a priest, religious, deacon or layperson in this Archdiocese. It is the shared hope of everyone in our Local Church that these victims, many of whom suffered in silence for decades, may find a measure of healing and some sense of closure with today's announcement. Although financial compensation in itself is inadequate to make up for the harm done to the victims and their families, still this compensation does provide a meaningful outreach to assist the victims to rebuild their lives and to move forward.

Though the achievement of a global financial settlement is important, so too is the tremendous dedication of our parish leaders and parishioners who continue efforts to prevent sexual abuse and the potential for abuse through our abuse prevention training programs, screening procedures for all priests, employees and volunteers, and our age-appropriate safe environment programs for our children in our parishes and schools.

As I mentioned at the time of our settlement of 45 sexual misconduct cases last November, these settlements will have very serious and painful consequences for the Archdiocese. This is not the fault, nor responsibility of the victims. Rather, we as an Archdiocese will be required to reevaluate all of our ministries and services since we will not be able to offer them at the same levels as in the past. We will also be required to sell non-essential properties in order to fund our portion of the settlements. However, I want to reassure you that no parish properties or parish schools will be affected as a result of these settlements.

Let us continue to pray, through the special intercession of Our Lady of the Angels, for healing for all victims of sexual abuse as well as for the future of our Local Church.

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