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## STATEMENT REGARDING THE STATUS OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN NIENSTEDT

*From Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda*

Since I arrived in this Archdiocese in 2015, I have often been asked for clarification on the status of my predecessor, Archbishop John Nienstedt, who had been under investigation for certain decisions made during his tenure as Archbishop and also regarding allegations of inappropriate conduct with both minors and adults. I have made public statements in this regard previously in [August 2016](#) and [December 2018](#), indicating that the questions necessitated a determination by officials of the Holy See. Archbishop Nienstedt himself also [stated publicly](#) that he would welcome an investigation to resolve the allegations, which he has denied.

The promulgation of [Vos estis lux mundi](#) (*Vos estis*) in 2019, reflecting Pope Francis's desire that reports of misconduct made against bishops around the world be brought to light and thoroughly investigated, created a path forward for a resolution of the Archbishop Nienstedt matter. At the formal request of individuals here in the Archdiocese, including the late Tom Johnson, a former Hennepin County Attorney and later Ombudsperson for the Archdiocese, the allegations against Archbishop Nienstedt were thoroughly investigated by officials outside of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis in accordance with the process set forth in *Vos estis*.

I was recently informed that the investigation of all the allegations has been completed and that a determination has been made by the Holy See. After reviewing all of the information gathered, the Dicasteries for Bishops and for the Doctrine of the Faith concluded that the available evidence did not support a finding that Archbishop Nienstedt had committed any canonical delict (crime). Accordingly, the allegations against Archbishop Nienstedt were deemed unfounded.

Though the evidence available did not support a finding that any conduct on the part of Archbishop Nienstedt could be judged as a delict, it was communicated to me that several instances of "imprudent" actions were brought to light. While none of these instances, either standing alone or taken together, were determined to warrant any further investigation or penal sanctions, it was determined by Pope Francis that the following administrative actions are justified:

1. Archbishop Nienstedt may not exercise any public ministries in the Province of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (the Province covers all of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota).
2. He may not reside in the Province of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.
3. He may not exercise ministry in any way outside of his diocese of residence without the express authorization of the attendant Ordinary and only after the Dicastery for Bishops has been informed.

Please join me in praying that this resolution may bring further healing to our Archdiocese and to all those involved in these matters.