

## Recently retired Dubuque archbishop to testify in sex abuse cases

Joshua J. McElwee | Apr. 12, 2013

A Catholic archbishop in Iowa who retired Monday will be deposed in upcoming weeks in two lawsuits brought against the Benedictine abbey in Missouri where he was abbot for 10 years.

Two men who say a Benedictine priest sexually abused them as minors in the 1980s filed the lawsuits against Conception Abbey in northwest Missouri. Jerome Hanus, the retiring archbishop of Dubuque, Iowa, was abbot there at the time.

The lawsuits, filed in Missouri circuit court in the summer of 2011, say that before the priest, Bede Parry, allegedly abused the two minors, he had previously reported to Hanus other "inappropriate sexual relationships" with minors.

Upon receiving notice of the previous relationships, the lawsuits say, Hanus allowed Parry to remain as a youth choir director while receiving psychological treatment.

According to court records, Hanus is set to be deposed for one of the lawsuits April 25. Testimony in the other lawsuit had been set but had to be rescheduled, a lawyer for one of the men who filed the lawsuit said in an email.

The communications director for the Dubuque archdiocese said Hanus retired for health reasons and not because of the pending depositions.

"I await the opportunity to be deposed," Hanus wrote in an emailed statement to *NCR* Thursday. "I look forward to it."

"Although I am a Bishop of the Church, I am also a Benedictine Monk," Hanus continued. "I began my priestly life at Conception Abbey. In my twenty-five years as a Bishop, it has always been my intention to return to Conception Abbey when I retired."

The lawsuits, brought by two men seeking anonymity because of the nature of the case, say Conception Abbey failed to supervise its clergy and committed fraud, among other allegations.

Hanus, who was abbot at the abbey from 1977-1987, has not been named as a defendant in either case.

Parry, the former Benedictine priest accused of the abuse in both cases, has publicly talked about his guilt in the matter. Parry has said in statements and videos [given to a website focused on the issue](#) [1] that after confessing in appropriate contact with minors to Hanus in 1981, the abbot told him, "Don't do it again."

In the same statement, Parry said he continued to abuse minors, including the alleged victim in one of the suits.

In responses to one of the lawsuits, lawyers for the abbey said the alleged victim's lawyers misrepresented several facts of the case, including when Hanus allegedly met with the parents of a boy who said Parry abused

him at a youth choir camp.

While that abuse is alleged to have occurred in 1982, the abbey's lawyers wrote in a January 2012 motion, the parents did not approach Hanus about the matter until 1987.

According to the lawsuits, Hanus sent Parry for treatment at a facility run by the Servants of the Paracletes in New Mexico in 1987. Following that treatment, the lawsuit says Parry served in Catholic parishes in New Mexico and Nevada before leaving the Catholic church and serving with an Episcopal community in Las Vegas.

Hanus' retirement [was announced April 8](#) [2] by Archbishop Carlo Viganò, the apostolic nuncio to the U.S., who also announced that Bishop Michael Jackels of Wichita, Kan., had been chosen by Pope Francis as his successor.

Hanus is 72 years old, younger than the normal retirement age of 75 for bishops. In a statement following Jackels' appointment, Hanus said his health had declined in recent years, leading him to submit his resignation to Pope Benedict XVI in the fall.

Hanus was in a car accident in February 2012. Franciscan Sr. Carol Hoverman, the Dubuque archdiocese's director of communications, wrote in an email that the accident, in which Hanus' car slipped on ice before rolling over twice, resulted in chest injuries.

Hanus has been hospitalized several times since for body spasms and for increases in arthritis pain following the trauma of the accident, Hoverman wrote.

"Many of the items on his schedule have been fulfilled by the vicars since this happened," she wrote.

"His retirement has nothing to do with the deposition. He had hoped his retirement would have been accepted earlier as he had sent in his resignation last year. He simply felt he couldn't do the job here anymore."

[Joshua J. McElwee is an *NCR* staff writer. His email address is [jmcelwee@ncronline.org](mailto:jmcelwee@ncronline.org). Follow him on Twitter at [twitter.com/joshjmac](https://twitter.com/joshjmac) [3].]

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