

# Archdiocese says judge needs to have say before list released

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has disputed recent media reports that it is “unwilling to publicly disclose the names of priests accused of abuse” over the past 50 years.

Attorney Jeffrey Anderson wants to make public a list of priests suspected of sexual abuse that was compiled in 2004.

Mr. Anderson, a St. Paul lawyer who has specialized in child sex abuse suits against Catholic institutions around the country, is representing a man who alleges he was sexually abused by former Catholic priest Thomas Adamson while Mr. Adamson was serving at Risen Savior Parish in Burnsville in the early 1980s.

The archdiocese says the list should not be made public until a judge considers the matter.

The April 8 statement by the archdiocese said the list the court ordered be released to Mr. Anderson last December contained 33 names. It said 23 names of priests charged with abuse have already been made public either because of litigation or disclosure by the archdiocese. The remaining 10 have never been charged criminally or civilly with any crime of abuse.

The statement released by communications director Dennis McGrath said the archdiocese had moved for a protective order regarding the names of the 10 priests until the Second Judicial District Court has ruled on the admissibility of the information.

“Just as the law provides protection for all of us from unproven accusations, we believe it wrong for this information to be disclosed until the judge who will hear this evidence decides it should be released,” the statement said.

In a telephone interview, Mr. McGrath said the archdiocese would be liable if it released those 10 names on its own.

“Not only would it be unfair and unjust, but we’d be liable in a court of law for defamation of character,” he told The Catholic Spirit, the archdiocesan newspaper.

The statement said: “We believe it is grossly unfair and highly inaccurate to characterize this as an attempt to keep this information secret.

“We have consistently communicated the intent to disclose this information, subject to appropriate safeguards for the people against whom the allegations may have been made and for those who made allegations to the archdiocese in confidence,” the statement said.

Tom Wieser, the attorney representing the archdiocese, has said that the files, which were assembled as part of an independent review of its sexual abuse complaints, may contain the names of innocent people.

None of the 10 are involved in active ministry and at least one is believed to be deceased, according to the statement.