

# Statement Refuting Allegations by Rita Monahan

In January 1990, Rita Monahan, with her then attorney John V. Murphy, contacted the Archdiocese of Baltimore alleging that in February 1989 Father Thomas Schwind, then pastor of St. Ambrose parish in Baltimore, had kissed her and attempted to touch her inappropriately. Schwind has consistently denied the allegation.

Statements today by Rita Monahan of a cover-up of that allegation by Cardinal Keeler are false. In January 1990, concurrent with an investigation by the Archdiocese, the matter was also investigated by the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City. The Archdiocese cooperated fully in that investigation. The State's Attorney's Office met with Rita Monahan and Father Schwind during this time. The Archdiocese continued to cooperate with the State's Attorney's Office through their last request for information in December 1990.

In the course of the investigation in early 1990, Rita Monahan and her attorney met with Archdiocesan officials on several occasions. During this time:

- She requested and received a document, dated January 30, 1990 and signed by former Archbishop William D. Borders, confirming her status as a member of the "Order of Virgins."
- She requested that a statement on her behalf be read to parishioners at St. Ambrose church. That request was granted, and Bishop John Ricard stated the following there at all Masses on Saturday and Sunday, February 17 and 18, 1990: "The Archdiocese of Baltimore affirms and supports the moral integrity, professional ministry and the religious vocation of Sister Rita Monahan, Consecrated Virgin. We regret any unauthorized statements of perceptions by anyone at St. Ambrose parish which in any way would detract from Sister Rita's character or credibility in the Archdiocese of Baltimore."
- She requested and the Archdiocese offered to cover her expenses of \$5,000.
- She requested and received a private meeting with then Archbishop Keeler

to assist her pastorally.

Her requests having been met, a draft settlement agreement which would have affirmed her intent not to move forward with criminal charges against Schwind was prepared and delivered to her attorney on February 21, 1990. The agreement was never signed or returned, and neither Rita Monahan nor her attorney maintained contact with Archdiocese, despite our inquiries, after that time.

The Archdiocese asks the public, and the media, to responsibly digest accusations of misconduct, allowing civil authority the opportunity to assess their credibility prior to rendering personal judgment. The Baltimore City Police Sex Crimes unit has reopened an investigation into this matter. As in 1990, the Archdiocese will cooperate fully in that investigation.