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NEWS RELEASE

LAWYER IN SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CASES EXAMINES THE COST OF THE CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

DAYTON, Ohio — They weren't a part of the problem but, according to attorney and professor Patrick Schiltz, the Catholic church's own lawyers may well have contributed to the crisis. Schiltz holds the St. Thomas More Chair in Law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis.

"The Wounded Body of Christ: Sexual Abuse in the Church" series continues at the University of Dayton as Schiltz discusses the issue of "Too Much Law, Too Little Justice: How Lawyers Helped to Turn a Clergy Sexual Abuse Problem Into a Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis." Schiltz will speak at **7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 10, in the Sears Recital Hall** in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center on UD's campus. The presentation is free and open to the public.

"I will focus on the role that lawyers, especially the church's own lawyers, played in creating the clergy sexual abuse crisis, and I will talk about how those same lawyers now have the opportunity to help the church emerge from the crisis," Schiltz said.

According to Schiltz, clergy sexual abuse has become less common during the past decade but litigation continues to increase. The amount of settlements continues to rise, causing financial problems for several dioceses.

"Dioceses, for the first time, have turned to the bankruptcy courts for protection," Schiltz said. "Three dioceses have now filed for bankruptcy, and more are sure to follow."

Since 1987, Schiltz has represented or advised religious organizations in connection to more than 500 clergy sexual misconduct cases across the country and internationally. As

recently as the early 1980s, litigation in such cases was virtually nonexistent. In the decades that followed, dioceses have settled both civil and criminal cases and awarded millions of dollars to plaintiffs.

“The amount of settlements has skyrocketed,” Schiltz said. “The amount of settlements agreed to by relatively wealthy dioceses, such as Boston, are going to make it more difficult for relatively poor dioceses to settle their cases.”

“The Wounded Body of Christ: Sexual Abuse in the Church” lecture series was designed to provide people with the resources to respond to the crisis of sexual abuse by the clergy. The series is sponsored by the University of Dayton office of the president, department of religious studies and campus ministry.

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For more information about the series, call (937) 229-4321. For media interviews, contact **Patrick Schiltz** at (651) 962-4896.