

March 31, 2007 - Report: Archdiocese settles case over priest abuse allegations  
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HARTFORD, Conn. --A man who accused a Roman Catholic priest of sexual abuse will receive \$550,000 under terms of a settlement reached last week, The Hartford Courant reported Saturday.

The payment is the ninth settlement reached by the Archdiocese of Hartford in cases involving alleged abuse by the Rev. Stephen Foley, the newspaper reported. Two other cases are pending.

Foley was accused of using his position as chaplain for local fire departments and the Connecticut State Police to molest the plaintiffs when they were teenagers in the 1970s.

His accusers say Foley, who has not been charged with a crime, lured them by using a car similar to a police cruiser.

Foley's lawyer Walter Hampton Jr., has said his client adamantly denies the allegations.

The recently resolved case was filed in 2002 by a man who claimed he was sexually abused by Foley in 1978, when he was a 14-year-old parishioner at a Windsor Locks church where Foley ran a youth program.

The diocese will not comment on the amount it has paid to settle complaints involving Foley.

The Rev. John Gatzak, spokesman for the church, said the archdiocese does not discuss individual settlements, but that church officials "attempt to work with victims and the court system to settle these claims amicably."

Robert Reardon, the plaintiff's attorney, said the diocese has paid \$1.4 million in the past three months alone to resolve complaints from two people he represents.

"I know that my client is very pleased that he can bring closure to this horrible experience at a young age and finally move on," Reardon said Friday.

Earlier in the week, the archdiocese ordered Foley to leave St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. He has lived there since 1993, performing no duties while receiving free room and board, health insurance and a monthly stipend.

The diocese will still provide Foley's stipend and insurance because it is obligated to do so for all of its priests after they are ordained, Gatzak said.

Foley was also ordered to sell the police-equipped Crown Victoria he has been driving for years, even though he no longer serves as a police or fire chaplain.