

May 18, 2007 - Diocese loses sex abuse lawsuit
BY ANN GIVENS, Newsday

For the first time, a jury has found the Diocese of Rockville Centre liable for sexual abuse suffered at the hands of a church employee.

After eight days of deliberations, a Nassau jury Friday afternoon ruled that a man and a woman who were raped as teenagers by their youth minister are entitled to at least \$5.5 million each for their pain and suffering.

The plaintiffs, who are not being named by Newsday because they are victims of sex crimes, sued their youth minister, Matthew Maiello; the priest who hired him, the Rev. Thomas Haggerty; his church, St. Raphael's Church in East Meadow, and the diocese.

The jury found Maiello 70 percent liable for the damages and the other defendants 30 percent.

There was no immediate reaction in the courtroom after the verdict, but afterward the female plaintiff hugged and cried with her mother.

The jury said she should get \$2.5 million now and \$250,000 for the next 12 years. The male plaintiff also should get \$2.5 million now, and \$115,000 a year for the next 30 years, the jury ruled.