

D.C. Archdiocese Pays 1\$.3M to Victims

By DERRILL HOLLY, Associated Press Writer, December 16, 2006

The Archdiocese of Washington has agreed to pay \$1.3 million to 16 men who said they were sexually abused by eight priests from 1962 to 1982.

Although the men began pursuing claims three years ago, no lawsuits were filed in part because the statutes of limitation had expired in the jurisdictions where the acts allegedly occurred, said an attorney for the group, Peter M. Gillon.

"Our clients were in severe distress, emotionally, psychologically, financially and spiritually, and felt that a settlement was appropriate at this time," Gillon said as the agreement was announced Friday.

The allegations raised by the men stemmed from events that occurred between 24 and 44 years ago, and two of the men receiving settlement money already had lost legal claims against the archdiocese. All eight priests involved in the allegations have been removed from ministry; seven were prosecuted and one was acquitted.

The settlement, first reported in Saturday's editions of The Washington Post, provides cash payments of \$10,000 to \$190,000 to each of the men.

The archdiocese includes more than 560,000 Roman Catholics in 140 parishes in the District of Columbia and five southern Maryland counties.

The settlements will be covered by insurance reserves and not by other church assets, operating funds or collections, said a spokeswoman for the archdiocese, Susan Gibb.

Elsewhere, attorneys representing 45 people who sued the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the nation's largest, accusing clergy members of sex abuse, signed off Friday on a \$60 million settlement, according to the lead plaintiffs' lawyer. Cardinal Roger Mahony said earlier that \$40 million of the payment would come from the archdiocese, plus \$20 million from religious orders and a small amount from independent insurance coverage.