

All but 3 abuse cases are settled

BY MARK REITER
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Out-of-court settlements have been reached in all but three lawsuits filed against the Toledo Catholic Diocese alleging sexual abuse by priests and other church employees, attorneys representing the victims and the diocese said yesterday.

Since April, 2002, the diocese along with clergy and a former deacon who were accused of molesting children and adolescents have been named in at least 22 civil lawsuits filed in Lucas County Common Pleas Court.

So far, undisclosed settlements have been made with at least 19 victims who filed complaints. The lawsuits were mediated by Judge Melvin Resnick, who retired last year from the Ohio 6th District Court of Appeals.

Catherine Hoolahan, an attorney for the accusers, and John Hayward, an attorney for Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, which represents the diocese, said they hoped to have the remaining cases settled before the end of the month.

"We will try to schedule mediation meetings in the month of July to dispose of all the pending cases," Mr. Hayward said.

Motions were filed yesterday by attorneys for both sides to continue discovery moratoriums in the three cases until July 31. The moratoriums temporarily halt legal action while the cases are pending in mediation.

Those cases include the first suit against the diocese in which allegations of sexual abuse were raised against a priest. A woman said a former priest began abusing her when she was in the fourth grade at St. Piux X Church. The priest, Chet Warren, was later forced to retire from the priesthood.

Attorneys for the 12 who sued the diocese announced in March that out-of-court settlements were reached after Judge Resnick mediated the lawsuits.

The victims and their attorneys, David Zoll, Michelle Kranz, and Pamela Borgess, agreed to delay releasing financial details of the settlements until after the other lawsuits are resolved.

Ms. Hoolahan said the settlement terms for the victims she represents will be made available after the pending cases are resolved. "We are trying to stay under the radar. I don't want to do anything that could possibly jeopardize my clients' interests," she said.

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