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Priests Sue over Allegations

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The Press Democrat [California]
Downloaded March 22, 2004

Cases of Catholic priests who sued people accusing them of sexual misconduct include:

Monsignor Lawrence Baird of Diocese of Orange sued a San Francisco woman, Lori Haigh, for slander in 2002 after she accused him of sexual misconduct occurring 20 years earlier. A San Francisco judge dismissed the suit, saying it was meant to discourage Haigh from talking.

Haigh had won a \$1.2 million settlement from the dioceses of Orange and Los Angeles after accusing another priest of getting her pregnant and paying for her abortion more than 20 years ago.

A Staten Island, N.Y. cleric, Monsignor Thomas Gaffney, filed a \$2 million defamation of character lawsuit earlier this year against a New Jersey man, Daniel O'Dougherty, for allegedly false claims of sexual abuse 17 years ago. The suit is pending.

The Rev. James Mickus of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City filed a lawsuit in 2002 claiming a man, Tim Ryan, had falsely accused him of "inappropriate activities." Archbishop Eusebius Beltran reinstated Mickus to full-time ministry last year, saying a review board had found no merit to the allegations.

Mickus subsequently dropped his lawsuit against Ryan. Then Ryan sued Mickus and the archdiocese, claiming they had violated confidentiality in making public his allegations against the priest.

Raymond Tremblay, a former religious education teacher in Worcester, Mass., filed a slander suit last year against Timothy P. Staney, who had accused Tremblay and a priest of molesting him in the 1980s. The suit is pending.

In the Archdiocese of St. Louis, both a priest, the Rev. Alexander Anderson, and his accuser, Arthur Andreas, agreed last month to drop their lawsuits in a deal that paid Andreas \$22,500 for counseling.

Andreas had accused Anderson of molesting him 15 years ago; the priest went public denying it in 2002. Anderson sued for slander; Andreas sued over the alleged abuse.

Anderson continues to serve as a pastor. The church characterized the payment to Andreas as an act of kindness.

A South Florida judge last year dismissed a lawsuit filed by the Rev. Jan Malicki, accusing church officials of ruining his name by revealing allegations of abuse by two unnamed women. Malicki was suspended in 1998. The judge, in dismissing his suit, said the public had a "legitimate interest and concern" in being informed of potential sexual abuse.