

## \$2.2 million settlement in former Geneva priest abuse case

By Tona Kunz  
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The Rockford Catholic Diocese Thursday settled for \$2.2 million a lawsuit over a former Geneva priest's sexual abuse of two teens from Geneva and Aurora.

The settlement is one of the highest for church abuse cases in Illinois and one of the larger amounts in the country for a case without several victims, said Greg Snyder, who represented the girls.

The lawsuit accused the diocese of ignoring signs former priest Mark Campobello was a risk to children, and failing to heed complaints about him. A trial was set for October.

Campobello pleaded guilty in criminal court in May 2004 to abusing the two girls while he served as a priest at St. Peter in Geneva and taught at Aurora Central Catholic High School. The abuse of the then 15- and 14-year-old girls happened in 1999 and 2000. Some of the abuse was alleged to have taken place on church grounds.

The girls, now in their 20s, still live in Illinois. They continue with counseling to deal with the abuse and backlash from the criminal and civil court cases, Snyder said.

The majority of the settlement money comes from church insurance and the diocese will pay \$250,000 from its private funds.

The settlement marks the start of a new phase in the case.

Snyder's Minnesota-based firm, Hinshaw & Culbertson, has handled more than 2,000 lawsuits involving Catholic priests charged with abuse.

The firm has been successful - most recently in the Joliet Diocese - in getting pre-trial documents opened to the public even after settlements.

Snyder said the settlement agreement allows him to argue for lifting a protective order on the depositions of witnesses, including St. Peter Church leader Monsignor Joseph Jarmoluk and Campobello. He also is seeking to lift the seal on diocese files that show other complaints about priests and how those cases were investigated. The files were subpoenaed as evidence for the trial to show a pattern of how the diocese responds to allegations of abuse.

A court hearing on publicizing the files could occur as early as the next 30 days.

"We think it is shameful that church officials ever sought to keep this information secret, especially when for years and years they have been repeatedly promising to end secrecy,"

said David Clohessy, executive director of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. "The obvious, common sense question is what are they trying to hide."

The diocese attorney did not return a call for comment.

Diocese and St. Peter officials did not return calls seeking comment, but issued written statements.

Jarmoluk wrote he was happy to see the lawsuit settled and hoped it would help contribute to the complete healing of the women.

"Although the settlement amounts were a heavy burden for the diocese, the diocese owed restorative justice to the two women for their injuries," the diocese said in a statement.

The statement also stressed Campobello had been expelled from the priesthood June 3, 2005. He could be paroled from his eight-year prison sentence as early as Feb. 13, 2008.

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