

## WORLD &amp; NATION

## Abuse victims' settlements rejected

BOSTON (CNS) — Cardinal Bernard F. Law May 5 acknowledged "the disappointment, the anger, and even the sense of fresh betrayal" arising from a decision by the Archdiocese of Boston's Finance Council to back out of a multimillion-dollar settlement with victims of former priest John J. Geoghan.

The cardinal said the archdiocese would continue to work for "a just and equitable solution" for all victims of clergy sex abuse.

He talked about the rejected settlement during his regular Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston.

He said the Finance Council, which under canon law was required to approve the \$15 million to \$30 million payment to settle claims by 86 of Geoghan's victims, had rejected the settlement out of a "laudable concern" that the payment would "negatively affect the response which the archdiocese can later make to the other victims."

Although the archdiocese had thought there were about 30 other victims when it agreed to the tentative settlement in March, Cardinal Law said, the number of possible victims of clergy sex abuse in the archdiocese had now reached about 150.

"When you have the 150 in addition to the 86 already settled, the amount at hand will be very negatively affected," the cardinal said. "There are no easy answers. Certainly, we must respond as best we can to all those who have suffered abuse by clergy. It is also true that the financial resources of the archdiocese are limited. Somehow, somehow, in the weeks ahead, we must deal with those two realities as we seek a just and equitable solution."

In a lengthy statement May 3, David W. Smith, chancellor of the Boston Archdiocese, said the Finance Council members had expressed "grave concern ... that the proposed settlement would consume substantially all of the resources of the archdiocese that can reasonably be made available and therefore, such an action would leave the archdiocese unable to provide a just and proportional response to other



Reuters/CNS

Maryetta Dussourd shouts while protesting the actions of Cardinal Bernard F. Law May 5 in Boston. During Mass that Sunday, Cardinal Law said the number of people bringing abuse claims against the archdiocese had mushroomed to about 150, making a previously reached multimillion-dollar settlement with 86 plaintiffs too expensive.

victims."

It was the first time since Cardinal Law came to Boston in 1984 that the Finance Council had refused to grant "the canonically required consent," Smith said.

The cardinal "expressed his deep regret at the vote, particularly in light of the fact that the Finance Council had previously been briefed on the proposed settlement and had expressed, at the time, a desire to see it go forward," the statement added.

The council "unanimously advised the cardinal to develop a mechanism which will provide all necessary counseling for the victims and their families" and to "come up with a nonlitigious global assistance fund for all victims."

In a May 5 interview with the *Boston Herald*, Smith said a total of "\$40 million would be in line with what we can afford" for all victims of abuse by priests in the

archdiocese.

"These (settlement) payments from our perspective have been voluntary from the first day," he was quoted as saying. "We intend to give appropriate monetary help in proportion to injury. But that help will come from a pool we can pull together without crippling the ability of the church to pursue its mission."

Mitchell Garabedian, an attorney for the 86 Geoghan victims, said he would ask a judge May 6 to set a date for a deposition by Cardinal Law and to issue a restraining order barring the cardinal from leaving the country. He also said he was considering suing the church for fraud.

Announcement of the Finance Council's decision came on the same weekend as the start of the 2002 Cardinal's Appeal, the annual fund-raising drive for the Boston Archdiocese.

## Pope's messenger asks for end to Mideast standoff

JERUSALEM (CNS) — As tensions mounted between Israeli forces and the Palestinians hiding inside Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, a retired Vatican official arrived in Jerusalem to seek an end to the monthlong standoff.

"I come to ask that everything be done to settle as soon as possible the tragic situation of Bethlehem," Cardinal Roger Etchegaray said in a statement released after his visit with Israeli President Moshe Katsav May 2.

The cardinal said he came in the name of the pope, who "insists on witnessing to respect and trust in the two peoples, Israeli and Palestinian."

Cardinal Etchegaray, who headed Vatican councils for humanitarian aid and justice and peace, has been sent on a number of sensitive church missions. In recent years, he also traveled to the Holy Land to help with advance preparations for a papal trip and to deliver the pope's 2001 annual peace message to Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Cardinal Etchegaray's visit was one of

several high-profile diplomatic appeals that sought to end the West Bank church standoff without further bloodshed. During his visit, he met privately with Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and heads of Christian churches.

By May 6, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said a negotiated end to the Nativity stalemate was imminent. Powell's remarks came in advance of a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and U.S. President George W. Bush, who has demanded a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian-ruled areas.

An Israeli military source said 123 Palestinian security officials and civilians remained inside the Church of the Nativity, with 10 people on Israel's most-wanted list, Reuters reported May 6. A proposed settlement would send the wanted men to Italy through Jordan as guests of the Italian government.

Seven people who were inside the church have been killed by Israeli gunfire, and several others were wounded.

Israel launched a military offensive in the West Bank March 29 after Palestinian suicide bombings killed dozens of Israeli citizens. The gunmen have been in the church since April 3.

On May 3, Pope John Paul II, in remarks to Morocco's new ambassador to the Vatican, expressed his hope that appeals for peace and continuing international pressure would convince Israelis and Palestinians to return to the negotiating table.

Cardinal Etchegaray said he came in the name of the pope to "demand insistently the most rapid end of a tragic and unacceptable situation."

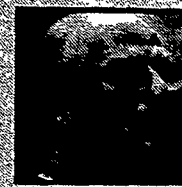
He called for prayers for Bethlehem and for the Franciscan, Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox communities that live in the Church of the Nativity's complex.

Later he told reporters that what had happened at the Church of the Nativity was a "humiliation for the church and a scandal for all humanity."

But someday peace will come to the Holy Land, and that would be a symbol for all humanity, he said.

## Priest faces rape charges

BOSTON (CNS) — As a retired Boston priest who was living in California returned to the Archdiocese of Boston for arraignment on child rape charges, sex abuse charges continued to mount against a Boston priest who died in 1989.



Father Paul R. Shanley In a San Diego court May 3, Father Paul R. Shanley, 71, waived his right to fight extradition to Newton, Mass., on three counts of child rape. Accompanied by Massachusetts authorities, he boarded a plane for Massachusetts May 6.

Meanwhile, at least 40 people from four Catholic parishes have joined in a civil lawsuit against the Boston Archdiocese, alleging that they were sexually abused as children by Father Joseph E. Birmingham, now deceased.

The suit charges that Boston Cardinal Bernard F. Law, Msgr. John Jennings and Bishop John B. McCormack, a former Boston auxiliary who is now head of the Diocese of Manchester, N.H., failed to intervene after being told that Father Birmingham had abused boys and continued to transfer him from parish to parish.

Father Shanley's arrest May 2 in San Diego came after Paul Buse, a 24-year-old former resident of Newton, told authorities that the priest had repeatedly molested him from 1983 to 1989, beginning when Buse was 6. Father Shanley and the archdiocese also are charged in several civil suits, including one by the family of Gregory Ford of Newton. Attorneys in that case forced the archdiocese to release more than 1,600 pages of confidential documents related to Father Shanley.

The archdiocese handed over a first batch of Shanley files to attorney Roderick MacLeish and the Ford family April 5 following a court order issued April 3 by Superior Court Judge Leila Kern. Kern had denied the archdiocese's request to "gag" the documents.

A second set of about 800 pages was handed over April 25 following their discovery at the chancery office in Brighton. They included letters and memos between archdiocesan officials and Father Shanley, and a series of newsletters written by him publicizing the work of his "street" ministry. The documents do not indicate who the recipients of the newsletters were.

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