

VICTIMS OF EX-PRIEST SETTLE FOR \$4 MILLION

CHICAGO (CNS) — Four victims of sexual abuse by former priest Vincent McCaffrey will share in a \$4,015,000 settlement from the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The settlement was announced July 9 by Minnesota-based attorney Jeffrey Anderson at a press conference that included one of the victims, Eddie Vincent, and Barbara Blaine, founder of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.

McCaffrey, 50, was sentenced earlier this year to 20 years in prison for possessing and receiving child pornography. He was suspended from ministry in 1991 and left the priesthood in 1993.

Anderson said the settlements were part of a three-month mediation process with the archdiocese involving several other victims and priests previously identified.

Negotiations over financial settlements and noneconomic measures designed to promote reconciliation and healing are ongoing, he said.

Twins' surgery questioned

John Norton/CNS

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican's top health official said surgeons in Singapore should not have attempted a risky operation — which proved fatal — to separate 29-year-old Iranian twin sisters joined at the head.

"There was no moral obligation to do it," Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragan, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, said July 9 in an Italian newspaper interview. "In the face of the high risk, the operation should not have been performed," he said.

Laleh and Ladan Bijani, the conjoined twins, died July 8 from massive blood loss after a 52-hour operation to separate them.

The twins had spent months preparing for the operation and knew it was highly risky. Some experts gave the procedure a 50-50 chance of success.

Archbishop Lozano said that without making "superficial condemnations" it was important to stress to doctors in such cases that the benefits must be very carefully weighed against the risks.

"When one places human life in danger, there can never be too many preventative questions," the archbishop said.



Reuters/CNS

Friends and members of the Iranian community pray over the caskets of Iranian twins Laleh and Ladan Bijani July 9 in Singapore. The 29-year-old sisters died following a high-risk surgery to separate their conjoined heads.

Meanwhile, a moral theologian at one of Rome's church universities told Vatican Radio he thought the operation did not create any ethical problems.

Redemptorist Father Raphael Gallagher, professor of moral theology at Rome's Alphonsianum, noted that the sisters prepared for the opera-

tion, were aware of the risks and had entrusted themselves to some of the world's top surgeons.

"The medical team and the two women were aware of the possible consequences of the operation. So it doesn't seem to me that the choice to do the operation creates ethical problems," he said.

Justice denies request for restraining order

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Officials of the Diocese of Rochester said they were pleased that a New York State Supreme Court Justice has refused to issue a temporary restraining order that would have stopped renovations of Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral.

On July 15, attorneys representing the City of Rochester, the Diocese of Rochester and the renovation opponents met with Justice Robert J. Lunn, who denied the renovation opponents' request for the order. The order would have stopped cathedral renovations — save roof replacement, asbestos abatement and repair of the parapet.

"We are disappointed that a small group of obstructionists presented yet another obstacle to a process that has been welcomed by an overwhelming number of Sacred Heart parishioners as well as the local neighborhood associations," said Father John Mulligan, Sacred Heart's pastor and a diocesan vicar general.

"The City of Rochester Planning Commission has now twice rendered a decision to deny landmark status

for Sacred Heart. We view that as the correct decision that will enable us to continue our own stewardship over this beloved church, and continue a project that will restore the beauty and grandeur of our cathedral and strengthen the surrounding Maplewood neighborhood."

In addition to the temporary restraining order, opponents asked that Lunn annul the planning commission's two 4-3 votes on June 24 against landmark status for the cathedral's exterior and interior, respectively. In May, Lunn ruled that the commission had to re-examine its October vote denying the cathedral landmark status. Lunn's ruling came in response to a petition filed by the Sacred Heart Preservation Committee, the same group filing the new petition.

In a petition filed July 11, the Sacred Heart Preservation Committee argued that the planning commission failed to comply with the city's landmark ordinance as well as Lunn's May ruling. The petitioners say the commission failed to deliberate on the designation of the cathedral's interior as a landmark and gave undue

weight to "mere neighborhood opposition" to landmark designation.

In his affidavit, diocesan attorney Edward P. Hourihan Jr. argues that "(c)ontrary to the petitioners' unbalanced and selective recapitulation of the Planning Commission's (June) deliberations, the record demonstrates careful review by the Planning Commission and strict adherence to the City landmark ordinance and the Court's decision."

Michael Tedesco, diocesan spokesman, said the latest move by the Sacred Heart Preservation Committee would only add expense to the renovation project.

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