

Diocese pays out \$45,000 settlement

**No lawsuit was filed, but
2 priests are accused of
abusing a man in 1976.**

settlements in recent months.
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By JOE LAMBE
The Kansas City Star

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph has paid \$45,000 to a Kansas City-area man who alleged that two priests sexually abused him in 1976.

The alleged abuse by Thomas Reardon and Thomas O'Brien was unusual in that it involved a 16-year-old boy who was not a Catholic, said the unidentified man's attorney, Sam Wendt.

The settlement also differed in that it was reached last month before a lawsuit was filed. A diocese spokesman said other such settlements have been quietly made in the past, but he did not know how often.

At least a dozen men have sued O'Brien and the diocese, and 14 have sued Reardon and the church. One has settled, and others are moving toward trial.

The diocese spokesman declined further comment, and lawyers for Reardon and O'Brien did not return calls for comment.

Wendt announced the settlement at a Wednesday news conference alongside David Clohessy, director of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests.

The abuse started after a Catholic friend persuaded the boy to attend church at St. Elizabeth in Kansas City, Wendt said, and sometimes one of the priests gave the boy money after sex acts.

Both he and Clohessy urged any other victims of sex abuse by clergy to come forward.

Coming forward treats inner scars that often have festered since childhood, Clohessy said. "The unacknowledged wound never heals."

In November, *The Kansas City Star* reported on widespread allegations that adolescent boys decades ago called Reardon and O'Brien the party priests.

Lawsuits against both detail accusations of rape, sodomy and other sex acts. They allege a pattern of molestation that began in the early 1960s with O'Brien and continued with Reardon through the 1980s.

They contend the priests used their positions to access and prey on youngsters, plying them with alcohol, groping them and sometimes paying them for sex.

As of November, priest abuse cases nationwide had cost the Roman Catholic Church at least \$2.3 billion since 1950, including millions of dollars in