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## Ananova :

### **Church could pay up to \$30 million to alleged sex victims**

Lawyers for the Archdiocese of Boston and alleged paedophile victims of former priest John Geoghan have met in an attempt to finalise a compensation deal.

The deal could give up to \$30 million (£22 million) to 86 people who say they were molested by the now-defrocked Roman Catholic priest.

The tentative agreement was reached late on Monday, according to The Boston Globe.

"All of the parties are working in good faith to reach an agreement and we believe they will continue to do so," said archdiocese spokeswoman Donna Morrissey.

"Our goal is to achieve a fair and just resolution of these cases as soon as possible in the best interest of the victims."

The Globe said the tentative agreement was reached after 11 months of negotiations. It will still need the signatures of all 86 plaintiffs and the 17 defendants, including Cardinal Bernard Law, the archbishop of Boston.

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The 86 plaintiffs would get an average of \$232,000 to \$348,000 each (about £170,000-£250,000), with an arbitrator deciding the amount in each case.

The church has already paid an estimated \$15 million (£11 million) to 100 alleged Geoghan victims since the mid-1990s.

Geoghan was sentenced to nine to 10 years in prison last month for groping a 10-year-old boy in a swimming pool, and faces two more criminal trials. He has been accused of molesting more than 130 children in six parishes over 30 years.

The settlement would be one of the biggest ever reached by the Roman Catholic Church in a US child-molestation case involving a priest.

*Story filed: 02:44 Wednesday 6th March 2002*

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