

Anne Arundel couple claims priest used son in sex fantasy

BALTIMORE (AP) — An Anne Arundel County couple has filed a lawsuit alleging their son was sexually molested by a Roman Catholic priest who forced him to act out religious fantasies and told him a martyred saint had been similarly tortured.

In 1982, when their son was a 13-year-old altar boy at St. Andrew By the Bay Church in Cape St. Claire, he was molested by the Rev. William Q. Simms, who had a history of molesting boys, the lawsuit said.

Simms' history included "dressing them in sexually provocative briefs, and engaging in sexual wrestling, fondling, ritualistic sexual fantasies and other sexually deviant and dangerous and pedophilic behavior," the lawsuit charges.

The lawsuit, which also names

Archbishop William D. Borders and the Baltimore archdiocese, seeks \$9 million in compensatory damages and \$3 million in punitive damages.

The lawsuit lists the parents as Jane and Joseph Doe and their son as John Doe to prevent the victim from being identified. It was filed last week in Baltimore Circuit Court.

Simms is now an administrator with the Archdiocesan Tribunal, a religious court.

A spokesman for the archdiocese and attorneys for the church acknowledged Monday that the boy had been molested, but they insisted that the number of Simms' victims was only two and that the church had responded "immediately" when complaints were made.

Simms repeatedly had the boy

come to the rectory "alone to practice a 'skit' in which he made the plaintiff ... dress up in a sexually provocative female costume and sheer nylon swimsuit," the lawsuit said. The boy was then sexually assaulted and molested, which terrified him and caused physical pain, the suit says.

Simms, who was ordained in 1962, is accused of forcing the child to act out sexual and religious fantasies in which he was told that St. Isaac Jogues had been similarly tortured before his martyrdom. St. Isaac died in 1646 after being tortured by Indians while serving as a missionary in Canada.

Richard O. Beradt, general counsel for the archdiocese, said that when church officials learned Simms had molested the boy, the priest was removed "instantaneous-

ly" and had therapy for about a year at St. Luke Institute in Scotland. He will remain assigned to duties where he has no contact with children, Beradt said.

According to the suit, the archdiocese should have known that Simms had exhibited sexually deviant behavior because when he arrived at Cape St. Claire, he was accompanied by an adolescent boy from his last parish who lived with him at the St. Andrews rectory.

Beradt said an investigation by diocesan officials found no evidence that any boys were molested at the two parishes where the priest had served previously.

"We have no history of Bill Simms having any problem before the complaint and we've been all through this with the family," Beradt said.