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## **Man settles sex-abuse suit with Roman Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth**

Fort Worth Star Telegram  
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A man who accused a priest of sexually abusing him when he was 14 has settled his lawsuit with the [Fort Worth](#) Roman Catholic Diocese.

At the man's request, terms of the settlement were confidential. The suit, filed last year in state district court, accused the Rev. Rudolf Rentería of abusing the boy in the rectory at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Arlington on Mother's Day weekend 1981.

Rentería had denied the allegations. Bishop Kevin Vann, who came to the diocese after Rentería was removed from priestly duties, expressed regret over the matter.

"I am deeply sorry for any sexual abuse that any individual may have endured and suffered by Rentería or any person connected with the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth," Vann said in a statement. "I am deeply ashamed and truly sorry. I pray that healing and reconciliation can be achieved in your life. I have previously stated that such actions are a sin and a crime."

Vann has petitioned the Vatican to defrock Rentería. The request is pending, according to the diocese.

According to the suit, Rentería offered to let the boy spend the night at the rectory. There, Rentería fondled him and attempted anal intercourse, the suit says. An additional report of sexual misconduct dating to 1985 surfaced in 2000, according to the lawsuit, which accused the priest of having an "impulsive sexual attraction to boys."

A 2002 diocese news release describing an incident involving a 14-year-old boy said Rentería was unable to "confirm or deny the incident because of the influence of alcohol."

The man's attorney, Tahira Khan Merritt of Dallas, said then-Bishop Joseph P. Delaney transferred Rentería to parishes in Wichita Falls, Vernon, Lewisville and Fort Worth and "even promoted him to pastor despite the report that he had sexually abused a child."

Rentería last served as a chaplain at St. Paul's Medical Center in Dallas when he was removed in 2002 by Delaney -- after the man's father contacted him.

The father, who is not being named to protect his son's identity, said he recently received a letter of apology from Vann. It was the first apology his family has received, he said. "What was difficult was they used the letter of the law to protect themselves, that being the statute of limitations ... rather than doing what's right," he said.

He said his son has suffered emotional problems because of the abuse. He urged anyone abused by a priest to contact police first.

-- [Darren Barbee](#)