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## Lawsuit says St. Louis priest abused boy in 1980s

Robert Patrick

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Members of the Missouri Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests held a news conference on Wednesday, July 8 to address the alleged offenders in the St. Louis area and called on Bishop Mitchell Rozanski to publish their names on the Archdiocese website. Photo by Chris Kohley, [ckohley@post-dispatch.com](mailto:ckohley@post-dispatch.com)

Chris Kohley

**ST. LOUIS** — A federal lawsuit says the Archdiocese of St. Louis has failed to remove a De Soto priest who has had four accusations of sexual abuse against him.

A man identified in the suit only as John Doe contends the Rev. Alexander R. Anderson sexually abused him as a boy in the late 1980s at St. Joseph's Home for Boys in St. Louis, where Doe was living at the time and Anderson was chaplain.

Anderson fondled Doe and later took him to his den for what the children called “late night with Father,” where “the touching became discussions of masturbation” and forced sexual acts, the suit says.

In a statement, officials with the archdiocese said a “third-party independent investigative team” found the allegations against Anderson “to be without merit. Fr. Anderson has denied the allegations, and the Archdiocese of St. Louis supports Fr. Anderson in defending himself against false allegations,” the statement said.

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The boys’ home was closed in 2001, court filings show. Anderson is currently pastor of **St. Rose of Lima** parish in De Soto.

The suit was originally filed in February by Doe, who is serving a 14-year federal prison term for bank fraud, conspiracy and other charges, court records show. The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, **announced the lawsuit this week** and provided a copy of an amended lawsuit filed by a Kansas City lawyer, Rebecca Randles.

The suit alleges that Doe tried to make Anderson stop his abuse but was unsuccessful, and complained to a nun and in writing to the archbishop. He repressed the memories until his sentencing for an unspecified criminal offense, at which time a letter from a relative triggered the memories, the suit says.

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SNAP said it is asking **newly installed St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski** to review the file on every accused cleric, add dozens of names of priests and others to the list of those “credibly accused” in the archdiocese, and warn the community about what the group calls the “most dangerous dozen” clerics.

At least three other boys have made accusations against Anderson, but church officials did nothing, according to the suit. SNAP said church officials have said one accuser of Anderson later recanted.

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A second made an accusation against Anderson, who denied the claims at Sunday Mass in April 2002, when he was pastor of Most Sacred Heart Church in Eureka. “I want you to know, plainly and simply, that I did not abuse this child and have not sexually, physically or emotionally abused any child,” he said. He added that his offer to step down was rebuffed by church officials.

Anderson sued that accuser for slander later that year, and his accuser countersued. The lawsuit was settled in 2004 with neither side apologizing or withdrawing their accusations. Church officials agreed to pay \$8,000 for past counseling and \$14,500 for future medical costs in what they called an act of charity.

Monsignor Richard Stika, vicar general of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, said at the time that Anderson was a chaplain for nuns, not students, and had little or no access to individual students.

St. Louis prosecutors also looked into the accusation, saying in 2002 that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute before the statute of limitations expired.

A church panel in 2004 deemed a third accuser’s claims “not credible.”

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