

CLOSURE IN BOSTON

On September 9, the Archdiocese of Boston agreed to pay \$85 million to settle the hundreds of lawsuits filed against it by persons saying they were abused by priests.

It took the leadership of Archbishop Sean O'Malley to bring closure to the scandal that he inherited. By working tirelessly with victims and their lawyers, he was able to seal an agreement that had escaped the reach of his predecessors.

Most of the money will come from mortgaging churches and other buildings in parishes scheduled to be closed. The insurance companies are not cooperating and it remains to be seen whether they ever will; the archdiocese may be forced to sue them. No matter, none of the money will come from parish funds or from Catholic Charities. Moreover, the Knights of Columbus helped the archdiocese avoid filing bankruptcy by lending \$38 million to cover daily expenses.

Now that the lawsuits have been settled, attention will turn to reform. But not everyone agrees what reforms are necessary.

For example, no sooner had the settlement been announced when Mary Jo Bane, a left-wing Harvard professor, wondered aloud about Archbishop O'Malley by commenting, "We don't know how he is going to be theologically." Thus did she suggest that perhaps the newly appointed archbishop might (she would say "should") deviate from established Church teachings.

In short, the scandal may be over but the crisis is not.