

# **Boston Archdiocese, Daughters of St. Paul in dispute over pension funds**

BOSTON - The Boston Archdiocese and members of the Daughters of St. Paul were scheduled to go before a mediator March 29 to resolve a number of issues in a dispute over pension funds.

The religious community said that for five years, it has tried to withdraw from the archdiocesan pension fund for lay employees so that it can establish its own pension plan for its lay employees.

According to The Associated Press, the sisters filed a lawsuit in December alleging that the pension fund's trustees, including Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, did not give them a full accounting of what their portion of the fund is.

The sisters have asked the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts to order the fund's trustees to provide a full accounting or rule that the sisters were never part of the plan and must be reimbursed for their contributions. The sisters also requested the archdiocese pay their legal fees.

The sisters believe they are owed \$1.37 million based on the value of the assets four years ago. A Boston Globe report said the archdiocese has declined to say what the value is, leaving that topic for mediation.

Terrence Donilon, archdiocesan secretary for communications and public affairs, told Catholic News Service in an email March 23 that the archdiocese has been working "for some time" with the Daughters of St. Paul "regarding their request to withdraw from the lay pension plan."

Donilon said archdiocesan officials believed they were "making progress toward resolving any outstanding concerns" and found the December lawsuit "unexpected."

Since the suit was filed, he said, the archdiocese reached an agreement with the

Daughters of St. Paul “on a number of issues.” He also noted that the archdiocese has “a long-standing and good relationship” with the sisters. “We will resolve this disagreement through mediation and continue to work closely together in the future for the good of the church.”

The Daughters of St. Paul is an international community with about 60 sisters in Boston and 50 lay employees. The sisters have a special commitment to spreading the Gospel message through publishing, book and media centers, websites, apps, music, media literacy presentations, radio programs, workshops and media retreats.

Last year, the Archdiocese of Boston announced plans to freeze its pension plan for about 10,000 lay employees, saying it hoped to stabilize the pension fund and make sure employees kept their benefits.

Although the pension fund was fully funded in 2007, it suffered during the economic downturn in 2008. Beginning next year, the archdiocese will offer retirees an alternative, a 401(k)-style plan, similar to what some other dioceses and corporations are providing.