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"Sex charges cause money problems for archdiocese—

"New Mexico parishioners are being asked to give what they can to save the church from bankruptcy," in the December 22, 1993 Times reported:

"ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—Faced with dozens of sexual molestation claims against priests in New Mexico, the Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe has told parishioners that it might have to file for bankruptcy.

"It has asked parishioners to help defray millions of dollars in settlement costs and legal expenses to keep it from becoming the first American archdiocese to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

"In a letter read from pulpits or posted on bulletin boards in 91 parishes and missions throughout New Mexico on Sunday, Archbishop Michael Sheehan noted that with victims of sexual misconduct demanding up to \$50-million in damages and the church's insurers balking, bankruptcy loomed.

"Acknowledging that he was taking a 'drastic' step, he asked each parish to contribute whatever cash and property it could rather than have them seized by the courts."

"Church officials in Albuquerque estimate that over a 30-year period as many as 200 people were abused by 45 to 50 priests. The archdiocese currently is defending itself in 41 separate lawsuits. Another 20 people have said they have claims."

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