

Three men who claim they were abused by Catholic clergy in America have succeeded in naming the Vatican as sole defendant in a lawsuit and are hoping to force Pope Benedict XVI to give evidence in the case.

The 6th US circuit court of appeal recently ruled that although the Holy See, as a sovereign state, was immune from most lawsuits, the plaintiffs could proceed with their argument that its officials were involved in a deliberate effort to cover up evidence of sexual abuse by American priests.

Their case centres on a 1962 directive from the Vatican telling church officials to hide sex abuse complaints against clergy.

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