



Office of the Cardinal

June 13, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

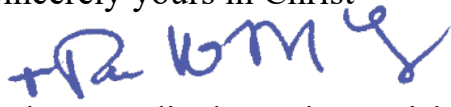
In February of last year, I wrote to you indicating that it was highly likely that the Diocese of San Diego would enter into bankruptcy as an effort to achieve the settlement of the approximately 450 legal claims that have been brought to court seeking compensation for victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and lay employees over the past eighty years. For the past year, the Diocese has held substantive and helpful negotiations with the attorneys representing the victims of abuse, and I, in collaboration with the leadership of the Diocese, have come to the conclusion that this is the moment to enter formally into bankruptcy and continue negotiations as part of the bankruptcy process.

The Diocese faces two compelling moral claims in approaching the settlement process: the need for just compensation for victims of sexual abuse and the need to continue the Church's mission of education, pastoral service and outreach to the poor and the marginalized. Bankruptcy offers the best pathway to achieve both. It provides a framework to achieve equity among the differing claims of victims, while also establishing a fund to compensate past victims of sexual abuse who come forward in the future. It will also assure that the Diocese of San Diego, which paid \$198 million for claims of sexual abuse in 2007, will achieve a definite conclusion to its legal liability for past claims of sexual abuse in the settlement we hope to reach in bankruptcy.

Only the Diocese will be filing for bankruptcy. The parishes, parochial schools and high schools will not. But it is clear that as part of providing appropriate compensation to past victims of the sexual abuse of minors, both the parishes and high schools will have to contribute substantially to the ultimate settlement in order to bring finality to the liability they face.

As we move through this difficult process during the coming year, it is essential that we all keep in mind that it was the moral failure of those who directly abused children and teenagers, and the equally great moral failure of those who reassigned them or were not vigilant, that led to the psychological and spiritual wounds that still crush the hearts and souls of so many men and women in our midst. The tremendous strides we have made in the past twenty years to protect minors in the Church and beyond cannot begin to mitigate the enormous moral responsibility that I, as your bishop, and the entire Catholic community continue to bear. May God never let this shame pass from our sight, and may God's tenderness envelop the innocent children and teenagers who were victimized.

Sincerely yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. McElroy", with a small cross symbol at the end.

Robert Cardinal McElroy, Bishop of San Diego