

Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

January 16, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have all been devastated by revelations of the stories from those who have been hurt by clergy sexual abuse. Victims, survivors and their loved ones have personally shared their heartbreaking stories with me. I have sensed their anger, their sorrow, and their intense sense of betrayal because of these unthinkable evil deeds. I deeply regret their suffering. I hope to do all I can to assist them towards healing.

We must come together to care for all those who have been hurt during this tragic time in our Church's history. As announced in October, we are continuing to work with those representing victims/survivors to make sure we are doing all we can to prevent sexual abuse of minors, as well as to be instruments of healing for those who have been abused.

To that end, I have directed that a petition for a Chapter 11 Reorganization of the Archdiocese Corporation be filed in the United States Bankruptcy Court of the District of Minnesota. Please note: this filing does not include parishes and schools.

I make this decision because I believe it is the fairest and most helpful recourse for those victims/survivors who have made claims against us. Reorganization will allow the finite resources of the Archdiocese to be distributed equitably among all the victims/survivors. It will also permit the Archdiocese to provide essential services required to continue its mission within this 12 county district.

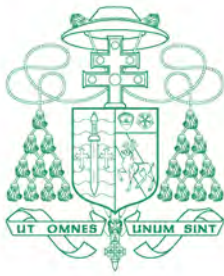
It must be pointed out that this action will not in any way avoid our responsibilities to those who have been affected by clerical sexual abuse. This is not an attempt to silence victims or deny them justice in court. On the contrary, we want to respond positively in compensating them for their suffering. Plaintiffs' attorneys and I are in agreement that priority should be given to providing resources for the victims/survivors as opposed to spending those resources on professional fees.

We have made this decision thoughtfully, prayerfully and collaboratively. I have consulted experts in the field of bankruptcy, finance, insurance, civil and canon law, law enforcement, child sexual abuse and victim advocacy. They have advised me that Chapter 11 Reorganization is the best workable structure for resolution of victims' claims. I have received the approval of the consultative boards of the Archdiocese, namely the Archdiocesan Corporate Board, Archdiocesan Finance Council, and the College of Consultors. They agree Reorganization is the best forum in which a negotiated resolution can be established that fairly and adequately compensates claimants and permits the Archdiocese to continue its important mission of evangelization.

Documents included in our Reorganization filing provide detailed financial information about archdiocesan corporation assets. Much of this information has been made public already in our fiscal year 2013 and 2014 financial reports. During the coming weeks and months, additional documents will be filed in court. We will continue to post relevant documents on the archdiocesan website, www.archspm.org and will include more information in *The Catholic Spirit*.

Finally, the men and women of my team join me in making this pledge to you, the faithful of the Archdiocese:

- We will keep our focus on creating and maintaining safe environments. In short, the protection of minors is a top priority, and it informs our every action and decision.



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- We are making every effort to resolve these issues through collaboration, cooperation, and reconciliation.
- All resources that are not essential to core ministries will be directed toward these efforts.
- We will care for those who have been harmed by clergy sexual abuse. We will continue to facilitate the healing process for our local Church in order to restore trust with the Catholic faithful, who are counting on the clergy and leadership of the Church to make virtuous decisions for the well-being of the Body of Christ.
- And we will work hard to restore trust with our clergy, who are dedicated men deserving of our confidence and respect.

We still have a long journey ahead as we restore trust through humility, competency and transparency, in order to respond with compassion to all those who have been hurt, to continue to atone for sins that have been committed, and to foster healing. The filing for Reorganization marks another important step on our way forward as a local Church.

Let us place our trust in Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, and in his holy mother, Mary. May they continue to be our guardians as well as our inspiration and source of confidence.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially yours in Christ,

+ *John C. Nienstedt*

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis