



DIOCESE OF WINONA - ROCHESTER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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November 18, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As your Bishop, I write to painfully acknowledge the past sexual abuse of children by members of our diocesan clergy. At this time, there are 121 pending claims against the Diocese, in regards to clergy, all of whom are either deceased or have been removed from ministry, laicized, and no longer function in any priestly capacity in the Diocese.

Together, we are committed to creating an environment of healing for these victims and their families, as well as for all of us in our Diocesan community.

As part of this healing, it is incumbent upon us to create a path forward that provides just and equitable compensation for the victims of abuse. This path forward must include public acknowledgment of their pain and an apology for it as well as financial compensation.

After much prayerful consideration, and after consultation with the College of Consultors, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Presbyteral Council and the Trustees of the Diocesan Civil Corporation Board, I have accepted the recommendation that the Diocese file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy no later than the end of this month. This legal process will allow us to reorganize diocesan finances in order to provide financial compensation to the survivors and to ensure that the daily operations and ministries of the Diocese will continue uninterrupted.

We are cooperating with the lawyers who are providing representation to the survivors of abuse, believing that this cooperation will help us move forward toward reconciliation and healing.

Please be assured that for more than 15 years, important measures to protect our children have been in place in our Diocese. We continue to take steps to keep our children safe, including running more than 30,500 criminal background checks on clergy, employees, and volunteers; training facilitators of the VIRTUS® "Protecting God's Children for Adults Program;" and hosting more than 1,200 VIRTUS® program sessions that have trained over 12,000 adults across our Diocese.

My prayers go out to those who have experienced sexual abuse, and I stand committed to providing support and healing. I also pray for God's grace during this difficult period, and for guidance and strength from the Holy Spirit. It is my hope that through this process we will move toward healing and be strengthened as one Diocesan family.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. John M. Quinn

Bishop of Winona-Rochester