



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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September 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

On September 12th of this year it will be two years since the Diocese filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code in order to address in the best and fairest manner possible the now approximately 475 claims (this is the number of claims, not the number of persons accused) brought against the Diocese by the survivors of childhood sexual abuse by clergy, religious and laity.

Over these past two years, all parties concerned have been seriously affected, certainly the survivors, our priests and others in diocesan ministries who have had no part in these egregious acts, but who daily continue to serve the faithful, and truly, my sisters and brothers, all of you rightly scandalized and your faith shaken by those who violated a sacred trust and betrayed their promise to serve faithfully Our Lord and His Church. Naturally everyone wants a resolution, especially the survivors. Bringing this process to a conclusion has been a long and arduous task further exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. Nonetheless, seven mediation sessions were conducted with the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors appointed by the Office of the United States Trustee, which comprises several representative survivors, together with the insurers, and the Diocese. Sadly, these sessions held virtually did not result in a settlement agreement.

To move the process along, at a hearing conducted by telephone on July 9th last, United States Bankruptcy Judge Paul Warren ordered the parties concerned to return to in-person mediation with the United States Bankruptcy Judge Gregg Zive in Reno, Nevada, where Judge Zive resides. However, because of recent surges of the Coronavirus, especially in localities such as Reno, Nevada, the mediation will continue as scheduled from August 31st to September 2nd, but alternate arrangements have been made to conduct the mediation. I ask for your prayers that these days will be productive and clear a path toward a final resolution, with compassion and justice for the survivors, while also ensuring that the sacramental, spiritual, catechetical, pastoral and charitable ministries of the Diocese continue for the welfare of all our diocesan family.

I am so very sorry and I again apologize to the survivors of childhood sexual abuse for the pain, anxiety, heartache and even loss of faith that they, as well as their families, have suffered over these years. While renewing my apology especially to our survivors, I pray that we reach a conclusion that provides for them and their families some hope, renewed faith and restores their belief that Jesus never abandons us, as He is

ever faithful to His promise, “And behold, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20).

This month I reach seventy-five years of age. In accordance with canon 401, § 1 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I will submit my resignation from the office of Bishop of Rochester to His Holiness, Pope Francis. It then is entirely the decision of Pope Francis regarding his acceptance of this resignation and when it will become effective. Several other Diocesan Bishops in the United States are continuing past seventy-five years of age until the Holy Father appoints their successors. We all await and accept in obedience the will of our Holy Father. I would hope to be able to see the Diocese through to the completion of the bankruptcy process, thereby relieving my successor of this painful situation. His will be the task of rebuilding and, I pray, a new time will dawn and this very sad episode of our diocesan history is passed, but always praying daily for all who suffered through this period and taking every precaution that the grievous sins of the past are not repeated.

In the end, I place my trust in the Lord and in His Vicar on Earth, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, repeating the words of our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, “Thy will be done.” (Luke 1:38).

Asking your prayers and begging the intercession of God’s Mother and our Mother, and our diocesan patron, Saint John Fisher, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

+ *Salvatore R. Matano*

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester*