



February 15, 2023

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Three years ago, I announced that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg was filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protections. That difficult decision was made as a means of stabilizing the Diocese's financial situation, while at the same time allowing us to make restitution to survivors of clergy sexual abuse and continue our ministries.

This morning, I attended a hearing at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, presided over by the Honorable Henry W. Van Eck. During this hearing, the Joint Plan of Reorganization for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg was confirmed. This confirmation brings our reorganization process, which started on February 19, 2020, to a conclusion.

This was a difficult, emotional process for many, most especially the abuse survivors who served on the Tort Claimants Committee and those that aided them in their duties. I particularly wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to these survivors, who represented all survivors who presented a claim during this process. The difficult and brave work they completed was vital in achieving a resolution. While it is my prayer that the Trust established through this process will bring some level of restitution for the abuse each survivor has endured, I acknowledge that no amount of money will ever make reparation for these horrific and sinful acts.

As you will read in the pages of the Plan, the Diocese recognizes and is fully committed to addressing the horrors of clergy abuse. In addition to establishing the Trust, we will continue to offer mental, spiritual and pastoral counseling to survivors, if they so desire. We will work tirelessly so all survivors know that the Church cares for them. Our foremost concern will be their emotional and spiritual welfare and we will continue to offer survivors immediate, loving and compassionate care. Through our new Youth Protection protocols, which enhance our current policies, we will increase our educational efforts on recognizing potential child abuse and coming together, as one Catholic community, to support those that have been harmed by members of the Church.

I will never be able to adequately express my deep sorrow for the pain these survivors have endured. All I can say is how profoundly sorry I am and I pray that our actions will demonstrate our commitment to supporting them.

When this process started, I know that it was very difficult for our clergy and the faithful as well. There was a lot of uncertainty about the future. But our clergy and the faithful responded to the reorganization with grace and an understanding that this path was the only path forward at that time. It's difficult to put into words how grateful I am to our clergy and staff, and most especially to the Catholic faithful. Each of you supported and assisted our Diocese through this difficult process and played a part in helping us to secure a more stable financial future.

Three years ago, I said our goals were to stabilize our financial situation and provide just and fair compensation to survivors of clergy abuse, while continuing to maintain our charitable, spiritual and educational ministries. Now, as our Diocese enters this new chapter, I believe we have reached these goals.

As we implement the agreements detailed in our Plan in the coming months, know that we will continue to remain vigilant in protecting all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care. The road ahead may not always be easy, but through our faith in Christ and by working together, I am confident that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg has a bright future.

In Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer, DD, JCL  
Bishop of Harrisburg