



Office of Communications

4800 Union Deposit Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710
(717) 657-4804

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

www.hbgdiocese.org

Immediate Release

February 15, 2023

Diocese Contact: Rachel Bryson

(717) 657-4804 ex. 235

(717) 300-0146 (cell)

rbryson@hbgdiocese.org

www.hbgdiocese.org

Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg Completes Reorganization Process

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Today, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg (RCDH) announced that its Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization has been approved by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. With this approval, the RCDH has emerged from bankruptcy, nearly three years from when this process started. The Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg, offered the following statement on the completion of this process:

“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, myself and our legal counsel 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; you represented all survivors who presented a claim during this process and the difficult work you 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 reparations 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 you in your path to healing.

“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 institute 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 have faith the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg has a bright future.”

With the plan approved, the RCDH and related entities will establish a Survivor Compensation Trust and provide funding to the Trust in an amount equal to \$7.5 million. The settling insurers will contribute an additional \$10.75 million, bringing the total Trust amount to \$18.25 million. This Trust will provide financial restitution for survivors of clergy sexual abuse. According to the plan, the Trust will be established by early March. More details related to the Trust are included in the Plan, which is on file with the Bankruptcy Court and on the Diocesan website. Once established, a Trust administrator, and not the Diocese, will determine compensation amounts and claim eligibility for abuse survivors.

The RCDH filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code in February 2020. More than 60 timely filed proofs of claim from clergy abuse survivors were received during the reorganization process. The move to declare bankruptcy came after years of financial hardship, which was exacerbated by the Grand Jury investigation and subsequent lawsuits, and after every attempt to scale back operations, including reducing overhead, were unsuccessful.

The RCDH has a zero-tolerance policy regarding child abuse and has passed every audit related to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* since 2002. In 2019, the Diocese’s independent Survivor Compensation Program assisted 111 survivors, for a total financial commitment of \$12,784,450.

As plans for the Trust are finalized in the coming weeks, the Diocese will provide updates to our website.

###

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg was established on March 3, 1868. It covers 15 counties in south and central Pennsylvania, is home to 89 parishes and 35 Catholic schools, and has over 200,000 Catholics.