



# Diocese of Davenport

WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

*News*

*For Immediate Release*

## Fax Cover Sheet

**DATE:** October 10, 2006  
**TO:** Media  
**FROM:** Deacon David Montgomery **PHONE:** 563-324-1912 ext 230  
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**RE:** The Diocese of Davenport Files for Chapter 11 Reorganization

**Please Note: In-person interviews are not being granted. You may call or e-mail with questions.**

From (Most Rev.) Wm E. Franklin, Bishop of Davenport:

Today, the Diocese of Davenport is standing in the moment of an historic event. In spite of all the good work by the people of the Diocese to carry on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, both in the past and present, we are at a crossroads due to the action and inaction of a few people that has caused a great tragedy to the lives of so many in our Church.

The sexual abuse of children by anyone is wrong. It violates the very foundation of love and trust that is at the heart of our Church. Choosing to ignore these horrendous acts against our children is also a violation of love and trust. I continue to apologize for the harm done to children and their families that was caused by the sexual abuse by some of the priests in the Diocese of Davenport decades ago. No amount of apology is enough. My apology remains sincere.

During my ordination as bishop, I resolved myself to show kindness and compassion in the name of the Lord to the poor and to strangers and to all who are in need. My concern must always be for the victims of abuse who are in need of the healing grace of God. I have searched for ways to adequately respond to the twenty-five outstanding claims of sexual abuse against the deceased Msgr. Thomas Feeney, William F. Wiebler and Msgr. Carl H. Meinberg and retired Bishop Lawrence D. Soens, all of which occurred thirty to forty years ago.

Because the settlement demands are greater than the available assets of the Diocese, we cannot continue on our present path. To do so would mean that victims who have already made claims through their attorney would consume the remaining assets of the Diocese, leaving no money left for other victims who have not yet made the decision to come forward of whom the Diocese would like to care for as well. In justice, I want to reach out not only to those who have come forward, but also to those who will have the opportunity to do so.

It is my desire to respond to all victims of clergy sexual abuse in the most appropriate way and to help them in the healing process. Because of our limited resources, I must make a very difficult decision. After much consultation with the Diocese of Davenport Corporate Board and Finance Council, the College of Consultants, Diocesan Directors, and our legal counsel, I have asked that a petition for a Chapter 11 reorganization be filed in the Iowa District of the United States Bankruptcy Court. Along with this petition, I have also requested that a plan of reorganization for the Diocese of Davenport be filed that will be considered by the creditors and the Bankruptcy Court.



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I and the leadership of the Diocese believe that, as difficult as this decision is, it provides the best opportunity for healing and for the just and fair compensation of those who have suffered sexual abuse by clergy in our Diocese, those who have come forward and those who have not yet decided to come forward. While providing just and fair compensation to victims/survivors, we also believe that the decision to reorganize is the best way in which we will be able to continue the Church's mission in the Diocese of Davenport.

In the coming days, more information will be made available and shared regarding the specifics of this reorganization process. I will do my best to keep you informed as the process continues. The pain and suffering by survivors of abuse will not end with the reorganization of the Diocese. The clergy abuse scandal has impacted everyone in some way: victims, laity, priests and religious. I pray that with the decision announced today, a new path toward healing can begin for everyone.

I ask for your continued prayers for the victims/survivors and their families. Please pray for me and for all who are involved in this reorganization process. Please pray for healing in our Diocese. Let us continue to trust that the Lord will guide us through this difficult time in our history.