



A PASTORAL STATEMENT

To the Pastors and People of the Diocese of San Diego

Today the Diocese of San Diego, along with the Diocese of San Bernardino, reached a settlement with some 144 people who have filed lawsuits regarding sexual abuse. For 111 cases the Diocese of San Diego will be paying \$77,071,350 and our insurance carrier, Catholic Mutual, will be paying \$75,650,000, for a total of \$152,721,350. In addition, we will be paying \$30,269,098 for 22 cases involving members of religious orders, part of which we hope to recover from the communities. The Diocese of San Bernardino, with help from Catholic Mutual, will be paying \$15,134,552 for 11 cases.

The total settlement for the Dioceses of San Diego and San Bernardino and seven religious communities amounts to \$198,125,000. It covers all 144 cases ranging from 1938 to 1993, with the majority occurring in the 1960's and 70's.

To realize this settlement, we have found it necessary to petition for release from bankruptcy court. We filed for Chapter 11 reorganization in the hope that we could accomplish a fair and equitable compensation for all of the victims of abuse without disrupting the core mission of the Church, especially in the life of our parishes and schools. Since this effort failed, we have accepted a plan for the compensation of victims, even though the total settlement amount actually takes us beyond available resources and will result in some damaging consequences for the mission of the Church in this diocese for a number of years. In resolving the financial ramifications of this settlement parish assets and contributions designated for specific diocesan ministries and programs or projects will be respected.

We knew from the outset that the level of compensation initially offered for the lawsuits would be a point of negotiation within the bankruptcy process, just as it had been before bankruptcy. In time, an amended plan of reorganization would have been filed with a higher offer of compensation.

Some have accused the diocese of engaging in delay tactics in order to avoid our responsibility to victims. I want to assure you, on the contrary, that we have done our best all along the way to bring this matter to conclusion with justice for all involved, but many forces beyond our control have complicated the process.

Hopefully, the settlement that has been accomplished will serve to begin a healing process, especially for the victims of abuse, but also for the Church. Once again, I want to apologize to those abused and their families and, in the name of the Church, to beg their forgiveness.

All of us in the Church must continue our efforts to insure that the Church is a safe and happy place for children and young people. And, we must embrace together the challenge we face for reorganization and renewal.

September 7, 2007

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert H. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Bishop of San Diego

AN OVERVIEW

This settlement is one more chapter, and not the last chapter, expressing our commitment in the Diocese of San Diego to address and to put an end to the sexual abuse of children in the Church and in society.

Over the past five years, we have been responding to people claiming sexual abuse by priests and others in the Church. Pastoral resolution has been accomplished with more than 40 victims of abuse; about 20 of these have accepted professional counseling; about 30 received financial compensation.

I have repeatedly invited victims of sexual abuse to meet privately with me in order that I might reach out to them personally. More than 20 have accepted this invitation, almost always with great benefit.

The diocese has developed and is effectively implementing a *Safe Environment Program* in all of our parishes and schools.

We have an updated *Policy on Sexual Abuse by Church Ministers* in which we pledge ourselves to the prevention of abuse, and to be open, accountable and transparent in responding to it.

We have become painfully aware of the tragic plight of victims, and we continue to invite any victims of abuse to come forward and to accept our offer of help toward healing and reconciliation.

Once again, I apologize to victims of abuse by ministers of the Church in the Diocese of San Diego. I apologize, as well, to their families and friends who have been affected by these crimes and this abuse of power. I am very, very sorry for the suffering we have caused them, and I pray that they will walk with God for a renewed life.