



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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September 5, 2025

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

On September 5, 2025, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of New York, The Honorable Paul R. Warren, United States Bankruptcy Judge, presiding, signed an Order approving and confirming the 8<sup>th</sup> Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization for The Diocese of Rochester. This is a significant step in bringing our Chapter 11 filing to a conclusion. Now that the Plan has received Court approval, the Diocese and the other involved parties will be working expeditiously to ensure that its settlement provisions can be effectuated and implemented as soon as possible. We expect that these final steps will be completed in the coming weeks. The total settlement amount provided for in the Plan is \$246,350,000.00, with \$55,000,000.00 funded by contributions from the Diocese of Rochester and its affiliated entities and the remaining amount funded by insurers.

When the Diocese filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code on September 12, 2019, it was not anticipated that this would be a six-year process. Despite this lengthy process, bankruptcy was the only means possible to assure that *all* survivors would be justly compensated, and the best and fairest course of action for the continued mission of the Diocese, its parishes and related entities. Nonetheless, I am particularly conscious that these years of waiting have added to the suffering and pain of those sexually abused and whose trust was betrayed. Betrayal is a harsh word, but its effects are far more harsh. With profound sadness, I apologize to the survivors, the victims of such sinful and tragic acts for which they were not responsible. The Diocese has accepted responsibility for the damage caused by abuse. I ardently pray that this conclusion will bring to the survivors, and to our Diocesan family, peace, healing, tranquility, and, please God, a renewed restoration of faith in Jesus Christ, who never abandons us, especially in our darkest hours, and heals hurts where humanity fails. I have been and will continue to be available to meet with the survivors who so wish to offer my personal support.

I also thank God for you, my dear sisters and brothers, who have remained faithful in this unprecedented tribulation, which has tested, and even wounded, our faith. How well we understand the need for Jesus to help us carry our crosses. Everything we celebrate in faith points to Jesus, especially present in the Most Holy Eucharist. Bankruptcy is a judicial and legal process with which the Diocese has cooperated fully. However, in all these lengthy and complex proceedings I have been so gratefully mindful of your prayers and support, your deep faith to cross over the thresholds of our churches to encounter Jesus Christ in that Sacred Host who embraces us even as some called to serve Him failed to reveal His love and presence and sadly alienated our dear brothers and sisters from our faith communities. Let us always pray for these brothers and sisters without ceasing.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, I also rely upon the virtue of hope, the hope which transformed the tragedy of Golgotha into the joy of Easter Sunday, Jesus Christ conquering even death itself! I pray our survivors and their families find hope in this resolution and can continue to rebuild their lives with the same courage they have exhibited in this entire process.

I pray for hope in the hearts of all our people as we begin a new chapter in our Diocese with the firm conviction and dedication to the mission entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ and to do everything possible to assure this very sad period in our Diocesan history will never again be repeated. As I wrote in my August 2019 letter to you: “Our Diocese has a steadfast record of responding earnestly ... when victims have come forth. I have welcomed the opportunity to meet with victims to offer my personal apology for all they have endured, to encourage them to continue their relationship with Our Lord and, as Saint Paul encouraged, to not allow any human being to separate them from the love of Jesus. (Cf. Romans 8:38-39).” And I reaffirm what I wrote in that same letter: “Our safe environment protocols have been firmly in place for several years, especially since the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was approved in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.” Every year the *Charter* requires an independent audit and each year the Diocese has been found compliant; most recently, the Diocese was found compliant in Fall 2024. The Diocese has not received a contemporaneous report of sexual abuse of a minor since 2006. But in no way does this mitigate or diminish our efforts to create a safe, faith-filled environment for our children, one that radiates hope in Jesus, hope that is real and lasting in their lives. In the name of our Diocese, I condemn the acts of the perpetrators of child sexual abuse and affirm the Diocese’s commitment to the protection of children. We are strongly committed to the emotional, physical, spiritual and moral wellbeing of all our members. Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.

Sadly, over these six years I have written often on this subject and I realize and accept that these words can seem so hollow, something obligatory for positive “public relations,” rather than genuine pastoral and spiritual concern for all from which they emanate. I regret that this letter will be so received by some but my words are heartfelt. Nonetheless, I must rely upon the Good Lord to make up for the inadequacy of my message and above all to bring His peace and joy to a situation that has been so very overwhelming, and in some cases extinguishing the flame of faith.

As we go forward, please pray for our many priests who have served and continue to serve so faithfully. They have seen the beauty of their vocation they so cherish terribly damaged. At the same time, they do have a genuine shepherd’s heart for the survivors of abuse and have been, in some instances, ministers to them. How much they, too, wish to bind these wounds and heal these broken hearts. To be a part of the sufferings of others helps us to empathize with the wounds of all our sisters and brothers and how much they look to us for consolation. May we never turn consolation into further suffering and betray our very vocation to reveal the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

For those who have committed these grievous acts, I entrust them to Jesus, the final judge, and I pray they have acknowledged their offenses and used their remaining years to seek His mercy and have prayed fervently for those whom they have hurt.

Assuring you of my prayers and asking a memento in your good prayers, I remain, while invoking the intercession of Our Mother Mary and our Diocesan Patron, Saint John Fisher,

Devotedly yours in Christ,

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