

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

320 CATHEDRAL STREET • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201 • 410-547-5437 • FAX: 410-547-8234

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 29, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I recently shared with you, as a result of a new law that takes effect October 1st the Archdiocese of Baltimore faces a great number of lawsuits of historic cases of child sexual abuse that were previously barred by Maryland law. After consulting with numerous lay leaders and the clergy of the Archdiocese, I have made the decision I believe will best allow the Archdiocese both to equitably compensate victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and ensure the local Church can continue its mission and ministries. Thus, the Archdiocese of Baltimore has filed for Chapter 11 reorganization.

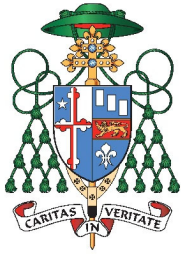
This announcement will no doubt raise several questions and concerns that I will strive to address today and over the coming months. Before I do so, however, I must pause to offer my heartfelt and enduring apology for the Church's past failings. We cannot and will never forget the devastation caused by some ministers of the Church.

I acknowledge that no apology, compensation, or knowledge of our present-day accountability measures will necessarily lead to healing for victim survivors, nor repair the harm they suffered. To be sure, conversations with victim-survivors have taught me that neither I nor the Archdiocese can undo what was taken from them. At the same time, the Church cannot and will not abandon its moral responsibility to assist victims and accompany them on their journeys.

Chapter 11 is one of two types of bankruptcy. With an approved plan under Chapter 11, the Archdiocese will be reorganized, victim-survivors will be equitably compensated, and the Church will continue in its mission and ministries. This is different from Chapter 7 bankruptcy where an organizations sell all of their assets to satisfy creditors and shutter their doors.

We expect that our reorganization will involve several steps over the next two to three years. Generally speaking, shortly after today's filing, the bankruptcy court will begin to accept claims from victim-survivors for a specified period of time. The Archdiocese and victim-survivors will then enter negotiations with the hope of agreeing to a plan that includes a trust fund to provide compensation. If a plan is approved by the bankruptcy court, no future claims for past cases of abuse can be brought against the Church. Additional information on the process, including answers to frequently asked questions is posted on our Archdiocesan website: www.archbalt.org.

Chapter 11 reorganization is the best path forward to compensate equitably all victim-survivors, given the Archdiocese's limited financial resources, which would have otherwise been exhausted on litigation. Staggering legal fees and large settlements or jury awards for a few victim-survivors would have depleted our financial resources, leaving the vast majority of victim-survivors without compensation, while ending ministries that families across Maryland rely on for material and spiritual support.



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The Church's efforts to eradicate the scourge of child sexual abuse from our parishes, schools and ministries and to provide care and compensation to those harmed did not begin with today's Chapter 11 reorganization, and our efforts most certainly will not end here. This journey has included many steps over the past 3 decades - from our zero-tolerance policies, extensive training and reporting requirements and pastoral care to voluntary settlements offered to victim-survivors and today's action.

We steadfastly hope and pray those who have been harmed can find some peace in the light that has been shone on the Church's sinful past, as well as solace through the pastoral care and financial compensation that we hope will be provided under the reorganization process.

With sincere personal regards, I am

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William E. Lori".

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore