



August 21, 2023

Dear Faithful of the Archdiocese of San Francisco:

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you about the impact of more than 500 civil lawsuits that have been filed against the Archdiocese under state law AB-218, which allowed individuals to bring claims for childhood sexual abuse that otherwise would have been barred due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

Today, I am informing you that after much reflection, prayer, and consultation with our financial and legal advisors, the Archdiocese of San Francisco filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization.

We believe the bankruptcy process is the best way to provide a compassionate and equitable solution for survivors of abuse while ensuring that we continue the vital ministries to the faithful and to the communities that rely on our services and charity.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco joins a growing list of dioceses in the United States and California that have filed for protection under the bankruptcy laws. Some of these dioceses have already restructured and emerged from this process.

To be clear, only the legal entity, The Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco, a Corporation Sole, is included in the Chapter 11 filing. Our parishes, schools, and other entities are not included in the filing. Our mission will continue as it always has. Parishes will serve the spiritual needs of the faithful, celebrating Mass, offering the Sacraments, and providing religious education. Schools will provide the best Catholic education for students, and our Chancery will continue to support parishes and schools, and its ministries will remain engaged in the community. Catholic Charities, Catholic cemeteries, and St. Patrick's Seminary & University will continue their operations as usual. Chancery employees will work and receive their wages and benefits during this process and beyond.

I also want to reassure you that any contributions made to the parish offertory or to the Archdiocesan Annual Appeal will not be used to settle abuse claims. According to a very long-standing legal and moral principle, the intention of the donor must always be respected, and these funds, which you so generously donate, are collected for use by the stated ministries, which exclude legal settlements or related expenses. Without your continued support, the Archdiocese could not provide its critical services to those most in need. I am grateful for your generous gifts of time, talent, and financial resources.

It is important to know that the overwhelming majority of the alleged abuse occurred in the 1960s and 70s, and into the 80s, and involved priests who are deceased or no longer in ministry. A significant number of these claims include unnamed individuals or named individuals who are unknown to the Archdiocese.

To safeguard against abuse, our Archdiocese has maintained and improved awareness and education for children and adults. We use stringent processes to screen volunteers, employees, and priests. Today, while this continues to be a widespread societal problem, occurrences of abuse within the Catholic Church are very rare, and I believe the Church has set the standard for other organizations, showing what can and should be done to protect our children.

I remain committed to the healing and care of survivors who have suffered irreversible harm because of the sins of the Church's ministers and ask you to join me in praying for our Archdiocese, parish communities, schools, and all survivors of sexual abuse.

Now more than ever, we need to take recourse to prayer. I invite you to commit yourselves, or recommit, to living the consecration of our Archdiocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which I celebrated on October 7, 2017.

While the great majority of these sins were committed many decades ago, it will be a sign of Christian solidarity for us to join together on a daily basis in praying the rosary, spending an hour each week in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and fasting on Fridays for the survivors of abuse, for the mission of our Archdiocese, and for the eradication of this shameful crime from our society as a whole. God is pleased by such prayer and penance, and doing so will open our hearts to the blessings He wishes to lavish upon us.

May God shower you and your families with His grace during these difficult times.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Cordileone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning and a horizontal line at the end.

Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco