

A Statement from Bishop Malooly

October 28, 2011

On September 26, 2011, the Plan of Reorganization of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington became effective, and the Diocese emerged from bankruptcy. When we filed for Chapter 11 reorganization in October 2009, our goals were to fairly compensate survivors of sexual abuse by our priests, while maintaining the charitable, spiritual and educational ministries of our parishes and schools, and to live up to our commitments to our lay employees and creditors. With the establishment of a Settlement Trust to compensate survivors of clergy sexual abuse, and the implementation of a long-term plan to ensure that the obligation of the Lay Pension Plan of the Diocese will be fulfilled, I believe that these goals have been reached.

This is an opportunity for the Diocese of Wilmington to make a fresh start, but we must never forget or gloss over the suffering endured by survivors of abuse. We must continue to promote healing for the survivors, and keep our promise that, to the best of our ability, the mistakes of years ago will never happen again. As I have done since my installation as Bishop in September 2008, and will continue to do, I apologize for the innocence stolen from our brothers and sisters at the hands of men who were supposed to be dedicated to promoting the best spiritual interests of these children and young people. I again invite any survivor to meet with me to discuss how I as Bishop, and we as Church, can promote further healing and reconciliation. Some survivors have told me that the Child Victim's Act helped them to come forward and deal with the abuse they suffered. The adversarial nature of litigation does not foster healing and reconciliation, and the bankruptcy process exacted a terrible toll on our ministries, but an essential ministry of this Diocese is our outreach to survivors of abuse, and I am grateful to the survivors who have had the courage to speak about the sexual abuse they suffered as minors.

This is a moment of transition for the Diocese of Wilmington. The road ahead will be difficult, but during my three years as Bishop I repeatedly have experienced the abiding spirit of the Catholic community of Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I am optimistic that together, with God's help, we have a bright future. I ask for your continued prayers and support, as we learn from the past and move ahead in our mission.

Most Rev. W. Francis Malooly
Bishop of Wilmington

With this statement the Bishop is fulfilling one of his obligations under the non-monetary terms of the bankruptcy — that the Bishop in his official and personal capacity will issue a written statement of gratitude for the survivors who have had the courage to speak out about sexual abuse that they suffered as minors. The statement is to be posted on the Diocese's website and is to be published in a half page ad in both The Dialog and the News Journal.