

I am reaching out to you today to share information about something that may surface soon in the media.

You may have seen reports recently about the Bankruptcy Court allowing designated “test” Child Victims Act cases to move forward to trials in State Court to establish claim values. All the cases, approximately 400 of them, were stayed, or put on hold, when the Diocese filed its voluntary Chapter 11 Petition with the Bankruptcy Court two years ago.

The designated “test” cases going forward have been specifically chosen by plaintiff’s attorneys because they believe that a settlement or verdict after a trial in those cases will help determine claim value in the hundreds of other cases that remain stayed to inform the Bankruptcy Court, Diocese, parishes and the insurance companies whose policies extending coverage for the Diocese and its parishes of their potential exposure and amounts they should expect to contribute to a plan to compensate survivors.

The plaintiffs’ attorneys also are attempting to influence the insurance carriers to contribute significant funds to any settlement providing for payment to all survivors. In their view, this process will also assist survivors, the Diocese and parishes in reaching an agreement on that settlement as well with the goal of accelerating the process to achieve an approved plan for a bankruptcy settlement.

Despite these “test” cases going forward in State Court, we continue to believe that the best way to resolve the abuse claims is through mediation. The Diocese and parish representatives continue to participate in mediation with representatives for the abuse claimants and the insurers. The Bankruptcy Court has directed that this mediation continue, and we remain hopeful that it will resolve the amounts to be paid by the Diocese, parishes and insurers to the survivors through the Diocese’s plan in its bankruptcy case.

I am sharing this information now because there was a court hearing on Monday, April 14, and it is likely that a report will follow in the media.

Another concern is that the allegations in these “test” cases are going to be difficult to hear, and reporters will be sharing them. That may cause pain for many; for the survivors, for those who suffered abuse and are still suffering in silence not ready to ask for help, even for the people in our pews who have never been abused. Many struggle to deal with the fact that abuse ever took place in the church they love. It is difficult to understand how anyone in our church, which was created to share God’s love in the world, could have abused anyone. I will keep you informed as new information becomes available.

I want you to know that the Diocese has a Hope and Healing Committee. They are a resource for all. They have a webpage <https://www.rcda.org/hopeandhealing>. They have spoken with survivors to ask how the church can help, and they share those stories on a separate webpage <https://www.rcda.org/offices/safe-environment/survivors>. Those stories can help you better understand what survivors need, and how you can help.

Please pray. We need to share compassion with all. We are the body of Christ. This will be difficult for all of us. I encourage each of you to be honest about your need for help through this. I will do the same. We are a community in Christ. Let's help each other, rely on available resources, look at the Hope and Healing webpage. If you want to schedule a Hope and Healing mass, let's plan for that. The Hope and Healing Committee can help.

Pray for healing for all. Keep in mind that anytime you are at church, even at Mass each Sunday, a survivor may be there with you. Some may be too afraid to admit they were abused. Let's be Christ for one another.