



**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN G. VLAZNY
AT
JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE AT END OF BANKRUPTCY**

April 17, 2007

For more than seven years the Archdiocese of Portland has been confronted with claims of child abuse by some of our priests, mostly between 1940 and 1986. By July 6, 2004, we had reached settlements with 140 victims. But on that day we filed for Chapter 11 protection in federal bankruptcy court in order to be able to continue the mission of the church and make an honest effort to compensate all remaining victims as fairly as possible. These have been difficult days for all of us and I am grateful to all our people who have continued to support the mission of the church and collaborate in the effort to resolve this crisis.

The good news is that we were able to reach important agreements about the resolution of our Chapter 11 case and the bankruptcy court has approved our financial plan of reorganization. It is my sincere prayer that our ability to compensate the many victims will assist them in their efforts to achieve personal healing and peace of heart. I pray for them daily and I know that the Catholic people of Oregon join me in asking God to bless them.

As pastor of our Catholic family here in western Oregon, I once again extend a sincere apology to all our abused sisters and brothers and their families who were victimized in any way as a result of this scandal. My heart goes out to all of them. I have met with many victims and been present during weeks of mediations to offer my help toward their healing. My door continues to be open.

Furthermore, I apologize to all our Catholic people, laity, religious and clergy, who have been humiliated and penalized throughout all of this, even though they bore no personal guilt. But we are family and when one suffers, we all suffer. The resources of the church have indeed been diminished but the generosity of our people and their commitment to our evangelizing mission have never been greater. As pastor of the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Portland, I am deeply touched by the resilience and perseverance of all involved.

Once again, I assure you of my commitment to the safety of children. We have comprehensive child protection policies and programs in place throughout the archdiocese which I am told are models of best practice for child sexual abuse prevention. I promise also to provide fuller information on the bankruptcy and the claims, beginning with a special issue of the *The Catholic Sentinel* available in all parishes the weekend of April 28 and 29. As part of the healing process and in the interests of transparency, we will also be releasing relevant and appropriate documents, after a process that seeks a fair and just result for all concerned. There will also be a service of reconciliation and healing at St. Mary's Cathedral on June 13, 2007. All are welcome.

The people of the archdiocese are deeply grateful to many who have helped us through these uncertain times. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the diligent and generous service of the mediators, Judges Michael Hogan and Lyle Velure, who helped us reach the agreements that were necessary in order to provide a financial plan of reorganization for the court. The ultimate grace we seek is reconciliation with all those who have been aggrieved as a result of the sinful behavior, the diminishment of church resources and the bankruptcy. As we Catholics throughout this scandal have learned much about child abuse, it is my sincere desire that these lessons will not have to be repeated in any other forum.