



Dear Brother/Sister in Christ,

As you are aware from the publicized reports, the Final Order in the Bankruptcy Action involving our Diocese of Harrisburg has been issued. You may have heard that our Parishes and Schools will be contributing toward this total Settlement and I write this to explain how this has come about.

In February of 2020, our Diocese filed this Bankruptcy Action. Bishop Gainer explained, at that time, that this course was necessary to ensure the continued viability of our Diocese in light of the potential costs of litigation and judgments that could be entered against it as a result of claims of Sexual Abuse.

About a month later, at a meeting of our 10 Diocesan Deans, who are Pastors chosen to serve as leaders of groups of Parishes that comprise Deaneries, it was explained that the Order discharging all claims that would be issued at the conclusion of the Bankruptcy Proceeding would only apply to the Diocese, since the Diocese was the “Debtor” in the Bankruptcy Action. Therefore, even after the conclusion of the Bankruptcy Case, Parishes and Schools could still potentially be sued. The Deans voiced concern about this since any potential claim against any Parish, even if unfounded, could result in a catastrophic financial loss.

The Deans were advised of the possibility of their forming an “Ad-Hoc Committee of Non-Debtor Related Entities” for purposes of protecting our Parishes and Schools and in June, 2020, all of our Deans, along with representatives of our High Schools, Catholic Charities and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, created such a Committee.

The committee secured an Attorney, independent from our Diocese, and acted during the Bankruptcy Action to ensure our Parishes and Schools would be protected. As reported, this Committee will pay \$2,000,000 toward the Settlement. Each Pastor of all our Parishes agreed to this proposal and because of the universal agreement, the particular cost to each individual Parish and School is somewhat “nominal”, especially when compared to the significant costs that would be incurred in defending just one claim. The payment assigned to Sacred Heart, Lewistown is \$8,356.

All of us mourn the grave harm caused by the sins of those entrusted with that sacred responsibility to care for our young people. We lament the failure of some of our leaders to have acted to protect them. We pray for all survivors of sexual abuse, that they may know God’s healing. And we hope that, moving forward, our Church may have a renewed fervor in bringing the love and truth to Christ to all.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Bill  
Pastor, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church