



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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July 17, 2019

Dear Christ's Faithful of the Diocese of Crookston,

I am happy to report to you that a Settlement Agreement has been reached between the victims and survivors of clergy sexual abuse and the Diocese of Crookston. This Agreement has been reached after years of negotiation and mediation regarding suits filed against the Diocese between April of 2016 and May of 2017. These suits were filed as a result of the passage of the Minnesota Child Victims Act which lifted the statute of limitations for sexual abuse cases in Minnesota, opening a three-year window allowing victims to come forward and affording them the opportunity to file civil claims. This Agreement settles all cases against the Diocese – 15 in total – as well as cases brought against eight parishes of the Diocese filed in conjunction with the cases against the Diocese.

The monetary figure agreed upon in the Settlement Agreement is \$5,000,000. Most of this has been paid by our insurance carriers. \$1,550,000 is being paid by the Diocese of Crookston from funds saved from the sale of property (2016 and 2018), from non-restricted estate gifts (2017), and from funds the Diocese currently has on hand. No Diocesan Annual Appeal funds were used.

To all victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy, as the Bishop of Crookston I apologize for the harm done to you by those entrusted with your spiritual care. Although you can never be fully compensated for your suffering, we are thankful this litigation has now come to a good end and are hopeful this settlement offers you justice and will be helpful for healing.

To you, the faithful of this local Church, I say thank you for your continued prayer: for victims of sexual abuse; for a fair resolve to these cases. Let us all now, humbly, offer prayers of thanksgiving. Because of this settlement, the Diocese of Crookston can avoid filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. All other dioceses in Minnesota have filed or announced their intent to file for financial reorganization. We will not have to lay off staff. We can joyfully and steadfastly continue our mission of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to this time and place. We pledge our continued efforts to rid the Church and world of sexual abuse and provide a safe environment for all.

Sincerely, in the name of the Lord Jesus,

Most Rev. Michael J. Hoepfner  
Bishop of Crookston