Renewing Our Commitment
the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans
Renewing Our Commitment
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The past few years have been extremely trying times for us in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The resurgence of the clergy abuse crisis has been particularly challenging, especially as it has played out regularly in the local media. Most importantly, again, I extend daily prayers to those who are victims and survivors. May God give you healing and renewed hope. This issue coupled with ongoing budget challenges has created an impossible situation.

After much prayer and consultation, we have made the difficult decision to pursue Chapter 11 reorganization. I, along with a team of advisors, believe that reorganization will create an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the faithful and the New Orleans community by restructuring our financials, increasing our transparency and creating a path forward in hopes that we can continue and strengthen our core mission: bringing Christ to others. This reorganization will affect only the archdiocesan administrative offices.

The prospect of more abuse cases with associated prolonged and costly litigation, together with pressing ministerial needs and budget challenges, is simply not financially sustainable. Additionally, the unforeseen circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have added more financial hardships to an already difficult situation.

Filing for Chapter 11 does not mean the Archdiocese of New Orleans is closing, and we will certainly continue to pay our bills responsibly. This only affects the archdiocesan administrative offices and will not affect the individual parishes, their schools, schools run by the various religious orders, or ministries of the church. Rather, this will allow for our administrative offices to continue and, by the grace of God, emerge better prepared for the future. Very importantly, taking this action will allow us to address remaining clergy abuse claims, all of which stem from allegations dating back several decades ago, in a way that will allow funds to go directly to victims. No money from parish collections will be used to resolve claims. Parish funds are separate from archdiocesan accounts and the pastor decides how those are used for parish ministry.

Through prayer and reflection, I believe that this path will allow victims of clergy abuse to resolve their claims in a fair and timely manner. My daily prayer is that this independent process brings about healing for those who have been harmed as a result of abuse by members of the clergy. The healing of victims and survivors is most important to me and to the church.

It is my commitment to do our very best to provide clarity about the implications of this reorganization. I understand that many of you will have questions and concerns, and I ask for your patience as we work toward a path of renewal. Again, rest assured that individual parishes, their schools, schools run by the various religious orders, and ministries of our church will not be affected by this reorganization. I encourage you to visit our website www.nolacatholic.org/renew for updates, announcements and resources.

God is faithful, and he will guide us in this process. It is my prayer that through His grace, the Archdiocese of New Orleans will emerge from this experience stronger with a renewed commitment to our mission.

In closing, I ask for your support and prayers during this challenging time. Please keep our clergy, religious, lay staff and those who are working to support us through this process in your prayers. I humbly ask too for prayers for me during this challenging time.

We hope to bring this reorganization to a conclusion as soon as possible. Throughout this time, we will remain focused on Christ, His will for us and our commitment to lead and serve God’s people in a spirit of humility.

Wishing you God’s blessings, I am,
Sincerely in Christ,
Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Impelled by God’s call and inspired by the vision of the Ninth General Synod, the ministries of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, in union with the Archbishop and with one another, serve the people, parishes, schools and organizations of the archdiocese, enabling them to encounter Jesus and witness his love with joy.
The administrative offices of the Archdiocese of New Orleans seeks reorganization of its finances under the supervision of the Federal Bankruptcy Court. Proceeding under Chapter 11 will allow us to satisfy current financial obligations and to reorganize our operations with a commitment to a future ministry that is stronger financially and strengthened in its mission. This process affects only our administrative offices and not parishes and other vital ministries.

The decision to file for Chapter 11 reorganization was made by Archbishop Gregory Aymond, in consultation with a committee of trusted advisors of laypersons and clergy. It is a decision that will preserve the mission of the Catholic Church in this region for future generations.
What is Chapter 11?

There are two types of bankruptcies permitted by the Federal Bankruptcy Code — dissolution of an entity under Chapter 7 and reorganization of assets and liabilities under Chapter 11. The Archdiocese of New Orleans is not dissolving or closing. Under the court’s supervision, we will continue to minister to the people of our local church and continue to meet our payroll obligations and other costs. Current creditors of the Archdiocese will be assured payment via a Chapter 11 plan of reorganization approved and controlled by the Court.

Why has the Archdiocese filed for Reorganization now?

The past few years have been trying times for us in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The resurgence of the clergy abuse crisis has been particularly challenging. Beyond that the COVID-19 crisis has affected our churches, schools and ministries, compounding an already difficult situation.

What are the costs associated with proceeding under Chapter 11?

The Archdiocese will incur legal fees, accounting fees, consultant fees and other costs throughout the reorganization proceedings. These costs pale in comparison to the costs associated with defense against claims of alleged abuse; litigation that could continue for many years.

Have other Archdioceses/Dioceses filed for Reorganization?

Yes, other archdioceses and dioceses around the United States have found themselves in positions very similar to the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Some have already gone through a similar process and have emerged from reorganization, others are currently moving through a court supervised reorganization much like the Archdiocese.

How long will the Reorganization take?

The length of time it will take to complete the reorganization of the Archdiocese will depend on many factors. The Court will control the proceedings. Our commitment is to accomplish this process as soon as possible. In the meantime, ministry will not be interrupted.
Renewing Our Commitment to OUR FAMILIES and MINISTRIES

We renew our commitment to strengthening our administrative offices and ministries in order to better serve the people of God in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. This reorganization will allow us to meet this challenge.
How will the Reorganization affect our Parishes?

Celebration of the sacraments and parish life will continue as normal.

How will the Reorganization affect my school?

Providing a well-rounded Catholic education is a top priority for us and we renew our commitment to achieving excellence in our schools for our current students and for future generations. The daily operations of the ministry of Catholic education will not be affected by us filing for reorganization under Chapter 11.

How will the Reorganization affect our Ministries?

Ministries are separate and distinct corporations, and are not a part of the reorganization. Such ministries, for example, include Catholic Charities, Christopher Homes, Second Harvest, Project Lazarus, Notre Dame Health Systems, New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries and many others. The assets of these ministries belong to the particular corporation and are not affected by the reorganization of the administrative offices.

Chapter 11 is an orderly process of reorganization under Court supervision. As we move through the process, we will review and assess our operations and create efficiencies in our approach to our ministries. All of our decisions will balance ministerial needs and will enable financial sustainability of the Archdiocese. Our goal is to ensure that we can continue our mission of service to the community in a conscientious and sustainable manner.

What is the effect of Reorganization on gifts and donations to my Church or school?

Gifts and donations to a parish whether through the Sunday collection or other means, belong to the parish. Restricted gifts or donations to a specific school or ministry belong to those entities. We will not use money from parish collections or monies belonging to separate entities to fund the financial obligations in this reorganization. Monetary gifts with legal restrictions are protected by law and can only be used for the express purpose of the donation. Your contributions will continue to provide funding for parishes and crucial ministries helping people in all walks of life. In the parish it is the pastor’s responsibility to use parish money where it is needed for ministry and other parish expenses.

What is the effect of Reorganization on the Catholic Community Foundation?

Gifts to the Catholic Community Foundation support specific ministries, and the Foundation restricts use of those funds to the stated purpose of the donation. The Catholic Community Foundation will continue to operate to spiritually and financially enhance and sustain the charitable, educational and pastoral ministries of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
Renewing Our Commitment to OUR PRIESTS, DEACONS and STAFF

Growing in faith is paramount. This Reorganization will have no effect on the daily duties of our priests, deacons, religious and lay ministers. The daily responsibility of those in ministry will continue. Seminaries will continue the excellence in forming men for the priesthood.

Our reorganization will enable us to renew our commitment to the men and women who work in our administrative offices. The reorganization will permit the Archdiocese to assess our true needs and to plan for a more promising future.

We will continue to meet our payroll and other financial obligations to our staff, including retirement benefits.
Renewing Our Commitment
to HEALING of VICTIMS

Our main priority for victims and survivors is to provide a means to facilitate healing from the effects of abuse. We understand that the prospect of reporting abuse can be frightening and intimidating. We who minster with victims and survivors renew our commitment to meet with them and offer pastoral care. This process will not involve court proceedings that can revictimize a person. Our Victims Assistance Coordinator is always available to assist victims of abuse in reporting the claim and in spiritual guidance.
Renewing Our Commitment to FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Archdiocesan Statistics
2019-2020

Created as a diocese on April 25, 1793 and as an archdiocese on July 19, 1850, the Archdiocese of New Orleans consists of 4,208 square miles including the eight civil parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany and Washington. The total population of the area is estimated to be 1.2 million people with an estimated total Catholic population of over 518,000.
Institutions of Higher Learning

- Parishes: 112
- Seminaries, Archdiocesan: 2
- Seminaries, Religious: 1
- Colleges and Universities: 3
- Student population: 8,849

Schools for Persons with Special Needs

- Schools: 2
- Students: 205

Other Facilities

- Homes for Adults: 1
- Independent Elderly Housing: 21
- Nursing Homes: 4

Catholic Schools

71 independent and archdiocesan-owned Catholic schools operating in the geographic footprint of the Archdiocese of New Orleans that offer Catholic-based education to students from nursery through high schools.

2019-2020 Fall Enrollment: 34,182
History of the ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS, its importance to New Orleans
No other entity – no government, business or organization – has been in the City of New Orleans since its founding, and the Church’s influence is part of everyday life. From Mardi Gras to St. Louis Cathedral, the city’s identity is rooted in Catholicism. The Catholic Church has flourished in New Orleans, providing education, health care and so much more to the people of the city.

The history of the Catholic Church and the history of the city of New Orleans cannot be separated. They are very much intertwined and have been for 300 years. It was only nine years after the establishment of the city that the Ursuline nuns arrived from France to do ministry here. They took charge of the royal hospital. They opened a school for girls. And they showed tremendous care for the poor and for the needy.

In the 300 years of New Orleans, we remember, by name, several saints who walked the streets of this city, and we remember them today. They walked the streets of this city. St. Rose Philippine Duchesne sailed to New Orleans in 1818 and opened a school here and in other parts of the United States. Venerable Mother Henriette Delille founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1842 and is on her way to canonization. Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos died from yellow fever in 1867 because he caught the disease as he was administering to those who were sick and dying. St. Frances Xavier Cabrini visited New Orleans in 1892 and opened a school and an orphanage to care for those who are in need. St. Katharine Drexel founded Xavier University in 1915. And most recently, in 1987, Pope John Paul II visited New Orleans. And he spoke here to thousands of people and stood outside the cathedral greeting people. This great saint, John Paul II, truly walked the streets of our city.

We also recall throughout this history of 300 years the significant ministry of women religious – their contribution to education, health care, social services and the pouring out of themselves to lead and to serve God’s people in the spirit of humility. All of these people together have shaped the city and the church into what it is today.
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