

For Immediate Release to the Press

January 13, 2014

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Statement from Bishop Stephen E. Blaire

After months of careful consideration and prayer, it has become clear to me that the Diocese of Stockton's financial difficulties can only be resolved by filing for bankruptcy protection. This decision was reached through consultation with experts in finance and law, as well as with priests, parishioners and many others in the community our Diocese serves.

Our attorneys will file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Wednesday, January 15, 2014. Our Diocese will become the tenth in the United States to make such a filing.

This has been a difficult decision. Nevertheless, I am convinced this step will allow us to achieve two essential goals. First, it will provide a process to compensate as fairly as possible the victims of sexual abuse, including those who have not yet come forward or had their day in court. At the same time, the process will provide a way for us to continue the ministry and support we provide to the parishes, the poor and the communities located within our Diocese.

It is important to remember that the only entity seeking bankruptcy protection is the corporation sole known legally as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Stockton. The parishes and Catholic schools within our Diocese are separate corporations and should not be impacted by this filing. The same is true for other separate corporations, such as St. Mary's and Central Catholic High Schools, and the Madonna of Peace Retreat Center.

Since we began discussing this possibility more than six months ago, I have been moved by the understanding, patience and support expressed by so many people in the Church and in the wider community. I am deeply grateful.