



DIocese OF ALEXANDRIA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

4400 COLISEUM BLVD.

P. O. BOX 7417

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA 71306-0417

318.445.2401 PHONE

318.767.1230 FAX

WWW.DIOCESEALEX.ORG

October 31, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace be with you!

About one year ago, there were some reports in the media about the Diocese of Alexandria considering entering a bankruptcy proceeding. After consultation with my priest consultants, diocesan advisors, and after my own prayerful consideration, I write to tell you that I have directed attorneys for the diocese to file a petition for a Chapter 11 reorganization of its financial affairs under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

This is not an easy decision and one of my many concerns is the impact it will have on the spiritual well-being of the Faithful of the Diocese. However, after reviewing the facts in front of us, I determined it was the most prudent course of action. Here's why.

This action is occurring because some past priest-perpetrators sexually abused minors, actions that are evil, sinful and go against everything the Church and the priesthood represents. As a result, there are financial claims pending against the diocese that exceed our means.

In taking this action, we have two goals. First, we want to do as much as we can, as fairly as we can, to compensate those who have been harmed. Second, we want to carry on the essential ministries of the diocese so we can continue to meet the needs of our parishes, parishioners and others who rely upon the Church for assistance. A Chapter 11 proceeding is the best way to achieve these goals.

Alexandria is a mission diocese, meaning we already rely upon others to sustain the work of the Church. As such, our resources are scarce. Chapter 11 will allow the diocese to use available funds to compensate all abuse survivors with unresolved claims in a single process overseen by a court, ensuring that all are treated equitably. Second, by serving as a final call for legal claims against the diocese, the proceeding will allow the Church to move forward on stable financial ground, focused on its Gospel mission.

The Diocese is also committed to making sure that nothing like this can ever happen again. We will continue our outreach to abuse survivors as an ongoing ministry of the Church. We will continue the policies and practices we have implemented to keep children safe.

Some of you may feel disheartened or frustrated by this development. Some may feel anger or resentment that we have come to this moment. I have experienced the same emotions. We are at this moment for one reason: some priests sexually abused minors. For that, I feel deeply ashamed. As your bishop, I apologize to abuse survivors for the harm, pain and suffering they experienced and continue to experience in their lives.

I also want to apologize to all the faithful priests, deacons, religious and laity whose ministry may have a shadow cast upon them by this next step in the process.

This bankruptcy applies only to the diocese itself. Our parishes and other Catholic entities are separately incorporated under state law and are not affected by this filing.

Our hope is that the diocese can reach a global settlement with those who have claims in the very near future. We have already been in negotiations for some months with a group of lawyers whom we understand represents the vast majority of currently known abuse survivors. If we can reach an agreement toward the beginning of the case, we would be able to avoid the lengthy delays and unnecessary professional fees that would otherwise result.

I know there will be many questions to answer as we move through this legal process. Our website – diocesealex.org – will serve as a repository for information. Some answers will come only as the process unfolds. I promise to share information with you in an open, candid and straightforward way.

Although this will be a difficult journey, what inspires me is the Faithful of the Diocese. I have witnessed your faith in action: in worship, in charity and in service. So even as we proceed with this Chapter 11, I am confident this good work will continue.

Our Pastoral Plan, Together as One Church, will also continue. We must remember that we are pilgrims on a journey to our eventual heavenly home. We cannot allow our mission to stagnate, even though the diocese is in legal proceedings.

Lastly, I ask that you pray for the Church, especially in the Diocese of Alexandria, asking God to give us wisdom and grace in our decision making. Together as One Church, we will move forward, not forgetting our past, but addressing it and taking appropriate responsibility for those who were harmed, and placing our trust in God, who is our strength and our hope, and who is with us always.

With assurance of prayers and with faith in Jesus Christ, who makes all things new, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Marshall, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Most Reverend Robert W. Marshall, Jr.
Bishop of Alexandria