

St. James Parish
Information Related to the Child Victim Act Joint Settlement

Introduction

As mentioned previously most of the following information has been communicated to our parishioners by altar announcements, bulletin announcements and inserts, articles in The Evangelist and articles placed on our website. The following information provides a recap/summary of that information. The primary additional information today is the amount each parish in the CCNCC will be contributing. Thank you for your understanding. Let us continue to pray for all those who have been affected by the abuse in our world, church, and in our diocese.

What is the Global Joint Settlement?

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany (RCDA) and the Official Committee of Tort Claimants in the Diocese's bankruptcy reorganization have reached an agreement on the contribution to be made by the Diocese of Albany, its parishes, and other Catholic entities. The amount of contribution will be \$148 million. The amount is expected to increase once insurance contributions are added. The Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors have given their assent to this settlement. The Tort Committee represented the victims who filed approximately 440 against the RCDA and many of the parishes. Press release statements, Bishop Mark's letter regarding the settlement, and other information can be found at: www.rcda.org/reorganization.

How much will our parish contribute?

Collectively, the parishes in the RCDA will contribute \$50 million, primarily from parish savings and investments. Fr. Jim Walsh, Chair of the Parish Steering Committee, and Deacon Gregg Wilbur, Diocesan CFO met with parishes and determined individual parish contributions based on many factors including financial stability of the parish and overall financial resources. The contribution to the settlement from our parish is **\$206,000**.

Where will our parish contribution come from?

The parish contribution will come from historical earnings in our investment account which was started over twenty-five years ago. No funds from other Parish accounts will be used to pay for the settlement. In addition, there will be no "special collection" at a Mass to help fund our contribution. As always, all funds collected at a Mass during the offertory are utilized to support the operations of the Parish, including but not limited to the cost of personnel, insurance, maintenance, and utilities. Other special collections or funding campaigns will continue to be needed, when necessary, to fund a particularly expensive endeavor or capital project. While this contribution will deplete a significant part of the Parish's investment account, with your continued support the Parish will continue to operate as it always has.

What about the lawsuits filed against individual parishes?

There were approximately 440 lawsuits against the Diocese and individual parishes. Fortunately, our Parish has not been named as a co-defendant in any of these claims. All pending lawsuits will be settled as part of the Global Joint Settlement.

What, if any, legal fees have been incurred by our parish in relation to the bankruptcy?

A total of approximately \$3,000 has been paid over the past several years for legal representation in connection with the bankruptcy procedures.

What are the next steps?

This is the first step toward settling these claims and will help the Diocese move forward and emerge from bankruptcy. That legal process takes time. Work continues on important issues that will be included in the final plan, including agreements on child protection protocols, aimed at strengthening the protocols already in place in our Diocese. Our parish contribution is to be set aside and will be sent to the Diocese when the legal process dictates. This process has been discussed with and approved by the St. James Finance Council and Parish Trustee.

What else can we do or should we know?

Abuse of any kind should never happen. In God's plan of love and peace, there is no room for actions and words that bring harm to people. Yet, we know these behaviors have happened in families, workplaces, and within the Church. To those who have been harmed by a leader or person within the Church, or by the structure of the Church itself, we feel true sorrow. Furthermore, when one person is harmed by sins, actions, or inactions of another, the whole Body of Christ suffers across time and space. The suffering is different, yes, but all are affected. Although a monetary amount is necessary and helpful, we cannot let this be the last step in the process. Instead, we continue our prayers for healing for those who have been harmed in this process, prayers for justice and peace, and prayers for God's guidance to those who have experienced abuse. People are invited to visit the Hope and Healing webpage of the Diocese of Albany for additional information. There is also information on how to report abuse: www.rcda.org/hopeandhealing.

Final Note:

This process has taken many years and has taken an emotional toll on all those involved. Your continued support of our Parish in the months and years to come is a blessing and worthy of special mention and gratitude. Any questions regarding this development should be directed to Father Steve.

Thank you and God bless.