



## **DIOCESAN SETTLEMENT**

### **Bulletin Letter**

After a five-year tumultuous journey, the Catholic Church in Western New York can begin again to see a light forward - a light guiding us to the end of this painful and dark period in our history as Church and toward a future where we may continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In April, the Diocese of Buffalo announced a settlement in principle with the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors, which represents hundreds of people victimized by past sexual abuse. To fulfill the diocese's \$150 million commitment, parishes and Catholic affiliated entities are being asked to join with the diocese to contribute toward the settlement.

Some of you may question why we, as Church are asked to do this. It is exactly that, because we are Church, one, universal and not parish versus parish. As a faith community, it is our responsibility to help bring justice and healing. Part of this justice, to help soothe the pain, which will never go away, is to provide compensation. By making a meaningful contribution to the settlement, parishes secure protection from claims that have been time-barred, due to a channeling injunction. Put simply, parishes could be protected from current or potential future claims should New York State re-open that statute of limitations in which to bring claims forward. This has happened in other states.

It is important to understand that the money we are being asked to contribute comes from unrestricted reserves and not current offertory. Parish and cemetery assets which are restricted for specific, donor directed purposes will not be impacted.

No dollar amount can ever fully compensate victim survivors for their pain. However, this settlement ensures they receive some compensation for the physical, emotional, and spiritual scars they still endure.



Know that the diocese has worked diligently to ensure that the sins of the past are not repeated today. You can learn more about this by visiting "Protecting God's Children" on the diocesan website, [www.buffalodiocese.org](http://www.buffalodiocese.org).

This has been a sad chapter in our history as the Catholic Church in Western New York. We cannot erase the past, but there is a way we can emerge again into the light – the light of Christ. Just as Jesus willingly suffered for the good of His people, now we must be willing to sacrifice to ensure we continue our mission of evangelization and our ministries, for ourselves and for future generations.

