



February 4, 2013
Feast of Saint Agnes, virgin, martyr

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

As we move into the new calendar year, this annual mailing for the Catholic Stewardship Appeal reminds us all of the great needs we have in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Church's ministry in so many areas in our community.

A little over two years ago, the archdiocese filed for Chapter 11 financial reorganization in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. We filed for Chapter 11 because we were unable to reach a mediated resolution with clergy abuse survivors involved in lawsuits against the archdiocese. Despite our ongoing legal challenges, the good work of the Church continues through God's grace and your faithful generosity.

Throughout this process, the archdiocese has been forthcoming with information about the bankruptcy proceeding and the abuse scandal. The names of all known diocesan clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor are posted on the archdiocesan website, as are many documents and other information.

Any instance of sexual abuse of a minor is a horrible crime and sin. Our policy is to fully cooperate with law enforcement whenever an allegation is received. We also remain committed to providing therapy and counseling for abuse survivors of diocesan priests, and their families, for as long as such a need exists.

As an organization, we have a responsibility to do the legal things necessary under the bankruptcy law to ensure that rightful claimants receive equitable compensation in the Chapter 11. However, we don't believe our limited resources should compensate someone who has already received a previous legal settlement or that the archdiocese should be responsible for perpetrators who were not clergy or employees of the archdiocese.

-- Over, Please --

You may have heard about two recent developments in media reports. First, that the archdiocese objected to the use of any parish funds being brought into the bankruptcy proceeding and, thankfully, the court agreed that parishes are separate entities from the archdiocese and not part of the bankruptcy. Second, we objected to the lawyers' plan to attack the Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust in order to pay claims because the money in that trust is only to be used to maintain the cemeteries.

Even the annual Catholic Stewardship Appeal monies are held in trust to ensure they are used solely for the purposes, ministries and mission outlined in the annual Appeal materials, which includes support and service to Catholic parishes and schools.

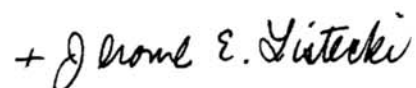
No one would ever condone the abuse some priests perpetrated on innocent children. At the same time, parishioners today should not be held financially responsible for these crimes that happened decades ago. As a Church, we have the responsibility to care for those harmed by diocesan priests and we continue to do so through therapy and counseling assistance. It is important that people understand how the Church has tried to balance its desire to assist abuse survivors and its responsibility to continue its mission, especially to those who rely upon the Church for assistance.

The archdiocese's website, www.archmil.org, is continually updated with the latest news. I encourage you to visit the site if you want more information.

In 2013, my prayer is that we will see a resolution to the Chapter 11 process and that the Church in southeastern Wisconsin will continue to reach out with compassion to those who have been harmed. I pray that, with your help, we will be renewed in our ministry and energized in our commitment to preach and live the Gospel.

With assurance of prayers and asking God's blessing upon you and your loved ones, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Jerome E. Listecky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecky
Archbishop of Milwaukee