



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

December 6, 2024

To All Survivors of Sexual Abuse:

As the bankruptcy case involving the Diocese of Rockville Centre and victim survivors of child sexual abuse now ends after four painful years, it is important to address first, the survivors. You have been courageous witnesses to the suffering caused by the horrific sin and crime of sexual abuse. Thank you for coming forward, for the ways in which you carry your crosses, and for working for justice and the protection of children. Because of your courage, you have been part of the solution to a problem you did not cause, but rather were victim to.

Words cannot assuage the pain you have endured, and I cannot begin to appreciate the depth of betrayal you have felt. We, as a Church, can only pray that some measure of healing may result from the conclusion of this process.

During my fifteen years serving as a Bishop in two Dioceses, I have been privileged to hear the stories of many survivors. I am deeply moved by the accounts of trauma and the fact that these horrors were perpetrated by those who should have been leading others to Christ. Each survivor I have met, I was able to look in the eyes and offer my apologies.

On behalf of all the faithful of the Church who are heartbroken by these sins, I humbly extend to you my sorrow and my apology. I am truly sorry for the evil done to you. I am sorry for the failures of the Church and her leaders in addressing these horrors.

The faithful men and women and the dedicated clergy of this Diocese who continue to carry forward the saving mission of Jesus have also carried crosses of disillusionment and anger from the abuse scandal. Their fidelity to the saving mission of Christ in the Church is a light in the darkness and a sign of hope as we emerge from this most painful period together.

The Diocese made a commitment in 2003, and we continue to devote ourselves to the protection of children as part of the Church's mission. Strict protocols, zero tolerance for abuse, careful screening, and training have all become the norm for those in ministry, employees and volunteers. We will not grow lax in these commitments and will remain vigilant. As we work towards a time of resurrection, let us pray for reconciliation, healing, and hope for all who have suffered. The Catholic Church on Long Island will continue to honor our commitment to protect children. We will continue to pray and work for an end to the scourge of sexual abuse throughout all of society.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre