



## Diocese of Monterey

## Office of the Bishop

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April 18, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I am writing to you today on an important topic: the sexual abuse of minors. In 2019, the California legislature reopened the statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse for a three-year period. The three-year period began on January 1, 2020 and ran through December 31, 2022. In that period of time, the Diocese of Monterey received approximately 100 lawsuits alleging childhood sexual abuse which occurred between the 1950s and 2002. As mentioned below, we have made significant changes to ensure the safety of children while under our care.

As you may have heard in the media, other California dioceses have either filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection or are considering it. In the Diocese of Monterey, we have been discussing how best to resolve these cases and how to be fair to all of the victims. One of the options that we have been considering is filing a Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition. This would allow all victims to be compensated from the limited funds that the Diocese has and will be allocated in an equitable manner.

I have consulted with the priests of the diocese, the Presbyteral Council, and my advisors and we are strongly considering this option. Our attorneys have tried other methods of resolution, but, unfortunately, have not been successful in reaching a resolution. While we have not made any final decision on filing for bankruptcy, it is highly likely in light of the number of lawsuits we are facing.

The issue of the sexual abuse of minors has been one that deeply saddens and disturbs all of us. It is an on-going human problem that has touched many families and all kinds of public and private organizations including, most sadly, the Catholic Church. These actions are never acceptable. Because of this, our prayers always support the victim-survivors, and we are committed to helping those touched by childhood sexual abuse by those working for the Church in Monterey.

Sexual abuse of children is intolerable, and we have worked hard in the Diocese of Monterey to restore trust in our processes and procedures so that children are safe. In 2002, the Bishops of the United States promulgated the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we are committed to a zero-tolerance policy and on-going, required Safe Environment training for all, clergy, and laity, who participate in ministry. These decisive steps have made a positive difference. Above all, the Church firmly believes we must hold accountable those who perpetrate such violations.

Again, I ask for your prayers for all victim-survivors. I also ask your prayers for our Diocese, parish communities, and all those who faithfully, with integrity and generosity, assist me in ministering to the People of God.

Peace of the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel E. Garcia", preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia  
Bishop of Monterey

