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May 1, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The past few years have been extremely trying times for us in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The resurgence of the clergy abuse crisis has been particularly challenging, especially as it has played out regularly in the local media. Most importantly, again, I extend daily prayers to those who are victims and survivors. May God give you healing and renewed hope. This issue coupled with ongoing budget challenges has created an impossible situation.

After much prayer and consultation, we have made the difficult decision to pursue Chapter 11 reorganization. I, along with a team of advisors, believe that reorganization will create an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the faithful and the New Orleans community by restructuring our financials, increasing our transparency and creating a path forward in hopes that we can continue and strengthen our core mission: bringing Christ to others. This reorganization will affect only the archdiocesan administrative offices.

The prospect of more abuse cases with associated prolonged and costly litigation, together with pressing ministerial needs and budget challenges, is simply not financially sustainable. Additionally, the unforeseen circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have added more financial hardships to an already difficult situation.

Filing for Chapter 11 does not mean the Archdiocese of New Orleans is closing, and we will certainly continue to pay our bills responsibly. This only affects the archdiocesan administrative offices and will not affect the individual parishes, their schools, schools run by the various religious orders, or ministries of the church. Rather, this will allow for our administrative offices to continue and, by the grace of God, emerge better prepared for the future. Very importantly, taking this action will allow us to address remaining clergy abuse claims, all of which stem from allegations dating back several decades ago, in a way that will allow funds to go directly to victims. No money from parish collections will be used to resolve claims. Parish funds are separate from archdiocesan accounts and the pastor decides how those are used for parish ministry.

Through prayer and reflection, I believe that this path will allow victims of clergy abuse to resolve their claims in a fair and timely manner. My daily prayer is that this independent process brings about healing for those who have been harmed as a result of abuse by members of the clergy. The healing of victims and survivors is most important to me and to the church.

It is my commitment to do our very best to provide clarity about the implications of this reorganization. I ask for your patience as we work toward a path of renewal. Again, rest assured that individual parishes, their schools, schools run by the various religious orders, and ministries

of our church will not be affected by this reorganization. I encourage you to visit our website www.nolacatholic.org/renew for updates, announcements and resources.

God is faithful, and he will guide us in this process. It is my prayer that through His grace, the Archdiocese of New Orleans will emerge from this experience stronger with a renewed commitment to our mission.

In closing, I ask for your support and prayers during this challenging time. Please keep our clergy, religious, lay staff and those who are working to support us through this process in your prayers. I humbly ask too for prayers for me during this challenging time.

We hope to bring this reorganization to a conclusion as soon as possible. Throughout this time, we will remain focused on Christ, His will for us and our commitment to lead and serve God's people in a spirit of humility.

Wishing you God's blessings, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Aymond", with a small cross symbol to the left.

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans