

Q & A Regarding Lawsuits Against Parishes

Q. Why are some parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm being sued now?

A. As you may know, the Minnesota Child Victims Act temporarily removed for three years the civil statute of limitations for historical cases of child sexual abuse. The deadline for victims to file a sex abuse claim is May 25, 2016. If victims and survivors of abuse don't file by then, it is expected that their cases against the parishes will be barred.

Q. Are new claims made in these lawsuits?

A. These claims are related to abuse alleged to have happened many years and in some cases several decades ago. The claims in these lawsuits do not involve anyone who is currently in parish ministry.

Q. What should a person do if they were sexually abused as a minor by a priest in the Diocese of New Ulm?

A. If a victim or survivor of sexual abuse has not yet done so, the first call he or she should make is to local law enforcement. If a victim or survivor wishes to file a claim, he or she should contact an attorney before the May 25, 2016 deadline. Victims and survivors of sexual abuse in Church ministry are also encouraged to contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, or via phone at 507-233-5313, for counseling or other assistance in healing.

Q. How will a parish being sued pay for legal and settlement costs?

A. Parish and diocesan staff are working with attorneys to search for any insurance coverage that could go toward resolution of the lawsuits.

Q. How will these lawsuits affect parish ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm?

A. We do not expect that these lawsuits will affect parish or Catholic school ministry. We expect that normal operations will continue as we work toward resolution of the lawsuits.

Q. Should I continue to contribute to my parish at this time?

A. Yes, your financial contributions are essential to support the core ministries of your parish.

Q. What does Bishop LeVoir say about the lawsuits against parishes?

A. Bishop LeVoir apologizes on behalf of the Church to victims and survivors of sexual abuse by priests. The Bishop, along with diocesan staff and parish leaders, are seeking the fairest possible resolution to claims while allowing for the continuation of the work of the Church in our communities.

Q. What if I have additional questions about lawsuits against parishes?

A. Please visit <http://protectandheal-dnu.org/> for more information. You can also call the diocesan Office of Communications at (507) 233-5332.