

## PRESS RELEASE

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San Diego, CA

Diocese of San Diego Sexual Abuse Settlement

Today, counsel for 144 victims of childhood sexual abuse announced a settlement in the amount of \$198,125,000, resolving all claims arising from sexual abuse by clergy and other employees of the Diocese of San Diego and the religious orders that operate within its jurisdiction. Our firms have had the privilege and honor of representing several of these brave individuals.

Victims of sexual abuse in the Diocese of San Diego will receive, on average, \$1.37 million. Individual awards will vary based on factors such as length and severity of abuse, and notice to the Diocese of an abuser's propensities. While the victims and their attorneys are pleased that a settlement has finally been reached, the needlessly acrimonious nature of these cases cannot be ignored.

After four years of litigation, on the eve of the first trial (which our firms were prepared to try before a jury), the Diocese of San Diego filed for bankruptcy. From the start it was clear that the Diocese's bankruptcy was a sham, born of misguided legal advice, and designed to protect the hierarchy from having to testify in open court about their shameful handling of predatory priests. Lacking in merit, the bankruptcy was also an extraordinary waste of time, energy and precious resources. Worst of all, it was a re-victimization of our clients, many of whom have struggled for years to get justice, only to have the Diocese leave them out in the cold, again.

The Diocese has also agreed to turn over documents associated with the tenure, assignment and transfer of perpetrators - a condition of settlement that was paramount to survivors. This critical settlement term was demanded by the survivors in an attempt to shed much needed light on the flawed and often tragic decision-making process that permitted perpetrators unfettered access to children.

It has been said that the truth is rarely pure and never simple. But fear of scandal should never have justified putting a child in harm's way. Childhood sexual abuse is an insidious assault on the victim and their family, becoming a daily reminder of loss and despair. It is our great hope that by courageously exposing the previously unspeakable -- the truth -- these survivors will now have the freedom to find some measure of peace.

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