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P R E S S R E L E A S E

ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF SAN DIEGO'S THREAT OF BANKRUPTCY IS A NEGOTIATION PLOY

The first of four trials in the Catholic Clergy sexual abuse cases is scheduled to begin in San Diego Superior Court on Wednesday, February 28, 2007. Lawyers representing Bishop Robert Brom and over 154 victims of childhood sexual abuse by priests and other employees of the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Diego have recently been in negotiations in an effort to reach a settlement of the pending lawsuits.

On Sunday, February 18, 2007 Bishop Brom issued a "Pastoral Statement On Sexual Abuse Cases" in which he purports to explain his decision to potentially file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The letter appears to be an effort to reach out to victims and their families and to explain the Bishop's reason for filing a bankruptcy to protect the "mission" of the church.

After five years of dealing with Bishop Brom and his team of lawyers it has become very apparent that Bishop Brom is more concerned with preserving the secrecy and cover up of the truth of what was done to children of this diocese over the last forty years or more, than he is over the well being of and reconciliation with those injured souls.

Since the spring of 2003, victims and their lawyers have been attempting to seek justice on two bases: 1) full disclosure of the truth of what happened including the release of all of the "secret files" and documents revealing that truth, and 2) a fair monetary compensation to attempt to make people whole for the wrecked lives and families that have been left standing alone for so many years. For these past four years Bishop Brom and his lawyers have employed every means possible to continue to cover up the truth. They have refused to turn over documents ordered by the court, they have attacked the power of the people of California, through their legislature, to amend California's statute of limitations to allow victims, who were too afraid, embarrassed and too intimidated from coming forward, to have a new short opportunity to do so. As a result almost 1,000 victims of childhood sexual abuse by Catholic Clergy have come forward across California. Bishop Brom and his lawyers have attempted to have the courts order the names of victim's to be made public while at the same time they have sought confidentiality orders from the court not to disclose their documents and the names of their employee priests and others. Not until facing the court house steps has Bishop Brom become at all serious about settlement.

Bishop Brom speaks of his offer to provide healing and counseling to victims. Yet, despite public pronouncements to the contrary, he has unilaterally terminated counseling benefits of victims because they have chosen to exercise their legal right to pursue damages for the harm done to them. He has cut off the counseling benefits for a victim despite repeated warnings by the victim's treating psychologist that to terminate benefits in the middle of treatment could have devastating affects.

Bishop Brom has shown repeatedly that what matters most to him, as it did to his predecessors, is secrecy and protection of the money. The Roman Catholic Bishop of SD is one of the richest dioceses in the country with over \$600,000,000 in real estate assets based solely on tax assessor's values and not market value. It is insured as a member of a self insured mutual pool called the Catholic Mutual Group which touts billions of dollars in insurance protection. Catholic Mutual Group is reinsured by some of the largest insurance companies in the world. There is insurance that protects this diocese with amounts ranging from \$250,000 per person in the 1960s to \$20,000,000 per person in the 1980s. This bankruptcy has nothing to do with insolvency and everything to do with causing further delay of justice. Unfortunately, by law, the mere filing of the bankruptcy, even if it is a baseless filing, automatically stops all litigation against the diocese. The axiom "justice delayed is justice denied" has never had more meaning.