
Diocese of Buffalo

Office of Communications



For Immediate Release

The Diocese of Buffalo and Survivors Find common ground as mediation continues

Buffalo, N.Y., July 31, 2023 – Negotiations have been ongoing between the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo and the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors appointed in the Diocese’s Chapter 11 reorganization proceeding. The Committee is comprised of six claimants entrusted to represent the collective interests of all abuse survivors. Details of the negotiations remain confidential, but the Diocese and the Committee have found common ground on one key issue: they’re searching for more insurance coverage.

The Diocese has robust records of insurance coverage beginning in 1972, but has to this point been largely unsuccessful in locating proof of insurance prior to that time. Nevertheless, the Diocese and the Committee are committed to working together to locate additional policies.

“We know the Diocese owned property before 1972, and that it would have been insured. The question is what companies insured the Diocese in those years,” said Ilan Scharf, an attorney for the Committee.

“We’ve agreed to proceed cooperatively on a number of fronts,” said attorney Steve Donato, who represents the Diocese. “That includes further efforts to find policy evidence in old diocesan records and inquiries to insurance agencies that may have placed the coverage.”

Seeking help from the community

The Diocese and the Committee are also asking the public for help. Their hope is to find someone who worked decades ago at an insurance carrier or agency, or who might otherwise have knowledge or evidence of pre-1972 insurance coverage for the Diocese.

Under New York law, insurance coverage may be available even if a copy of the actual policy is never found. Rather, evidence that a policy was issued can be used to prove coverage. Such evidence might include notes in business records, cancelled checks, accounting ledgers or policy numbers or the memories of people who worked for the Diocese, parishes or insurance companies or brokers.