



# ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA

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## News Release

### Archdiocese announces it will file bankruptcy; operations of schools and parishes to continue

Archbishop Michael Byrnes announced today that within the next month and a half, the Archdiocese of Agaña will file a Chapter 11 reorganization proceeding in the United States District Court of Guam.

“The bankruptcy proceeding is a continuation of the good faith mediation protocol that the archdiocese has engaged in for over the past year,” said Archbishop Byrnes. “The bankruptcy process will allow all abuse claimants to have their claims resolved in a process that will also allow the archdiocese to continue its mission to the Catholic community.”

“This is the best way to bring the greatest measure of justice to the greatest number of victims,” Archbishop Byrnes emphasized today.

The archbishop announced the news to reporters after first meeting with leaders of Catholic parishes, schools and organizations to brief them first-hand. He emphasized the importance of our Church staying strong and united in this newest chapter of its journey to correct the wrongs of the past and become a better archdiocese.

Archbishop Byrnes made the decision in consultation with the Archdiocesan Finance Council and the College of Consulters priest advisory group, both of which support the filing.

Parishes and schools will continue their operations after the bankruptcy has been filed, and it is anticipated that there will be a notice process allowing all victims of clergy abuse to have their claims resolved in a fair process.

The Chapter 11 process will also allow the continued reorganization of the archdiocese’s finances, which has been ongoing over the last two years, and is critical in providing transparency to the abuse claimants and the Catholic community.

“The archdiocese believes that this process will be the most expeditious way to resolve all abuse claims,” said Ford Elsaesser, a bankruptcy attorney from Idaho that has been retained by the archdiocese to handle the Chapter 11 proceeding. “Our experience with other dioceses that have gone through the bankruptcy process indicates that the bankruptcy process works well for this purpose and allows full involvement and participation by the abuse claimants and their counsel.”

The filing of the bankruptcy is anticipated to occur between mid-December and mid-January. Further information about the Chapter 11 filing will be forthcoming.

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