

## **St. Apollinaris Catholic Church**

### **Statement on the Intention of the Diocese of Santa Rosa to File for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Protection 12/3/22**

In a December 2, 2022, statement, Bishop Vasa announced that the Diocese of Santa Rosa intends to file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Protection between January 1 and March 1, 2023. Bishop Vasa states that this action is being taken in response to the “number of sexual abuse lawsuits filed against the Diocese after the statute of limitations was lifted for a three-year ‘window’”.

Bishop Vasa goes on to state that “the only entity filing for bankruptcy protection is the corporation sole known legally as the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. The parishes and Catholic schools within our Diocese are separate civil corporations or separate ecclesial entities and should not be parties to this filing. There are many matters to be discerned by the bankruptcy court and so absolute certainty about the degree of participation by any other entities such as parishes and schools will be determined in the course of the proceedings.”

Saint Apollinaris Parish (including Saint Apollinaris Catholic School) is separately incorporated under the title, “Pastor of St. Apollinaris Catholic Church of Napa, A Corporation Sole”. In both civil and canon law, all parish and school monies belong to this corporation, not to the Diocese. Research shows that, in bankruptcy filings of other dioceses, judges have respected the understanding that parishes (and parish schools, as ministries of the parish) are separate entities from the Diocese.

This situation will, of course, continue to evolve. As it does, I will be working very closely with our parish and school staff, our Parish Finance Council, and our legal advisors, to ensure that the assets and resources of the parish and school are protected from the process. I will continue to keep our parishioners informed of what is happening in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

While none of us knows what tomorrow will hold, I do have a deep and abiding faith in the power of prayer and in the strength of a united faith community. Therefore, I thank you for your support and prayers for our parish. I ask for your prayers that all victims of clergy sexual abuse will be able to receive the help they need from this process to achieve true and lasting healing. I ask for your prayers also for all of the employees of the Diocese, its parishes and its schools, who are particularly affected by this time of uncertainty.

May God bless all of you and those you love with His peace.

Fr. Fergal McGuinness, Pastor