News



A sculpture is pictured outside the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Santa Fe, N.M., May 20, 2021. (OSV News/Bob Roller, CNS file)

by OSV News

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Albuquerque, N.M. — September 9, 2024

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The Archdiocese of Santa Fe has installed a plaque near the entrance of the Pastoral Center in Albuquerque "as a solemn acknowledgment and remembrance" of all victims of clergy sexual abuse, both living and deceased, within the archdiocese.

A brief dedication ceremony for the plaque will be held Sept. 23, "and per the request of victims in the recent Chapter 11 settlement agreement, (it) will not include any religious rite or ceremony," an archdiocesan news release said.

In December 2022, a federal bankruptcy judge approved a $121 million reorganization plan for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in its yearslong effort to respond to clergy sexual abuse. The settlement capped four years of Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings for the archdiocese.

Bronze plaque pictured in small courtyard.

The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M., will hold a brief dedication ceremony for this newly installed plaque near the entrance of the Pastoral Center Sept. 23, 2024. The plaque serves as "a solemn acknowledgment and remembrance of all victims of clergy sexual abuse, both living and deceased, within the archdiocese," a news release said. (OSV News/Leslie M. Radigan, courtesy Archdiocese of Santa Fe)

The inscription on the plaque reads: "In remembrance of all victims of sexual abuse, living and deceased, in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. The archdiocese acknowledges your pain and apologizes for our failure to listen, to intervene, and to protect. We are resolved that it never happens again and are committed to the healing process and to reconciling our past with our hope for the future."

Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe said the plaque "stands as a permanent and painful reminder of the suffering endured by victims of clergy sexual abuse within our archdiocese."

"As we dedicate this plaque, we are compelled to confront our past with humility and sorrow, acknowledging the grave failures that have caused immeasurable pain," he said in a statement. "We are committed to ensuring these tragic events are never repeated, and the path of healing and reconciliation remains our foremost priority. This dedication is not just a moment of reflection but a vow to uphold the dignity and safety of every member of our community."

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In an open letter he released in March 16, 2023, following the Dec. 29 bankruptcy settlement, the archbishop told abuse victims, "I wish to express my profound regret and sorrow over the tragic and inexcusable harm done to you by clergy sexual abuse. As Archbishop of Santa Fe, I apologize to each of you and to all those who have been harmed by sexual abuse perpetrated by Roman Catholic Clergy in this archdiocese."

Wester added that the archdiocese "takes full responsibility for the abuse."

"I am ashamed of what happened to you and even more so that it happened within the auspices of the Catholic Church," the archbishop said. "There are no words that can convey how sorry I am and how committed this archdiocese is to keep children and young people safe."

The archdiocese, in a news release announcing the plaque dedication, said it is "committed to ensuring such tragedies do not occur again and continues to support the ongoing healing process for all those affected."

A version of this story appeared in the **Sept 27-Oct 10, 2024** print issue under the headline: Plaque is 'solemn acknowledgement' of abuse survivors.