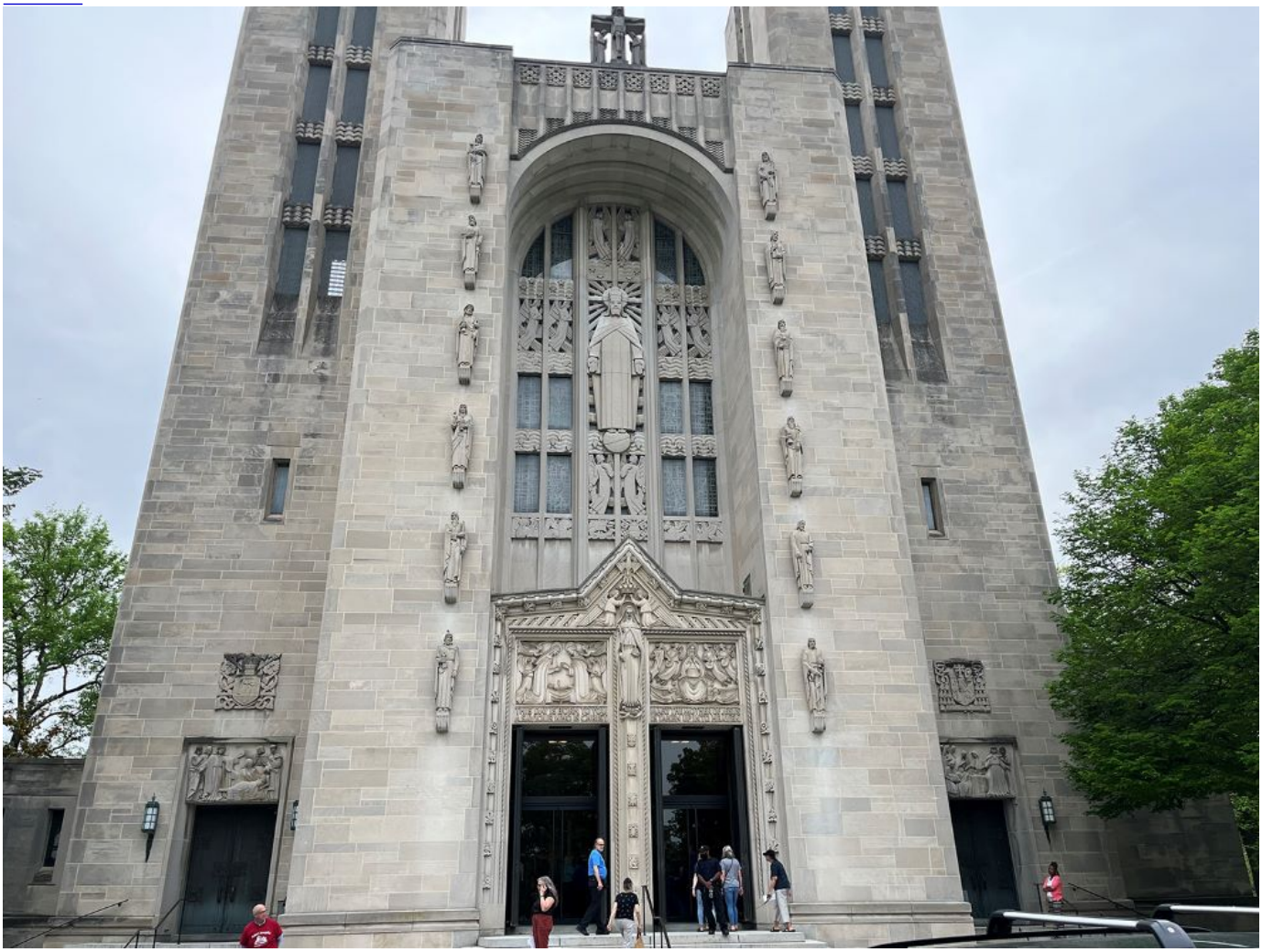
News



The Archdiocese of Baltimore's Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. (RNS/Aleja Hertzler-McCain)

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The Archdiocese of Baltimore submitted a proposed plan for reorganization May 15 in an effort to complete its Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization, with the goal of equitably compensating victims of child sexual abuse by clergy and others affiliated with the Catholic Church in Maryland.

The proposal includes establishing a survivor compensation trust totaling at least $168.9 million to evaluate and resolve claims. That amount would be funded by contributions from the archdiocese and its insurers.

Additional funds will be contributed by participating parishes, schools and related Catholic entities. That amount is still to be calculated.

A statement from the archdiocese at the time the plan was filed said, "At its core, the proposed plan seeks to provide equitable compensation to survivors while sustaining the Church's mission and ministries. It reflects a commitment to transparency and a realistic assessment of available resources."

It continued: "While the archdiocese remains firmly committed to reaching an agreed-upon resolution through mediation, no final agreement has yet been achieved. The proposed plan is intended to advance discussions, provide a framework for resolution and support continued dialogue among all parties."

The plan includes $43.9 million from the archdiocese and at least $125 million combined from two insurance companies that covered parishes, schools and the archdiocese during the times covered by some of the claims.

Funds to the trust from the archdiocese would come from unrestricted assets. The plan does not anticipate the Baltimore Archdiocese selling any real estate,

according to Christian Kendzierski, archdiocesan executive director of communications.

The parishes or other entities would also contribute from unrestricted assets.

Other insurance carriers are expected to contribute to the trust as well, he said, although the specifics cannot be revealed now because the conversations are part of the mediation process, which is confidential.

The archdiocese's proposed plan also includes "non-monetary obligations to further enhance the existing child safety and protection policies and procedures within the archdiocese," which is something the survivors' committee, known as the Unsecured Creditors Committee, has requested.

Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Adam Parker, who has testified in the court process and has been present for many hearings, said the archdiocese discussed with the Creditors Committee the possibility of retaining an independent, third-party consultant who is an expert on the subject matter to review archdiocesan policies and procedures for screening and training.

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The court approved in February a joint motion by the archdiocese and the committee to designate Guidepost Solutions as that agency.

"We welcome the opportunity to review our zero-tolerance policies. Our goal is to have the safest possible environment for our young people, and to ensure that what happened in the past would never be repeated," he told the Catholic Review, media outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Parker and Archbishop William Lori have been present in the bankruptcy court for three separate sessions in which victim-survivors provided statements about the impact of their abuse by clergy or others connected to the Church. After the third such session, Lori said hearing their experiences was "soul searing" and that it was important for them to be heard.

Parker said what struck him the most about these sessions as well as other conversations he has had over the years with victim-survivors is that they "want to

feel that somebody in the church cares for what happened to them and what is happening to them now."

He believes these needs are addressed by each claimant having a vote in the process of confirming the plan to set up the Survivor Compensation Trust, and that they are represented by the Unsecured Creditors Committee, a group of seven victim-survivors who represent all in the case.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in September 2023. In October 2025, the archdiocese had filed a form plan that would have included $33 million from the archdiocese and other Catholic entities and anticipated significant contributions from insurance carriers.

In April 2026, the Unsecured Creditors Committee filed a proposed plan seeking approximately $526 million from the archdiocese, as debtor in the case, plus affiliated entities and the insurers. Much of that plan was predicated on the committee's argument that the archdiocese and its parishes and schools should be consolidated into one entity.

However, Judge Michelle Harner, who oversees the case, ruled April 29 that "the structure of the Debtor as a separate entity from, and a service provider to, the nondebtor parishes and schools appears to align with general diocesan structure and Maryland law."

The Acting Trustee for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, David Asbach, also objected to the Creditors Committee plan, arguing May 7 that its plan is "patently unconfirmable" because the parishes and schools are separate nonprofit corporations and cannot be forced into bankruptcy.

The total number of allowed claims in the case is still unknown, but the court May 7 merged 227 claims into other claims because the claims were amended, superseded or duplicative.

In April, Harner set a timeline for the next several months to move toward a settlement in the Chapter 11 process, with closing arguments Sept. 22.

After the plan is finalized, an independent claims administrator will determine the amount each claimant will receive from the Survivor Compensation Trust, but it's unclear how long that process will take.

Parker said, "It's important to know that we would like to see survivors compensated as soon as possible. Our goal is that a sense of closure for them is of paramount importance to Archbishop Lori and to me, and that's our goal. We would like to pay them, and we would like to pay them today."