

DIOCESE OF ORANGE



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STATEMENT OF BISHOP BROWN REGARDING SEX ABUSE SETTLEMENT

Our goal has been to reach a prompt, just and compassionate resolution to the civil claims filed against the Diocese of Orange and settlement talks have made significant progress recently. Although the terms of an agreement have not been finalized, all the parties have an agreement in principal. I want to express my gratitude to Judges Fromholz, Lichtman, Kwong and Nuss for their efforts on behalf of a settlement. We put our trust in their judgment and expertise and they deserve much credit for bringing the parties to an agreement. We also a grateful for the willingness of the plaintiffs, their lawyers and our insurers to reach this settlement.

A settlement means:

- We have kept our commitment to the victims of these crimes by compensating them, with the help of our insurers, at a level that is, in our view, significant, generous and compassionate. For us as a church, it is also very, very costly. But such a settlement will allow us, chastened, to move forward with all the good works we do.
- Terrible things did happen to many of those who filed claims against our diocese and now these victims will not have to relive them in court, which would likely have injured them further. Additionally, the sordid details of these crimes would not be splashed across the media day-after-day, which would be painful for all Catholics and those who care about our church.
- A settlement is the best way we can avoid what happened in other dioceses. In those dioceses, victims were remunerated up to the point that the diocesan cupboards became bare; then, when there was nothing left for other victims, they were forced into bankruptcy.

We are ashamed that the crime of sexual abuse took place in our church and are determined that it will not happen again. Even after these cases are settled, all our efforts to make our church a safer environment for all and to educate everyone about the horror of childhood sexual abuse in our society will continue. We owe it to those who have suffered this kind of abuse to name it for what it is and, as far as possible, make amends.

I want, finally, to express my appreciation to our diocesan legal team who have worked tirelessly over the last 24 months to work out a just and compassionate settlement for the victim survivors that allows us to continue our important mission as the Catholic Church in Orange County. Thanks too for the many legal experts who advised them; they came to our aid in our hour of need.