Dear People of the Diocese of Stockton,

It has been about three months since I last wrote to you about the financial situation in which the Diocese * finds itself. At that time I mentioned that we were continuing to look into options other than filing for bankruptcy. However, no viable option has emerged other than re-organizing financially under the protection of Bankruptcy Court. Moving in this direction will enable us to continue to meet our obligations to the victims of sexual abuse, to the poor and vulnerable, and to you our people.

During these months we have met with the Pastors and the Directors of various Catholic organizations located within the Diocese of Stockton to keep them informed and to encourage them to secure legal advice on possible claims that might be made by the creditors of the Diocese. These parishes and organizations are separate corporations and are not subjects of the possible bankruptcy filing. Still they need to be prepared in case they are challenged, as has happened in other dioceses.

In the meantime our local Church continues its important works: educating our children, celebrating the sacraments, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and all the other ministries done in the name of Jesus Christ. At this time of Thanksgiving I continue to be overwhelmed by the thousands of people in the Diocese of Stockton participating in one way or another in their parishes, schools and all the works of the Church. The FAITH is alive among you and in your hearts.

I am grateful to you for your continued confidence in the Diocese, in your parishes, in your schools and in your organizations. Your ongoing support and your commitment to the Church for Tomorrow and the Bishop's Ministry Appeal are what allow our Church to continue to do the work of Christ.

I anticipate the Diocese making a decision on our financial future after the First of the Year.

With every Good Wish, I am

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire
Roman Catholic Bishop of Stockton

* "The Diocese" refers to “The Roman Catholic Bishop of Stockton, a corporation sole.”