

The state of New York has settled a class action lawsuit over sexual abuse by Catholic clergy, and others are pending. What does this tell us about the Catholic Church? What does the Bible have to say about sexual misconduct?

“Likewise, Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual promiscuity and practiced unnatural vice, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire”—Jude 7 NAB

All types of sexual immorality are condemned by the Bible. However, the Catholic Church has often looked the other way, or even worse, has covered up such gross wrongdoing by its leaders. The Bible even foretold one of the contributing factors that has led to such wickedness.

“God’s Spirit clearly says that in the last days many people will turn from their faith. They will be fooled by evil spirits and by teachings that come from demons. They will also be fooled by the false claims of liars whose consciences have lost all feeling. These liars will *forbid people to marry or to eat certain foods*. But God created these foods to be eaten with thankful hearts by his followers who know the truth”—1 Timothy 4:1-3 CEV

Of course, the perverse, immoral individuals bear serious responsibility before God for their crimes, but the Catholic Church’s unscriptural policy of celibacy for its priests and nuns has been a factor that has contributed such scandalous behavior.

The following news article about this appeared in *The Christian Post* on December 7, 2024:

Court approves Catholic diocese's \$323M sexual abuse settlement

By Ryan Foley, Christian Post Reporter Friday, December 06, 2024



Getty Images

A court has approved a Roman Catholic diocese's settlement with sexual abuse survivors, which is the largest such payment in New York state history.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, based on Long Island, New

York, published a *statement* Wednesday noting that it had reached a \$323 million settlement with survivors of sexual abuse: “We are grateful to God that on December 4th, the court confirmed the Plan that resolves and ends the Bankruptcy Case for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, all our parishes, and related ministries.”

“For the sake of abuse survivors and the [Catholic] Church’s mission on Long Island, we pray that the Plan brings some measure of healing to survivors and allows the [Catholic] Church to carry on the saving mission of Jesus Christ,” a spokesperson for the diocese added. “Victim survivors of child abuse deserve our respect, our prayers, and our pastoral support. The Church is grateful for their courage and perseverance.”

The diocese provided a breakdown of where the funds to cover the cost of the settlement would come from: “The Diocese, parishes and other related entities contributed a total of \$234.8 million. Insurance companies contributed a total of just over \$85 million. Counsel for the Creditor’s Committee contributed just over \$3 million.”

The Diocese explained that it entered into bankruptcy proceedings in order to “secure a release from any past liabilities for the parishes” and ensure that parishes can “continue their ministry, free from historical lawsuits and free from bankruptcy.” The statement added that, “No parishes are closing as a result of this process” and “No Catholic Ministries Appeal donations were used for this settlement.”

“The Diocese’s goal has always been the equitable compensation of

survivors of abuse while allowing the [Catholic] Church to continue her essential mission. We believe this plan has achieved those goals," the diocese concluded.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre first announced that it had reached a settlement with more than 600 abuse survivors in [September](#). Survivors had previously rejected a \$200 million offer made by the diocese, which fell short of the \$450 million requested by lawyers for the abuse victims.

According to data compiled by the Bishop Accountability Project, [128 priests](#) in the Diocese of Rockville, both living and deceased, have faced credible allegations of abuse. The diocese first filed for bankruptcy four years ago after the [New York Child Victims Act](#) became law in 2019.

The legislation established a one-year window where survivors could bring forth lawsuits alleging abuse that took place outside the statute of limitations and extended the timeframe when a victim could file a lawsuit alleging clerical abuse from within one to five years after the survivor turns 18 to until the victim reaches [55](#) years of age.

In addition to the Diocese of Rockville Centre, several other dioceses in New York and across the United States have filed for bankruptcy as they faced a multitude of abuse claims following the passage of state laws allowing survivors to file lawsuits regardless of how long ago the misdeeds occurred.

The Diocese of [Rochester](#) in New York and the Dioceses of [Fresno](#) and [Sacramento](#) in California have also entered into bankruptcy proceedings in response to lawsuits brought by those who experienced abuse at the hands

of Catholic clergy.

While the news reports of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy are shocking enough, we should not be completely surprised by such things, because the Bible foretold them. However, the Bible is very clear how God sees such behavior and the excuses made for it:

“They claim to know God, but by their deeds they deny him. They are vile and disobedient and unqualified for any good deed”—Titus 1:16 NAB