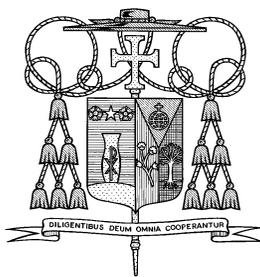


## Diocese of Beaumont

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Office of the Bishop

December 12, 2013

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

I am deeply saddened by the sexual abuse scandals that have affected the church and now our own diocese and the Southeast Texas community. These global scandals have profoundly impacted many lives and have grieved our priests including myself. On December 11, 2013, the attorney for the diocese announced that we were able to settle the case of six plaintiffs who alleged sex abuse by Ronald Bollich, a priest who died in 1996. The plaintiffs said the alleged acts took place 20 to 30+ years ago. We are unable to reveal the amount of the settlements to you because the plaintiffs requested that the amount remain confidential.

At the time of the settlement the court was considering motions on behalf of the Diocese that could have resulted in the dismissal of the case. The attorney for the diocese continues to advise that we had valid defenses to all the plaintiffs' claims. However, from the beginning, all the parties recognized that it would be in the best interest for all involved if the case could be resolved outside of the legal system. The announcement of the settlement followed nearly two years of negotiations. I believe we have acted in a responsible and amicable manner in the disposition of these allegations. My decision to settle this lawsuit at this time has been the result of much prayer, consultation, and reflection.

In the words of our Holy Father Pope Francis, "The pain and the shame we feel at the sins of some members of the Church, and at our own, must never make us forget how many Christians are giving their lives in love." Like our Holy Father, I too am grateful for the beautiful example given to me by so many individuals – both Catholic and non-Catholic – who joyfully sacrifice their lives and their time. I am especially encouraged by the priests of our diocese as they continue their pastoral ministry in light of the scandal and these recent allegations.

I know you are well aware of the safeguards that have been put in place under the "Protecting God's Children" banner. Since that program was implemented in 2003, more than 7,000 adults who work or volunteer in ministry for our diocese – including all of our current priests and seminarians – have been trained through those sessions. We conduct background checks before any applicant is hired at the pastoral center, our parishes and our schools or before any volunteer is accepted to work with children. These include background checks on our priests and seminarians. Our diocese continues to be diligent in the selection of individuals who minister in the name of the Church.

I ask you to join me in prayer, asking God to provide healing for all victims of sexual abuse and for all of us whose lives – in any way – have been touched by this pain.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Curtis J. Guillory".

Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.  
Bishop of Beaumont

[More information on what the Diocese of Beaumont is doing to promote a safe environment](#)