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Ogdensburg, N.Y. — July 18, 2023

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg in northern New York said July 17 that it was filing for bankruptcy protection as it faces more than 100 lawsuits alleging sexual abuse.

The diocese, like others in the state, is dealing with lawsuits dating to when New York temporarily suspended the statute of limitations to give victims of childhood abuse the ability to pursue even decades-old allegations against clergy members, teachers, Boy Scout leaders and others.

Ogdensburg Bishop Terry LaValley said there were 124 cases pending against the diocese, with claims dating from the 1940s through the 1990s.

Ogdensburg is the sixth of New York's eight dioceses to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, a list that also includes those based in [Buffalo](#), [Rochester](#) and [Rockville Centre](#) on Long Island.

Ogdensburg serves a big but largely rural area, and its 81 parishes are the fewest of any diocese in the state.

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Diocesan officials said the goal of the filing was to resolve the legal cases fairly and equitably while maintaining their mission of service.

"Filing for reorganization does not hinder claims filed by survivors," LaValley said in a prepared statement. "Instead, it establishes a process for all claims to be treated fairly."

Attorneys for survivors said the diocese was putting its self-interest above accountability.

"In declaring bankruptcy, the diocese knowingly obstructs survivors' long-awaited opportunity to say their piece; to be heard, to be acknowledged," attorney Cynthia LaFave said in a prepared statement.