

## Christian Brothers file for bankruptcy

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With the Christian Brothers declaring bankruptcy, time is running out for victims of abuse at the Christian Brothers-run [Mount Cashel](#) orphanage to come forward to file a claim against the religious order.

A notice in Friday's Telegram announced the Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which was filed in New York court April 28, 2011, listing the various operations affected by the bankruptcy — including the Christian Brothers' Institute and the North American Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers — and set a deadline for claims to be filed by abuse victims.

About 20 Christian Brothers were convicted for sexual acts against former residents of the orphanage.

“If you were sexually abused by any Brother of the debtors or any other person connected with the debtors and wish to file a claim against the debtors, you must file a claim by August 1, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time),” reads the notice.

Geoff Budden, who represents clients who suffered abuse at Mount Cashel, explained that Chapter 11 bankruptcy involves a reorganization of a debtors' assets and claims so that compensation can be distributed.

“The common meaning of the word ‘bankruptcy’ means ‘I have no money, I’m broke.’ That’s not true here. They have, by their own reckoning, at least \$50 million in property,” he said. “They’re in the process of selling some of that, ideally, or perhaps ultimately, selling all of it to satisfy claims. What the bankruptcy process requires, and this is true of many bankruptcies, is that there be advertisements to make potential claimants aware that you have until Aug. 1 to file a claim.”

All the claims have to be identified and valued, and then the money distributed according to whatever the bankruptcy court orders, said Budden. “There’s 60-something claims that have come forward. We represent 46 of those, and there’s another 20 or so originating almost entirely in Washington state,” he said.

With the bankruptcy notice and the deadline for claims set, the end of the long legal fight may be in sight.

“It’s been a battle that’s been on the go for over 10 years, and every inch of the way has been a battle, and this is the most recent one,” he said. “But we’re optimistic that the bankruptcy will, as it unfolds, will deliver compensation to our clients.”

He added that it’s still too soon to know when that end will be. “It’s beyond my power to control, so I can’t really say whether we’re looking at a 2012 resolution or a 2013 resolution. Hopefully it will be one or the other,” he said.