

Save Our Buffalo Churches, St. Clare's Pensioners & Survivors

November 13, 2025

Board of Directors
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
777 3rd Ave, 23rd floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Members of the Board,

We write today as three communities experiencing profound hardship — survivors of childhood sexual abuse, who continue to seek long-overdue justice and healing; the St. Clare's pensioners, who have been in court fighting for the retirement security they earned through decades of service in Catholic healthcare; and the parishioners in Buffalo, whose beloved churches face closure and alienation despite vibrant congregations willing to sustain them.

Although our experiences differ, all three communities share a painful truth: we were harmed by the actions and inactions of Church institutions, and that harm has left deep wounds — financial, spiritual, emotional, and physical. Some of us are Catholic, some are former Catholics, and many were never Catholic at all — but all suffered because systems meant to protect and support people instead failed them.

As we celebrate the feast day of Mother Cabrini, we are reminded of her unwavering commitment to the vulnerable and her refusal to ignore suffering anywhere she found it. Her example is the moral compass that guides this appeal.

A Foundation Created to Serve the Vulnerable

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was established through the \$3.2 billion sale of Fidelis Care, approved by the New York State Legislature, with a mandate to support the health and well-being of vulnerable and underserved New Yorkers. Guided by the legacy of Mother Cabrini, the Foundation exists to bridge gaps in care, eliminate barriers, and support those most in need.

Today, the people we represent stand clearly within that mission:

- Buffalo's parish communities, destabilized by sweeping closures and mergers despite having the faithful, the financial support, and the commitment to remain open.
- Survivors, many of whom for the past seven years since the passage of the Child Victims Act have been locked in a legal morass denied the long-term healing resources, and institutional acknowledgment of the harm they endured.
- St. Clare's pensioners, over 1,100 former employees whose pension collapsed in 2018 and who are now on trial in Schenectady County Supreme Court seeking justice after years of uncertainty.

These are New Yorkers in profound need — the very people the Foundation was created to serve.

Why the Foundation's Leadership Is Needed Now

Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Many survivors are not Catholic, and many who once were have left the Church because of the trauma they endured. Their harm is ongoing — affecting their mental health, physical well-being, and long-term stability. They need resources that support healing and justice in a survivor-centered way.

St. Clare's Pensioners

After decades of service in Catholic healthcare, pensioners were assured their retirement benefits were secure — only to see the fund collapse. Many now face serious financial strain and health insecurity. Their case now before the court underscores how long they have waited for justice.

Buffalo Parish Communities

Parish closures threaten the stability of entire neighborhoods, cutting off seniors, immigrants, working families, and others who depend on their parishes for spiritual

life, community, and social support. These closures undermine community cohesion and well-being.

All three groups are suffering today in ways directly tied to the health, dignity, and stability of vulnerable New Yorkers.

Honoring Mother Cabrini's Legacy Today

Mother Cabrini devoted her life to the people others overlooked — immigrants, the poor, the abandoned, and those without a voice. She did not hesitate to act when people were suffering.

Guided by that legacy, we ask the Foundation to explore emergency relief, stabilization funds, and community support initiatives that could:

- Honor the commitment made to St. Clare's pensioners, who now face financial and health insecurity while their case proceeds through the courts
- Support the parish communities in Buffalo, where closures and mergers are destabilizing families and neighborhoods
- Strengthen the financial capacity of dioceses to finally provide full, transparent, survivor-centered justice — supported by the resources necessary to do what should have been done years ago

These actions would not excuse or replace the obligations of dioceses. Rather, they would enable the Church to meet those obligations responsibly and compassionately.

A Call to Compassionate Action

We understand that the Foundation must operate within legal and charter constraints. But we believe — firmly and respectfully — that there is room, and indeed a moral imperative, to address the human suffering unfolding across New York.

This moment touches Catholics, former Catholics, and those who were never Catholic — all harmed by institutional failures. The Foundation's mission, resources, and moral purpose are uniquely suited to meet this moment of need.

A Request for Intercession

In the spirit of Mother Cabrini — whose feast day reminds us of her courage, mercy, and tireless devotion to those in need — we respectfully request a meeting with Foundation leadership to explore potential pathways for assistance aligned with both the Foundation's mission and the pressing needs of survivors, pensioners, and parish communities.

The Foundation was created for times when vulnerable New Yorkers need help the most.

That time is now.

With respect and hope,

St. Clare's Pensioners

Save Our Buffalo Churches
Mary Pruski

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