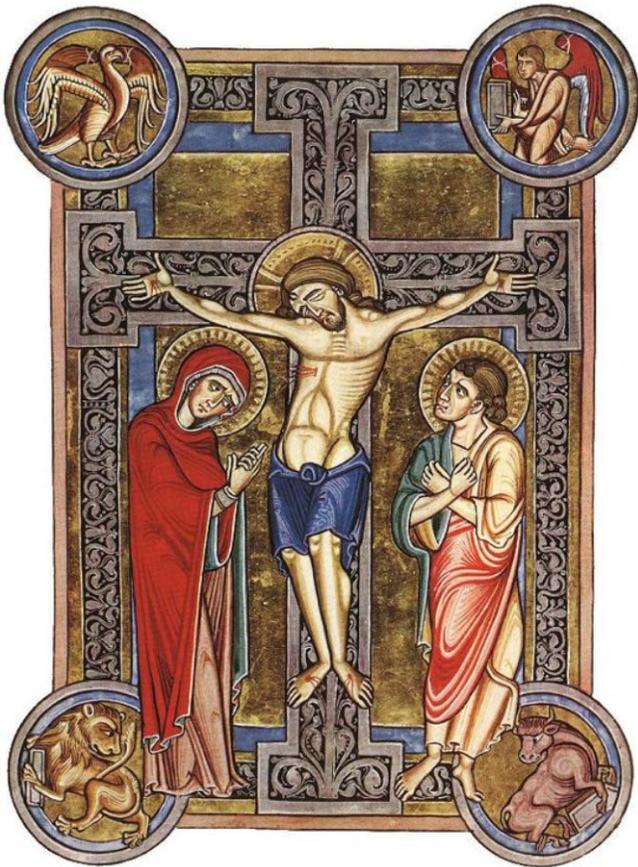


Prayer for Victims of Sexual Abuse And Guidance for the Church in the Future



INTRODUCTION

Archbishop:

My brothers, on August 20, Pope Francis wrote to the People of God, acknowledging the pain and scandal caused by the sexual abuse within the Church and by the bishops and superiors who ignored the victims and protected the guilty. We gather in prayer today, **first**, to acknowledge the wounds that this has caused to innocent children, women and men, as well as our own parishioners and ourselves and to pray for justice and the Spirit's gift of healing for them.

Second of all, we pray for wisdom and enlightenment for the future. Although we stand helpless before these wounded people, knowing that we lack the power to undo the past, nevertheless, we plead for the Spirit's knowledge and perseverance to know how to re-establish trust and confidence among all disciples of Christ, especially those who have lost faith in us, the Church or in Christ.

And so, we implore the Spirit's guidance and direction for the days ahead, and ask the Good Shepherd to lead the Church in the right path as we seek to go forward.

But first, as we begin this prayer service let us place ourselves before the mercy of the Lord and ask forgiveness for these crimes.

PENITENTIAL ACT

For the suffering caused to all survivors who have been subjected to the abuse of power, conscience, and sexual dignity, and for the criminal acts perpetrated by those with roles of responsibility in the Church, we ask forgiveness.

R. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For the times that as a Church we did not show survivors of abuse the compassion they needed and did not accompany or support them in the search for justice and truth through our concrete actions, we ask forgiveness. **R. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

For the members of the Church's hierarchy who did not act in these painful situations, kept silent or sought to hide the wrong doing, we ask forgiveness.

R. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Archbishop:

With humble and contrite hearts, we praise you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all consolation and hope, for by your Son's dying and rising, he has become our light in every darkness, our strength in every weakness. Be the refuge and guardian of all who suffer from abuse and violence. Comfort them and send healing for their wounds of body, soul and spirit. Rescue them from bitterness and shame and refresh them with your love. Heal the brokenness in all victims of abuse and revive the spirits of all who lament this sin. Help us to follow Jesus in

drawing good from evil and life from death. Make us one with you in your love for justice as we deepen our respect for the dignity of every human life. Giver of peace, make us one in celebrating your praise, both now and forever.¹

All: Amen.

FIRST READING Joel 2.12, 15-16ab, 17-18

A reading from the book of the prophet Joel.

"Even now," says the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing." "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast." Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The Word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

PSALM Psalm 51.1-2, 3-4a, 10-11, 12+15

Archbishop: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

All recite together:

**Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.**

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.**

**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.**

¹ Based on Bishop John F. Kinney, Bishop of Saint Cloud, MN, Imprimatur given May 15, 2002

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.**

**Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

**O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever.**

**Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned,
be merciful, O Lord.**

SECOND READING Ephesians 4.4-6

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. The Word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

PRAYER *All recite together*

Lord Jesus Christ, Divine Saviour,/ who has entrusted the work of your redemption/ and the salvation of the world,/ to priests as your representatives,/ I offer you through the hands of your most Holy Mother Mary,/ my life, whole and entire,/ with all its prayers, works, and sacrifices,/ its joys and sorrows,/ for the sanctification of my fellow priests,/ and for all those preparing for the priesthood./ Grant that we may be truly holy priests, /inflamed with the fire of your divine love,/ who seek nothing but your greater glory

/and the salvation of souls./ And you, Mary, Mother of priests,/ protect all your priests from dangers to their holy vocation,/ and with the loving hand of a mother,/ lead back to the Good Shepherd/ those unfortunate priests who,/ unfaithful to their exalted vocation,/ have gone astray./ Amen.

GOSPEL

Matthew 25. 31-40

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Archbishop:

With humility of heart and in the hope of salvation, let us pray to God, whose love and faithfulness endures forever.

Readers:

For the people who have been abused, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or sexually,

that the Lord of all tenderness and compassion will lead them in the paths of healing and restoration and give them peace. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all the ministers and leaders of the Church, that they may enact tangible gestures of justice and reparation and seek the Spirit’s enlightenment in guiding the Church into the future. We pray to the Lord

For our parish communities, that the Spirit will give us the words to reestablish trust and confidence with them, and that together, we may strengthen our commitment to make the Church a safe place for the most vulnerable people of society, particularly our children and elderly. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For an end to acts of violence and abuse, that compassion replace indifference, goodness dispel evil, and truth displace the silence of complicity. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For those who have been scandalized, confused and/or angered by the abuse of minors and by the Church’s lack of response, that the God of consolation may restore faith, hope and love in the hearts of all people. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For a solidarity among all God’s people in penitential prayer and fasting, that all Christians will seek a greater conversion and holiness of heart in their vocation as disciples of Christ in witness to the Good News of salvation. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For all the shepherds of the Church who are demoralized, shamed or disheartened by the revelation of sexual abuse by their fellow priests, that we, along with them, may support one another in the ways of prayer, fraternity and holiness as shepherds of Christ’s flock. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For our seminarians, that the love of Jesus and his people may strengthen their resolve to serve the Church and preserve them from hopelessness and discouragement. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

For the healing professions, who minister to those who suffer violence and abuse, that God

will give them an abundance of wisdom, compassion and love. We pray to the Lord. *R.*

For the grace of repentance and contrition for those who have abused others, and for a spirit of forgiveness that offers them reconciliation with God and the Church. We pray to the Lord. *R.*

Archbishop:

God our rock and strength, the One on whom we lean, dispel the gloom of sin that clings to Christ's bride, the Church, and help us to create an atmosphere of trust which allows the unspeakable to be said and heard, and the good news to be proclaimed to the downcast. Grant that despite our painful memories, we may support one another in our ministry and be havens of safety for all your people. In the exercise of our priestly office, we seek the guidance of your Son, the Good Shepherd, that he may speak to the hearts and minds of your ministers, as well as to your holy people. Through Christ our Lord. *R. Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Archbishop:

Remembering the mercy and compassion that Jesus showed, let us pray that we may be delivered from all sin and evil in the words that Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father...

Archbishop:

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

All pray together:

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour
for he has looked with favour
on his lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me
blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.**

**He has mercy on those who fear him in every
generation.**

**He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.**

**He has cast down the mighty from their
thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.**

**He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.**

**He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever. Amen.**

Archbishop: Let us bless the Lord.

All: And give him thanks.



CANTICLE OF MARY