



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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September 21, 2018
Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle

Dear People of the Archdiocese of San Francisco,

In my letter to you of August 17, 2018, I explained that I would consult the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and my Cabinet in order to determine how I would designate an act of reparation be conducted in the Archdiocese for the horrendous crimes of clerical sexual abuse. Since then, revelations have continued to unfold – especially with the publication of stories from the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report – which speak to the depth of the evil that occurred. The violations of sacred trust by those called to be spiritual fathers to God’s people fill us all with disgust and horror. Indeed, some of these incidents are nothing short of diabolical.

This is why our focus on the urgently needed reform in the Church must be on prayer and penance. As our Lord himself has said, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting” (Mk 9:29). At the same time, while this spiritual focus must always remain primary, there is more we have to do. During this time of rightful righteous indignation among our people, it is more important than ever that we, your leaders, listen to you. Therefore, in addition to the consultations I have already undertaken, I have also scheduled five opportunities for people in our Archdiocese to meet with me and speak to me directly. The schedule is as follows:

Sunday, September 30, 5:00pm: St. Anthony, Novato
Sunday, October 7, 5:00pm: St. Matthew, San Mateo
Wednesday, October 17, 7:00pm: St. Mary’s Cathedral, San Francisco
Thursday, October 18, 5:00pm: St. Stephen, San Francisco
Sunday, October 28, 6:00pm: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Belmont

Since the primary focus must always be on prayer, we will begin these sessions with praying the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours for the Evening Hour, Vespers. After that, those present will be able to ask questions and make comments. While I cannot claim to have all of the answers to the trials the Church is suffering at this time, I pledge to do my best to listen and respond.

After these meetings with you, and further consultations with our Archdiocesan Independent Review Board and my Cabinet, I will determine what further steps will be necessary to help bring about the desperately needed purification of our Church. I also take this opportunity to thank the members of the IRB for using their broad range of expertise from their diverse professional backgrounds for insuring accountability and transparency in handling both individual cases and general policies regarding the sexual abuse of minors by the Church’s ministers, and for their steadfast love of the Church. I find their insights and recommendations to be invaluable. I wish as well to express a special word of gratitude to our Victims’ Assistance Coordinator, Rocio Rodriguez, for her unwavering reliability in providing compassion and support to those who are survivors of clerical sexual abuse. For those who can benefit from this service provided by our Archdiocese, Rocio may be contacted at: rodriguezr@sfarchdiocese.org.

At the same time, we also continue to make available on the Archdiocesan website a means for easily and promptly reporting abuse (<https://www.sfarchdiocese.org/how-to-report-suspected-abuse>).

While we must continue to discern what practical measures in the temporal order must be taken in order to achieve the reform we all earnestly seek, we must remember that none of it will have the desired effect without help from above. Therefore, in light of the discussions I have had, I am designating three successive First Fridays of the month for our priests to dedicate themselves to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and to serious bodily fasting. Adoration will take place from 9:00am to 6:00pm on October 5, November 2 and December 7, and priests are asked to sign up for *at least* one hour (and preferably more if they can) of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on those days at one of the following locations:

St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco
St. Isabella Parish, San Rafael
St. Matthew Parish, San Mateo

On December 15th, these locations will host Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for you, our lay faithful, deacons and religious, to join with your priests in prayer, from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. Of course, you are also welcome to join them if you wish on any of the other three days of Adoration. Moreover, in light of the discussion at the Presbyteral Council meeting, I also ask our priests to take up a specific act of charity sometime during the week in which the First Friday occurs in October, November and December.

It is clear to me that our prayer and sacrifices must be offered up for the renewal of the Church. Most especially, we must pray for those who have been abused at the hands of clerics: they are the victims of the deepest betrayal imaginable, and more than anyone else need and deserve our support and care. It is also clear to me that we must be offering prayer and sacrifices for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, as well. God has entrusted the pastoral governance of the Universal Church to him at a particularly tumultuous time, and now more than ever he needs our love and support, and our prayers that God will give him the wisdom and stamina he needs to guide His people on the path of holiness during this time of great trial.

Finally, I ask that you keep your priests uppermost in your prayers. They are the laborers who bear "the burden of the day and the scorching heat" (Mt 12:20), and I remain deeply grateful to them for the pastoral care and support they provide to you, the People of God. Please pray for me, too.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Cordileone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco