

October 21, 2018: **CARDINAL WUERL'S LETTER TO ALL PARISHIONERS**

Cardinal Wuerl wrote a letter to all of us on October 12 and asked us to have it read at all Masses. Fr. Santiago and I read it at the end of our respective homilies last weekend. Below is the entire letter:

"Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Archdiocese of Washington,

Pope Francis has accepted my resignation as Archbishop of Washington. I had the privilege of meeting with him to let him know of your pain, sadness and confusion from what has been revealed these past months. With a heavy heart I said that I could no longer serve you in the way that you deserve. What is needed now is new leadership so that all of you, the faithful of this Church, can begin to focus on healing and the future.

I am sorry and ask for healing for all of those who were so deeply wounded at the hands of the Church's ministers. I also beg forgiveness on behalf of Church leadership from the victims who were again wounded when they saw these priests and bishops both moved and promoted.

In a particular way, I am sorry for all of you, faithful members of the Church, who have had to face the shame of these scandals and witness doubt and perplexity among your family and friends. My sorrow includes also my brother priests who have sought to live a joyful and faithful priestly life but now face the challenge of distrust. In them, however, I ask you to see so much good being done together with you in your parish in the effort to live the Gospel of Jesus.

As I conclude my ministry as shepherd of this Church, I carry with me profound gratitude for the grace to work side by side with you who manifest so beautifully and consistently the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been privileged to recognize because of you a Church alive in the work of the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters all you have to do is look around at all the extraordinary things you do in the name of Christ. It has been an enormous blessing for me to experience a small part of your depth of faith, commitment in hope and expression of God's love.

Finally, as my time trying to serve you well as your archbishop draws to an end, I want you to know of my love for all of you. I love our priests and religious who serve so joyfully and generously, I love you, the lay faithful, who manifest the kingdom in our parishes and in so many diverse and fruitful ministries. The resignation is my way of trying to express my great and abiding love for you the people of this archdiocese. As I now close this chapter in my life I want you to know that my heart is indeed filled with the love of Jesus for you.

Like all serious wounds, healing takes time, care, attention and love. I am inspired that so many of you have already taken the first steps along the pathway to that restoration that we find only in the redemption won for us by Jesus on the wood of the Cross. I join you in that fervent prayer that the Lord who destroyed sin and death will bring new life and healing to our Church.

In sorrow for my failures, in gratitude for your faith and fidelity to Christ and in great love for you, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Cardinal Donald Wuerl

Several of you came to me after Mass to express the respect and love you have for Cardinal Wuerl for his 12 years of service to the Archdiocese of Washington. As I said earlier, it has been a very difficult time for Cardinal Wuerl: first the accusations against his predecessor Archbishop McCarrick, and then the Grand Jury Report of Pennsylvania.

Following Pope Francis' acceptance of Cardinal Wuerl's resignation, I am inviting all of you to pray for his successor in Washington. Though his name has not yet been announced by Pope Francis, we can also pray that his early coming will assist all of us in coming to closure with the scandals that have plagued the Catholic Church in our Archdiocese, and having a better sense of direction for the future of our Archdiocese. At the parish level, as your pastor, I continue to invite you to:

1. come and share with me your own reflections and recommendations. I can pass them on to the Archdiocese if you wish me to do so;
2. continue to pray for all the victims of clergy abuse and their families by praying a daily rosary at home or in our church;
3. see the many difficulties we are facing as a purification process for the Church;
4. put the emphasis on the renewal of the Church, which begins with each one of us by focusing always on Jesus Christ!

May God keep blessing each one of you and your families.

May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with the fire of the Love of Christ!

One in Christ,

Fr. Alain