

A Day of Prayer & Penance for Priests

Renewing our Faithfulness to our Priesthood

Dear People of God,

As priests, as Catholics, and as men, we are revolted and heartbroken in hearing yet another wave of reports of abuse committed by other priests against the youth whom we are called to serve. Our hearts are with all the victims whose pain and suffering are unfathomable.

We know that you, like us, are shaken by recent reports which build upon the sickening revelations of the past. We, like you, are weary of them. Those priests who have committed these crimes have disgraced the dignity given them at ordination, and betrayed the trust and confidence placed in them by members of the Church and wider society. Although not personally guilty of these crimes, we know that we will bear the weight of these sins for years to come.

At the same time, we also love our faith and our priesthood. We came to our ministry guided not by our own decision, but because during the years of preparation for ordination we discerned the will of God calling us to serve Him and His people as priests. The words of St. Paul could well be our own: “If I preach the Gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! (1 Cor. 9:16)”

We are committed to rebuilding the trust that you place in us: when you come to us seeking the grace offered in the sacraments, when you listen to our homilies at Mass for spiritual nourishment, and when you turn to us for guidance, consolation, and support. We recognize the sacred trust implied when you call us “Father.” While some have failed grievously in living up to that title, we are resolved to show ourselves worthy of it.

In particular, those of us who have made a promise of celibacy renew our commitment to this way of life in which we have given ourselves for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven and in lifelong service to God and His people.

We recognize that the above are only words, and that their authenticity will only be proven in the years ahead as we, despite our weaknesses, will strive to serve you with the same conviction with which we responded to God’s call to priesthood years ago, and ensure that the sins committed by priests in the past are never repeated.

Therefore, as a sign of our sorrow at the sins committed against God’s people and of our resolve to work for the renewal of the priesthood, we are committing ourselves to a day of prayer and penance on 13 September 2018. This is a Thursday, the day on which Christ instituted the priesthood at the Last Supper. It is also the feast of St. John Chrysostom, a fourth century bishop whose writings set a high ideal for priests – one for which we must strive now more than ever.

As penance and in reparation for the abuse committed by priests against the young and the vulnerable, on this day we will keep the same fast as that kept on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Furthermore, we commit ourselves to spending the hour of 3-4 a.m. in prayer on the morning of 13 September for the healing of those victimized by sexual abuse at the hands of priests. While this hour calls for a small sacrifice on our part, it is a time to which we can commit to praying in unison (in our own time zones), without conflicting with other pastoral obligations. During this time we will also pray for the grace to be steadfast and faithful to the call we have received to serve you and to live up to the privilege of trust you place in us. This hour reflects the invitation of Christ to the disciples – then newly ordained priests – to watch and pray with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of His agony; it also mirrors the hour of the Passion.

As we make this commitment we recognize that there is much more to be done beyond this, but we know that any true reform begins with our own acceptance of our responsibility to be faithful to our vocation. And so, with these actions we commit ourselves to faithfulness: faithfulness to the God who called us to be priests and faithfulness to you who call us “Father.”

Mary, Queen of the Clergy, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Riley Williams
Acushnet, MA

Fr. Philip A. Smith
Toledo, OH

Fr. Pablo M. Migone
Savannah, GA

Fr. Michael Silloway
Greensboro, GA

Fr. Neal Hock
Kearney, NE

Fr. Patrick Finn
Waterville, ME

Fr. Joshua Allen
Atlanta, GA

Fr. Richard Degagne
Easton, MA

Fr. Stephen Vrazel
Mobile, AL

Fr. Brian Soliven
Portola, CA

Fr. David C. Frederici
Westport, MA

Fr. Dennis Di Benedetto
Fort Wayne, IN

Fr. Leon Vigil
Clovis, NM

Fr. Nicholas Desimone
Uxbridge, MA

Fr. Ronald P. Combs
Dayton, OH

Fr. Daniel Cruz
Phoenix, AZ

Fr. Alex Estrella
Sacramento, CA

Bishop John Kudrick
Parma, OH

Fr. Michael Conway
Washington, PA

Fr. Edward A. Murphy
Taunton, MA

Msgr. Stephen J. Avila
East Falmouth, MA

Fr. Brian Clary
Boston, MA

Fr. John Murray
Raynham, MA

Fr. Carlos D. Suarez
Braintree, MA

Fr. Raymond Harris
Randallstown, MD

Fr. Tom Dubois
Nailsea, Bristol, UK

Fr. Jacob Boddicker, S.J.
Rosebud, SD

Fr. Francisco Rodriguez III
Temple, TX

Fr. Donato Infante
Charlton, MA

Fr. Matt Libra
Portland, OR

Fr. Jeff Eirvin
Portland, OR

Fr. Francis Smith
Settle, North Yorkshire, UK

Fr. Chris Markman
Enderlin, ND

Fr. Michael A. Friedel
Springfield, IL

Fr. Aaron Johanneck
Arlington, MN

Fr. Michael Nufable
Rodeo, CA

Fr. Sean R. DeWitt
Austin, TX

Fr. Brian Wayne
Harrisburg, PA

Fr. John E. Sheridan
Canton, OH

Fr. Garrett Nelson
Great Falls, MT

Fr. John Langlois, O.P.
Washington, DC

Fr. Sean Magaldi
Smithtown, NY

Fr. Brian Saylor
Altoona, PA

Fr. Louis P. Masi
Harrison, NY

Fr Wayne Campbell
Oakland, CA

Fr. Jose Cabrera
Bay City, MI

Fr. Cesar Vega-Mendoza
Yakima, WA

Fr. Andy Booms
Midland MI

Fr. Mitchel Zimmerman
Lawrence, KS

Fr. Sean E. Flynn
Fort Nelson, BC

Fr. Andrew Ricci
Superior, WI

Fr. Joseph H. Fitzgerald
Rockville Centre, NY

Fr. Craig Vasek
Hallock, MN

Fr. Stephen Bill
Regina, SK

Fr. Christopher Sullivan
Floral Park, NY

Fr. Paul Noble
Sunbury, OH

Fr. Nicholas Pearce
Melbourne, VIC

Fr. Eurel Manzano
Sugar Land, TX

Fr. Matthew Suniga
Sugar Land, TX

Fr. Francis Orozco, O.P.
New Orleans, LA

Fr. John M. Norman
Ewing, NE

Fr. Matthew Niggemeyer
Omaha, NE

Fr. Philip Brune
El Campo, TX

Fr. Kevin Butler
Somonauk, IL

Fr Joseph Scolaro
New Hyde Park, NY

Fr. Michael Duffy
Malverne, NY

Fr. Fernando Camou
Phoenix, AZ

Fr. David Cartwright
Melbourne, VIC

Fr. Peter Zwaans
Brooklyn Park, SA

Fr. Jack Schrader
North Attleborough, MA

Fr. David Hust
Houston, TX

Fr. Christopher Costigan
Uniondale, NY

Fr. Brian C. Alford
Springfield, IL

Fr. Paul Sullivan
Phoenix AZ

Fr. Paul Chandler
Kealba, VIC

Fr. Eric Cadin
Boston, MA

Fr. JunHee Lee
Brooklyn, NY

Fr. Jason Pettigrew
Las Vegas, NM

Fr. Keith Romke
Dixon, IL

Fr. Thuy Nguyen
Radville, SK

Fr. Keith Heiberg
Delta, BC

Fr. Thomas Hennen
Davenport, IA

Fr. James Kerr
Mildura, VIC

Fr. David Hartley
Thame, Oxfordshire, UK

Fr. John D. Byrnes
Loretto, PA

Fr. Cristino Bouvette
Calgary, AB

Fr. Craig DeYoung
San Marcos, TX

Fr. Dallas St. Peter
Burlington, VT

Fr. Edwin C. Anderson
Rice Lake, WI

Fr. Nathan Dail
Lewiston, ID

Fr. José de Jesús Reynaga
Merced, CA

Fr. Timothy D. Hepner
Peoria, IL

Fr. Sean M. Suckiel
Brooklyn, NY

Fr. Michael Lastiri
Hanford, CA

Fr. Hans Mueller
Beaverton, OR

Fr. Juanito A. Vargas
Rockglen, SK

Fr. David Norris
Fresno, CA

Fr. Michel Mulloy
Rapid City, SD

Fr. Scott Woods
Gibsonburg, OH

Fr. Dan Avila
Fresno, CA

Fr. Mark C. Bristol
Douglaston, NY

Fr. Colin Jones
Coon Rapids, MN

Fr. John Gracey
Bishop, CA

Fr. Jose Thomas
Regina, SK

Fr. Paul Coleman, O.F.M. Cap.
Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK

Fr. Jonathan Raia
Austin, TX

Fr. Steve Dos Santos, C.P.P.S.
Dayton, OH

Fr. Paul Timmerman
Montevideo, MN

Fr. Cory Stanley
Altus, OK

Fr. Patrick Ebner
Copperas Cove, TX

Fr. Mike Polinek
Erie, PA

Fr. Melchor Samonte
Shaunavon, SK

Fr. David Trahan
West, TX

Fr. Michael Jacobus
Ontonagon, MI

Fr. Paul Kado
Atwater, CA

Fr. Justin Nguyen
Mexia, TX

Fr. Henry Cuellar Jr.
Round Rock, TX

Fr. Elias Gieske
Crosby, MN

Fr. Brent Crowe
Beaverton, OR

Fr. Brian O'Brien
Stillwater, OK

Fr. Iván Hernández Melchor
Tulare, CA

Fr. John Kimani
Moriarty, NM

Fr. Emmanuel Mary Mansford, cfr
New York City, NY

Fr. Ron Garry
Ft. Pierre, SD

Fr Solanus Benfatti, cfr
Bronx, NY

Fr. Justin Ford
Ascot Vale, VIC

Fr. Cory Sticha
Malta, MT

Fr. Dino Villadiego
Port Hardy, BC

Fr. Hugh Thomas, C.Ss.R.
Sydney, NSW

Fr. Michael Kennedy
Burlington, NJ

Fr. Ed Vanorny
Buffalo, SD

Fr. Greg Galvin
Moodus, CT

Fr. Tomasz Nowak, SChr.,
Wollongong, NSW

Fr. Patrick S. Broussard
Lafayette, LA

Fr. Brennan Sia
Kalgoorlie, WA

Fr. Peter Street
Singleton, NSW

Fr. Stephen Maria Lopez, O.P.
Oakland, CA

Fr. Nicolas Maurice
Maclean, NSW

Fr. Scott Pogatchnik
St. Cloud, MN

Msgr. Stuart Hall
Malvern East, VIC

Fr. Greg Morgan
Sydney, NSW

Fr. Paul Winter
Grafton, NSW

Bishop David Konderla
Tulsa, OK

Fr. Bernard Balaraj, C.PP.S
Geraldton, WA

Fr. Jerome Santamaria
Melbourne, VIC

Fr. John Paul Ouellette, cfr
Bronx, NY

Fr. John Boughton, cfr
Bronx, NY

Fr. Emmanuel Mansford, cfr
Bronx, NY

Fr Agustino Torres, cfr
Bronx, NY