

Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Archbishop
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

FOR READING AT ALL MASSES SEPTEMBER 29/30

Dear friends,

Earlier this month I marked seven years as your archbishop. During that time, our Church has faced and solved some very difficult problems. None of that could have been done without your patience, generosity and support. I'm very grateful to all of you, and to each of our parish communities.


The grand jury report released in August did not involve the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, but it does impact all of us. As I've shared with you previously, any form of retroactive statewide "window" or "reviver" legislation to address the abuse issue in decades past would be unjust to the innocent Catholic laypeople, clergy, and families who make up our community today. It would also be financially disastrous to our ministries, our parishes, and the Archdiocese at large.

However, the bishops of Pennsylvania do understand and deeply regret the suffering of survivors and have committed to *voluntarily* helping abuse victims whose claims are time-barred. I joined with bishops across the Commonwealth on September 21 to release a statement explaining our commitment. That statement can be found on our archdiocesan website. Please do take the time to read it. Obviously, this course of action will require extraordinary Church resources, but it can avoid the bitter litigations and diocesan bankruptcies that will follow any destructive changes in the statute of limitations. The details of such a proposed program are under development. I'll share them fully with you once finalized.

In the meantime, I encourage all our lay faithful and clergy to pray the Prayer of St. Michael in all our parishes and institutions. I have also asked our Office for Divine Worship to develop, again as soon as possible, appropriate weekly intentions for the Liturgy's universal prayer and a monthly schedule of Holy Hours for three purposes: the healing of abuse survivors; in reparation for the sins of sexual abuse; and for the protection of our local Church. The weekly intentions and Holy Hour schedules are now available on the website of our Office for Divine Worship in both Spanish and English.

Finally, I ask you to pray for and support your pastors and each other, and to remember me in your prayers as well, as I do you every day. The coming months will be challenging. We need to ground ourselves in the Lord, the Church and each other; and if we do, there will come a time when today's anger and confusion are behind us.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,


Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia