



Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Office of the Bishop

11 North "B" Street
Pensacola, Florida 32502
Office: (850) 435-3520
Fax: (850) 435-3565
Email: bishop@ptdiocese.org

September 1, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This truly is a very difficult time for us in the Catholic Church. Our faith in some of our leaders has been shaken, and this has even led some to question their faith in God. We must know, however, that God is always faithful; He is always with us. As God says through His prophet: "Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you" (Is 49:15).

We know that God is with us. But we admit that we have sinned. And while God constantly calls us back and is very merciful, we must repent and repair the relationship that we have with God and with one another.

I ask you to join me and the clergy of our diocese to pray in a special way for healing and reparation for sins committed by members of the clergy and episcopacy. As members of the Body of Christ, we know that when one member suffers, we all suffer. Likewise, through acts of prayer and penance, we can have a great impact on those who have been hurt or who are still suffering.

Therefore, I am asking each parish to offer a Mass of reparation on Friday, September 14 – the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This could be a regularly-scheduled Mass in the parish or one that is added for this intention. It is only by embracing the cross of Christ that we have any hope of the glory of the Resurrection.

As well, I am recommending that we observe the upcoming *Ember Days* (Sept. 19, 21, and 22), as days of fast and abstinence in reparation for sins and abuses committed by members of the clergy and episcopacy. Why prayer and fasting? As we read in the Gospel of Mark, when the disciples could not expel a demon, they asked Jesus, "Why could we not drive it out?" Jesus responded, "This kind can only come out through prayer [and fasting]" (Mk 9:28-29). On those days mentioned above, perhaps we could all fast from certain foods or other pleasures, abstain from meat, and/or spend more time in prayer with our God.

Our offenses are great, but God's love conquers all things. Together as a diocese and parish community, within our families, and as individuals, let us humbly ask for forgiveness and reparation, so that God's holy Church – indeed, all of God's children – will be made clean again.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. William A. Wack, CSC
Bishop, Pensacola-Tallahassee