

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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August 17, 2018

My Dear People of the Archdiocese of San Francisco,

The recent reports of episcopal negligence and malfeasance in the face of clerical sexual abuse, coupled with some reports of bishops themselves guilty of sexual predation, have reopened old wounds and inflicted new ones on victims, their families, the Catholic faithful at large, and indeed, the larger society. This has been further fueled by a spirit of raw ambition on the part of some, who will stop at nothing to advance their careers and climb the ecclesial corporate ladder over investing themselves in serving the people of God. Such behavior on the part of Church leaders is despicable, reprehensible, and absolutely unbecoming of a man of God.

I have emphasized this point to the seminarians of our Archdiocese in my recent summer meetings with them, and made it very clear that their vocation as diocesan priests is to serve God's people where they are most needed in our local church. This was not difficult to do. I am inspired by their purity of motivation, their great love for Christ and his Church, and their desire to be faithful servant leaders.

I have been in conversation with the administration at St. Patrick Seminary, who have conducted a review of their policies on issues involving sexual abuse and harassment. While the policies are thorough, I intend to discuss with the Seminary and its Board of Trustees ideas on how to more effectively implement these policies and ensure that they are followed. I intend to do the same with regard to the policies of the Archdiocese with my Cabinet at the Pastoral Center. These policies, and information on how to report abuse, are available on our Archdiocesan website (<https://sfarchdiocese.org/protecting-children>).

While attending to policies and procedures is necessary, by itself it is really superficial. What is called for at this time is penance in reparation for sins against faith and morals. This is how we keep the righteous indignation that so many of us feel at this time from becoming an anger that divides the Body of Christ.

Last year, in response to a request from some of the faithful of our Archdiocese, I consecrated the Archdiocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of our Lady at Fatima. At that time, I asked our people to live this consecration by observing what our Blessed Mother asked of us there. I now ask our priests and people to engage in prayer, penance and adoration as an act of reparation for sins against chastity and the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament, in accordance with our Lady's wishes.

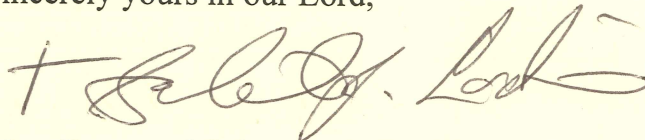
I repeat here what I asked of you then, and implore you even more earnestly to join me in:

- Praying the rosary daily – and for families, to pray the rosary as a family at least once a week;
- Practicing Friday penance by abstaining from eating meat and one other additional act of fasting (e.g., another form of food or drink, or skipping a meal);
- Spending one hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament at least once a week.

After consulting with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and my Cabinet, moreover, I will designate a day when together we will make an act of reparation, and how that will be conducted. While I pledge to attend to policies and their observance, we all must be engaged at this time on the spiritual level. Without prayer, penance and adoration in reparation for the horrendous sins rampant in our Church for very many years now, any efforts of the temporal order will be meaningless.

In the meantime, I ask you, our people to stay close to your parish priest. Our priests make great sacrifices to serve their people with generosity and compassion. They are there for you, attentive to providing you pastoral care. I am grateful to them for their labors in the Lord's vineyard, and pray that the divine assistance may be with them as they minister to you during this time of crisis.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Cordileone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a stylized "C" at the end.

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco