



May 11, 2006 - Cardinal O'Malley to Make a 'Pilgrimage of Repentance and Hope' to Support Healing and Rebuilding Within the Church

Cardinal O'Malley will lead services of repentance and prayer for renewal in nine parishes. Survivors, clergy, parishioners and members of the broader community who have been impacted by the clergy sexual abuse crisis are encouraged to participate.

(Brighton, MA) May 11, 2006 -- The Archdiocese of Boston announced today that Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley has invited the faithful of the Archdiocese to join him in a celebration of the Novena to the Holy Spirit. The Novena will acknowledge in a particular way the sins of clergy sexual abuse.

The Novena services, a 'Pilgrimage of Repentance and Hope: The Novena to the Holy Spirit', will be held in nine communities that have experienced an especially painful history of sexual abuse of children by priests and, at one parish, by a lay youth worker.

The pilgrimage will begin with a Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Ascension Thursday, May 25, and will conclude with a procession of prayer and remembrance starting at the Chancery in Brighton and ending with a Mass celebrating the Vigil of Pentecost at St. Columbkille Church on June 3. Additional services will be held in parishes located in the five regions of the Archdiocese so as to allow as many people as possible to participate.

These Masses and prayer services offer an opportunity for survivors, clergy, parishioners and members of the broader community to pray together for healing and renewal. The services will include a public acknowledgement of the sins and crimes committed and an act of reparation that will enable the Cardinal and clergy to join in an expression of repentance for priests and bishops whose actions and inactions gravely harmed the lives of children and young people entrusted to their care.

"Publicly acknowledging the Church's faults and failures is an important element of asking forgiveness of those who have been harmed by the Church," said Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley. "The sexual abuse crisis has caused intense suffering for survivors and their families and has been a source of shame and sorrow for our entire Church community. The sexual crimes against children by priests and the Church's initial failure to respond have fractured the essential spiritual connection necessary for the bonds of faith to flourish in our parishes and community. This Novena to the Holy Spirit offers a graced opportunity to seek a new outpouring of God's Holy Spirit for renewal and rebuilding of the bonds of unity here in the Church of Boston. Our hope is that these services will bring together survivors, their families and friends, as well as clergy, parishioners, and members of the broader community. I invite all people of this Archdiocese to join us as we call upon the Holy Spirit to assist us as we work to bind up the wounds of abuse and restore the faith of our community."

Services will be held in the following parishes:

Thursday, May 25 7:30 p.m. Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston Mass

Friday, May 26 8:00 p.m. St. Patrick, Stoneham Prayer Service

Saturday, May 27 5:00 p.m. St. Agnes, Middleton Mass

Sunday, May 28 11:30 a.m. St. Edith Stein, Brockton Mass

Monday, May 29 7:30 p.m. St. Michael, Lowell Prayer Service

Tuesday, May 30 7:30 p.m. St. Joseph, Needham Prayer Service

Wednesday, May 31 8:00 p.m. St. Julia, Weston Prayer Service

Thursday, June 1 8:00 p.m. St. Paul, Hingham Prayer Service

Friday, June 2 7:00 p.m. St. Blaise, Bellingham Prayer Service

Saturday, June 3 6:30 p.m.

8:00 p.m. The Chancery, Brighton

St. Columbkille, Brighton Procession

Mass



*****Please note that members of the press are invited to attend these services, however, out of respect for the participants' privacy, no cameras or photography will be permitted inside the churches. Media must register in advance for credentials. For credentials and additional information, contact Betsy Kelly at (617) 443-9933 x. 358.*****

Since his installation, Cardinal Sean has made it a priority to create safe environments in our churches and schools and to continue to provide support to survivors and all people who have suffered as a result of clergy sexual abuse. The policies and practices of the Archdiocese include working with law enforcement agencies and community professionals to report and investigate instances of sexual abuse as well as to develop and implement effective prevention and education programs. Further, through the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach, the Archdiocese continues the important work of reaching out to those who have suffered as a result of clergy sexual abuse in order to provide pastoral help and counseling services.

Cardinal Sean's letter (PDF format)

Novena Prayer to the Holy Spirit

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