

▲ Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio



Put Out Into the Deep

The Healing from Abuse Continues

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

Last year, the diocese offered its first Mass of Hope and Healing requested by survivors of sexual abuse. There was a very positive reaction on behalf of survivors, lay faithful, and clergy. Many stated how they experienced it as a grace-filled evening. This year, the second Mass of Hope and Healing will take place on Thursday, April 21, at 7 p.m., at Our Lady Queens of Martyrs Church in Forest Hills.

Also last year, a group of survivors came together for the first time, working with our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Ms. Jasmine Salazar, who is a licensed social worker, to explore and give voice on what survivors felt is needed for healing. This also provided an opportunity for these survivors to meet each other, and share in their experience. The group has since become the Diocesan Survivors Advisory Committee, and has become a guiding voice in our outreach to those impacted by sexual abuse committed by clergy and others.

Their recommendations not only included a yearly Healing Mass, which I have committed to, but also support groups for survivors and their loved ones. This year, we began a series of meetings with survivors who are now parents. The purpose of this group was to address the relationship between survivor-parent and child, as well as to facilitate discussions regarding triggers that occur in their own parenting journey due to their experience with childhood sexual abuse. This coming fall, we hope to begin a support group for spouses of survivors of sexual abuse which will be co-facilitated by our Victim Assistance Coordinator along with the spouse of a survivor.

This addresses the understanding that healing is necessary for the primary victims,

as well as the secondary victims who are spouses, parents, and children. The loved ones of survivors often have to deal first hand with the effects of the trauma caused by the sexual abuse victims endured.

We cannot ignore that healing is also necessary for our lay faithful, those who bravely fill our pews when others challenge them for remaining faithful Catholics after an epidemic of sexual abuse had occurred in the Church and caused such scandal. Now that the movie "Spotlight" has given us another vehicle to discuss this difficult topic, our Diocese will offer evenings of discussion in Brooklyn and Queens. These evenings of discussion will allow our lay faithful to share their reaction to the movie, share their concerns, their anger, their fears and pain and also gain knowledge and awareness of what the Church is actively doing to prevent such abuse from ever happening again.

The Mass of Hope and Healing allows victims, who have wished to remain anonymous, to take part in a step towards healing, and perhaps avail themselves of the assistance provided by the diocese, rather than trying to cope and suffer on their own.

The fact is, the abuse happened. And it will never be forgotten or just go away. One cannot just "get over it." However, through meeting each other on this journey, coming together in prayer and hope for healing, the possibility exists for the brokenness to begin to mend.

As you know, there are good days and there are bad days. For so many survivors, the bad days are magnified by the abuse, since negative feelings often trigger feelings associated with abuse. This is not easy to deal with. It is our duty and we are committed to ongoing efforts to continue to accom-

pany those who suffer.

This is not something that we "just deal with" once or twice, and then say, "okay it has been addressed." This is something that we have to continue to bring to the forefront, because many still suffer from the consequences of that abuse. This is why we are dedicated to continue providing assistance to all victims of sexual abuse.

The Mass of Hope and Healing is not only for victims but for all effected by the sexual abuse crisis. We also recognize that there are many who have suffered sexual abuse, not at the hands of clergy or members of the Diocese, but by others, who are also in need of healing. We welcome them to participate in this Eucharistic celebration.

At the conclusion of the Mass, members of our Healing Intervention Team, comprised of mental health professionals, lay faithful involved in the protection of children, and clergy members, will be available. Should someone wish to speak to a member of the Healing Intervention Team, they will be available as well as information regarding the services offered by the Office of Victim Assistance and about services offered by other local organizations that provide assistance to all victims of abuse.

This Mass of Hope and Healing is our second attempt to put out into the deep and address the difficult issue of healing from sexual abuse. Your prayers for victims and survivors are very much appreciated and your participation at this Eucharist will provide support to those who are on the road to healing.



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New Papal Nuncio to the US

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Pope Francis has appointed Archbishop Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to Mexico since 2007, to be the new apostolic nuncio to the United States.

He succeeds Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, who has held the post since 2011. Archbishop Vigano turned 75 in January, the age at which canon law requires bishops to run their resignation into...

As president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, shared "a heartfelt greeting and my prayerful support" of the newly named nuncio "as he embarks on his service to our country." "A shared closeness with the church in Mexico..."

"With fond affection, allow me also to thank Archbishop Vigano for his selfless contributions to the life of the Catholic Church in the United States," Archbishop Kurtz added.

A nuncio is a Vatican diplomat with the rank of ambassador. He is responsible for diplomatic relations with the government, but also serves as the pope's representative in the church in...

Pierre was born Jan. 30, 1946, in Rennes in France's Brittany region where his family has had roots for many generations. He first attended school at Antsirabe in Madagascar and pursued his secondary education at the College of Saint-Malo in France and also spent one year in Morocco at Lycee Francois de Marrakesh.