



Diocese of Belleville
Office of the Bishop

October 31, 2018
All Hallows' Eve


Dear Brothers in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ,
Dear Deacons, Religious and Seminarians,
Dear People of God:

The terrible sins, scandals, and crimes committed by members of the clergy in abusing children and concealing these offenses may have created the greatest crisis in the history of the Catholic Church. The Bishops of the United States have decided to commit themselves to a time of intense personal prayer and reparation during the days before our annual autumn meeting in Baltimore from November 12-16. During that meeting the Bishops will be making important decisions in response to the abuse crisis. **With my fellow Bishops in every diocese, I will be setting aside time for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and fasting during seven days, from Monday, November 5, to Sunday, November 11.**

We will be praying as a body for the wellbeing and support of all survivors of clergy sexual abuse and for their families; for true repentance in the hearts of offenders and those who concealed offenders which will allow them to change their lives and accept the just punishments for their offenses; and for greater wisdom, strength, and courage so that we who are Bishops may be more vigilant and more faithful shepherds of the holy people entrusted to our care by the Lord Jesus Christ. We will pray that we will be more mindful of the mandate of our ordination as Bishops to protect our people from harm. Finally, we will be praying for those priests who have been wrongly accused that they may receive the support they need.

I invite you to join me and the Bishops of the United States in praying with humble hearts for these intentions. I am aware that many of you are hurt, angry and disappointed by the actions of some Priests and Bishops. Nevertheless, I would be very grateful for your prayers for the Bishops of this country during our meeting in Baltimore. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to become more honest with ourselves and with each other. Pray that we may be more realistic about the human failings of Priests and Bishops, acknowledging that we are all redeemed sinners. Pray that the fire of the Holy Spirit will burn away all traces of indifference to the terrible moral crisis that has engulfed our Church. Pray that we all renew our commitment to strive to be saints.

Be assured that you and those who are dear to you are often in my prayers.

Prayerfully yours in Christ,


The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.
Bishop of Belleville