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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 6, 2018

Dear Brother Priest,

Thank you for your participation in the time of prayer and discernment on Monday, September 3, Labor Day, prior to the gathering for the annual cookout.

In that hour and a half long session, I clearly heard and saw expressed your support for survivors, the people of this archdiocese, and for me personally. However, the purpose of that meeting was to discern how best I can serve this Church.

Among the many observations was that the archdiocese would be well served by new leadership to help move beyond the current confusion, disappointment and disunity.

I also heard voices calling for the beginning of healing. This I believe we need to do now.

In recognition of the ongoing need for healing, and after consultation with a number of laywomen, laymen and some priests, I am proposing a "Season of Healing" that would begin Friday, September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, as a first step in the necessary healing process for our Church.

The "Season of Healing" would first and foremost be an invitation for parishes and parishioners to come together in prayer, to give voice to the pain and suffering of the survivors of clergy sexual abuse, while also recognizing the pain and wound of the whole Church. This six-week "Season" would use each Friday as a time when, as a Church, we could be united in prayer. This could take whatever form of prayer you consider appropriate or are currently undertaking at your parish on Fridays. I will celebrate a Penitential Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew the Apostle on September 14 to initiate this "Season."

Under separate cover by Monday at the latest will be a toolkit of resources which I hope will assist you in this time of healing and support. You will receive material from our Child Protection Advisory Board, and other experts on how to best respond to survivors who reach out to you, to bear witness to their pain, and assist in the healing of each individual survivor as well as the entire community. The resource packet will also include ideas for the Friday prayer gatherings, if you do not have an already established practice. If there are additional materials that you would find helpful, please contact Monsignor Charles Antonicelli who will assist you and connect you with professionals who have the necessary resources.

This is just a beginning. After this six-week "Season of Healing", the work of healing must and will continue. This special time is intended to call attention to our need to pray and to reach out to survivors throughout the year.

Additionally, we are in the midst of trying to plan a one-day healing retreat for any survivor who wishes to attend. The focus will be on prayer, professional services, including having licensed counselors present, and continued accompaniment.

My brother, I know the path to healing will be long and arduous. I renew my support and prayers for you as we begin this "Season of Healing."

With every personal good wish, I am

Faithfully in Christ,



Archbishop of Washington