



October 12, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters  
of the Archdiocese of Washington,

Pope Francis has accepted my resignation as Archbishop of Washington. I had the privilege of meeting with him to let him know of your pain, sadness and confusion from what has been revealed these past months. With a heavy heart I said that I could no longer serve you in the way that you deserve. What is needed now is new leadership so that all of you, the faithful of this Church, can begin to focus on healing and the future.

I am sorry and ask for healing for all of those who were so deeply wounded at the hands of the Church's ministers. I also beg forgiveness on behalf of Church leadership from the victims who were again wounded when they saw these priests and bishops both moved and promoted.

In a particular way, I am sorry for all of you, faithful members of the Church, who have had to face the shame of these scandals and witness doubt and perplexity among your family and friends. My sorrow includes also my brother priests who have sought to live a joyful and faithful priestly life but now face the challenge of distrust. In them, however, I ask you to see so much good being done together with you in your parish in the effort to live the Gospel of Jesus.

As I conclude my ministry as shepherd of this Church, I carry with me profound gratitude for the grace to work side by side with you who manifest so beautifully and consistently the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been privileged to recognize because of you a Church alive in the work of the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters all you have to do is look around at all the extraordinary things you do in the name of Christ. It has been an enormous blessing for me to experience a small part of your depth of faith, commitment in hope and expression of God's love.

Finally, as my time trying to serve you well as your archbishop draws to an end, I want you to know of my love for all of you. I love our priests and religious who serve so joyfully and generously, I love you, the lay faithful, who manifest the kingdom in our parishes and in so many diverse and fruitful ministries. The resignation is my way of trying to express my great and abiding love for you the people of this archdiocese. As I now close this chapter in my life I want you to know that my heart is indeed filled with the love of Jesus for you.

Like all serious wounds, healing takes time, care, attention and love. I am inspired that so many of you have already taken the first steps along the pathway to that restoration that we find only in the redemption won for us by Jesus on the wood of the Cross. I join you in that fervent prayer that the Lord who destroyed sin and death will bring new life and healing to our Church.

In sorrow for my failures, in gratitude for your faith and fidelity to Christ and in great love for you, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Donald Cardinal Wuerl