



Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany  
Office of the Bishop

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-30

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Jesus gives us an invitation in these verses: “come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens.” He offers us this invitation because he knows each of us experiences burdens, worries, and troubles throughout our lives.

I am writing to inform you of a new effort in our Diocese to provide Hope and Healing to victim survivors of abuse. This can include abuse by clergy, family members, domestic violence, and human trafficking. Additionally, any number factors can cause someone to experience trauma, especially loss of a loved one, financial hardships, and health struggles. Sometimes suffering can bring a sense of shame, causing some to suffer in silence instead of seeking help. My hope, as Jesus says, is that no one will have to endure these challenges alone.

Beginning in October, we are starting a series of Hope and Healing Masses with one to be scheduled in each Vicariate over the coming months. The first is Sunday, October 23, 2022 at 10:30am at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Rotterdam. These will take place once a month at regularly scheduled weekend Masses in cooperation and coordination with the Pastor or Parish Life Director. The homily will be focused on Christ’s healing in situations of abuse, trauma, and hardship that the faithful experience day to day, especially with the pandemic.

After Mass, we will have counselors available to listen to anyone who would like to share their story, seek additional assistance, or take information to bring to someone they know is suffering. This is a listening opportunity, allowing those who are struggling to share their thoughts on how the Church can help moving forward.

I am including a letter to insert in your parish bulletins. You may also post it on websites and social media. Please distribute copies of this information so the people you serve are aware of these efforts and opportunities. The letter also includes contact information for Frederick Jones, our Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, in case anyone would like to report abuse or seek more immediate assistance: (518) 453-6646, [assistance.coordinator@rcda.org](mailto:assistance.coordinator@rcda.org).

It’s a given that there are people in our pews who may benefit from assistance but are afraid to come forward or who don’t have access to healing resources. We are hoping that these Hope and Healing events (Masses and other opportunities) will help to create a safe environment and allow them to seek the assistance they need. These are also chances for you and me to listen and learn about how we, as a Church, can help.

Thank you for your assistance in these efforts. Further information can be found at [www.rcda.org/hopeandhealing](http://www.rcda.org/hopeandhealing). You will be contacted again when a Mass is scheduled for your Vicariate.

Yours in Christ,

*Edward B. Scharfenberger*

Bishop Edward Scharfenberger