

September 4, 2018

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Like us and so many others we know that you, your families, friends, colleagues and fellow parishioners have been profoundly affected by the revelations in the Pennsylvania grand jury report of clergy sexual abuse, the daily news in its aftermath, and reports of new allegations both in our local church and at the highest levels of authority in the Church.

Later this month the state Supreme Court will decide whether or not to publish the currently redacted portions of the grand jury report after hearing appeals by clergy identified in those sections. If published, we imagine that there will be more and new revelations.

It's difficult to overstate the crisis in our Church today, nor can we ignore either its impact or its call to us as Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates entrusted with the charism of union in the midst of such horrible brokenness. While this call to us may not yet be fully known, we know clearly our mission to draw ourselves and others closer to one another and to God.

Last Wednesday evening, we hosted nearly 100 guests at the Motherhouse for Prayers for Healing. With us were Catholic and other clergy, Sisters from other congregations, Associates, Auxiliary members, staff members, parishioners from in and outside of the Beaver County area and at least one survivor of clergy sexual abuse.

Following the prayer service a standing-room only crowd gathered in Medaille Hall for refreshments, fellowship and conversation. Sr. Anna Marie Gaglia facilitated the conversation, allowing guests to offer their comments, questions or experience in an atmosphere of respect and welcome.

The evening was very moving and meaningful for our guests, many of whom expressed a desire and an urgent request for us to continue to provide similar opportunities in the future.

We know that many of you, too, may be searching for ways to pray either personally or with a group. To support you in those efforts we've enclosed with this letter all of the materials that were part of the Prayers for Healing, prepared and led so beautifully by Kathy Wray.

You may use the prayer service as it is or adapt it for your own purposes or setting. The prayers provided can also be duplicated. While the Welcome included in these materials was prepared specifically for the evening at the Motherhouse, we include it here as a resource as well.

In addition to prayer, we urge each of you to take seriously your own need for care and support at this time. While others seek us out for emotional and other types of support, it's imperative that each of us tend to our own need for the same. While you have already received a resource listing in last week's Congregational mailing we include it again here for your reference.

In the days ahead, amidst our transitions and those that you may be experiencing as well, let's hold one another and our Church in prayer.

Gratefully,

*Nancy Diane Harm Barbara*