

**Homily – Bishop Gregory Parkes**  
**Mass of Healing for Victims of Abuse**  
**Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle**  
**April 24, 2021**

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is good for us to gather today at our Cathedral to celebrate this Mass of Healing for Victims of Abuse. The sad reality is that abuse is very prevalent in our country and world. It takes many forms, physical, sexual, emotional, and even spiritual. It occurs in homes, schools, doctor's offices, and in the Church. Those who have suffered abuse are harmed and wounded. And for those who perpetrate abuse, it is criminal, always wrong, and sinful.

We gather today to seek healing and hope. And we do so by celebrating the Eucharist which is, as I often say, the most powerful prayer that we have as a Church. My Mass intention today is for you, and for all who have suffered abuse, that the Lord will grant healing and peace. And we pray that the Church, and all, will continue its commitment to protect children, youth, adults, and those who are vulnerable.

We hear in our 1<sup>st</sup> reading today from the Prophet Ezekiel in referring to God, “I myself will pasture my sheep. The lost I will search out, the strays I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, and the sick I will heal.” And in our gospel, the Lord says, “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me.”

These words from sacred scripture assure us that God cares for each one of us like a good shepherd cares for his flock. He desires to lead and guide us in our lives. And when we are wounded, it is God who binds up our wounds and give us healing. And it is God who we turn to today asking for healing and hope.

Jesus Christ is the source of our healing and hope. For he himself, though innocent, suffered unjustly. But he conquered sin and death by and through the cross, and his resurrection. This is our faith. And this is why we can look to the cross as a sign of hope. Because beyond the suffering and the wounds that we endure in life, there is hope because of what Jesus Christ accomplished through

*his* suffering, death, and resurrection out of love for you and me.

We are still in the Easter Season which is a season of hope. All around us we see signs of hope as nature brings forth new life. May we find and have the hope, the joy, and the peace in our lives that comes to us from Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the diocese and the Church, I ask forgiveness from all those who have suffered abuse at the hands of priests, deacons, and ministers. Those who were charged with protecting the flock entrusted to them violated this sacred responsibility. And they, like each of us, will have to give an accounting of their actions one day before God. And as your bishop, I once again reaffirm my commitment to do all in my power to protect those entrusted to my care. I ask for your prayers that I may be the good shepherd that God has called me to be, and that you deserve.

I now invite you to join me as I pray this prayer for healing:

**God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just: You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross. Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.**

**Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them. Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith. Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth.**

**Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness. Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.**

**Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**(USCCB Prayers)**