

Blessing and Dedication of the Candle of Atonement for the Cathedrals and Churches of Ireland

This blessing and dedication ritual can take the place of the usual Penitential Rite at Mass or can be used as a separate moment during other liturgies or prayer times, e.g. the Liturgy of the Hours:

Introduction by Celebrant

On this Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse, we acknowledge our sins and pause to prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

During the Penitential Rite at the closing Mass for World Meeting of the Families, and reflecting on what survivors of abuse had told him, Pope Francis implored the Lord's mercy for the crimes of abuse and asked forgiveness, as follows:

Pause for silent prayer

We ask forgiveness for the cases of abuse in Ireland, the abuse of power, the abuse of conscience and sexual abuse on the part of representatives of the Church. In a special way, we ask forgiveness for all those abuses that took place in different kinds of institutions directed by men and women religious and other members of the Church. We also ask forgiveness for cases in which many minors were exploited for their labour.

Lord have mercy; **Lord have mercy.**

We ask forgiveness for all those times when, as a Church, we did not offer to the survivors of any type of abuse, compassion and the pursuit of justice and truth by concrete actions.

We ask forgiveness for some members of the hierarchy who took no responsibility for these painful situations and kept silent. We ask forgiveness.

Christ have mercy; **Christ have mercy.**

We ask forgiveness for those children who were taken away from their mothers and for all those times when so many single mothers who tried to find their children that had been taken away, or those children who tried to find their mothers, were told that this was a mortal sin. It is not a mortal sin; it is the fourth commandment! We ask forgiveness.

Lord have mercy; **Lord have mercy.**

May the Lord preserve and increase this sense of shame and repentance, and grant us the strength to ensure that it never happens again and that justice is done. Amen.

Lighting of the Candle of Atonement

*We light this Candle of Atonement which shall burn
in this Cathedral (and in the churches of our diocese)
with the prayer:*

CANDLE OF ATONEMENT

Lord, forgive us our many sins.

We grieve and repent with all our hearts
for having offended you, for our great failings
and neglect of the young and vulnerable.

We place all of those who have been hurt
by the Church in any way into your loving hands
and under the protection of Our Blessed Mother.

Lord, bring peace to their broken lives
and show us all the way out of darkness
and into the light of your Word.

May we as the people of God
be more fully human,
more fully Christ-like
and more fully your people,
that we may see the errors of the past
and go forward
with renewed hope and faith
in Christ and in our Church.

Amen.