



111 Boulevard of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

E-mail: [communications@diopitt.org](mailto:communications@diopitt.org)  
[www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org)

**Contact:** Very Rev. Thomas Kunz  
**Email:** [tkunz@diopitt.org](mailto:tkunz@diopitt.org)  
**(412) 456-3129**

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## For Immediate Release

### Bishop Zubik Announces Year of Repentance

Bishop David Zubik has announced a Year of Repentance in which all clergy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh are asked to fast and pray for the purification of the Church in light of the scandal of child sexual abuse, and all Catholics are invited to join in. A diocesan-wide service to liturgically inaugurate the Year of Repentance will be held Sunday, September 23, 2018 at 3 p.m. in Saint Paul Cathedral, Oakland.

“Faced with the sinful actions of the members of our own ranks of the clergy, who are called to manifest the example of Christ, we feel both shame and sorrow, and are reminded of our own sinfulness and the need for mercy,” Bishop Zubik wrote in a letter to all priests, deacons and seminarians of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

He quoted the recent call of Pope Francis, who said that “The penitential dimension of fasting and prayer will help us as God’s People to come before the Lord and our wounded brothers and sisters as sinners imploring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion.”

Special observances are called for on Ember Days: four sets of three days throughout the year that were traditionally set aside for prayer and fasting. These days were scheduled near the change of seasons. Bishop Zubik has asked that on each of these 12 days, clergy of the diocese fast and abstain from meat and make a Holy Hour. A Holy Hour is an hour spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, which Catholics believe is the real presence of Christ.

Bishop Zubik will liturgically inaugurate the Year of Repentance on Sunday, September 23, 2018, immediately after the first three-day cycle of Ember Days. On Sunday, September 23 at 3 p.m., Bishop Zubik will lead Solemn Evening Prayer within a Holy Hour with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in Saint Paul Cathedral, Oakland. Everyone is invited to participate, and parishes may also choose to hold a similar event at their own churches.

The Ember Days in the Year of Repentance are: September 19, 21, 22 and December 19, 21, 22 in 2018. In 2019 they they continue with March 13, 15, 16 and June 12, 14, 15.

The liturgical close to the Year of Repentance will be August 15, 2019, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. Bishop Zubik will celebrate Mass at 6 p.m. that evening in Saint Paul Cathedral. He chose the Solemnity of the Assumption “as a sign of hope and healing for victims and for renewal in the Church through the intercession of Mary.”

Bishop Zubik also asked the clergy to consider restoring the practice of reciting the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel after all Masses, a prayer that calls on Saint Michael to protect the faithful against all evil.

“I invite the faithful to join with the clergy as they desire in our acts of prayer and penance. The year is open to individuals to go beyond what I am requesting as we continue to pray that the Lord come to our aid,” Bishop Zubik wrote.