



DIOCESE OF TOLEDO
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

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For Immediate Release
September 2, 2015

Statement of Bishop Daniel E. Thomas
Regarding Absolution for the Sin of Abortion

In advance of the forthcoming “Jubilee of Mercy,” beginning December 8, 2015, Pope Francis yesterday issued a letter which expressed his desire that the year be “for all believers a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God.” Regarding the Sacrament of Penance (Confession), the Holy Father said this:

“The forgiveness of God cannot be denied to one who has repented, especially when that person approaches the Sacrament of Confession with a sincere heart in order to obtain reconciliation with the Father. For this reason too, I have decided, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, to concede to all priests for the Jubilee Year the discretion to absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it. May priests fulfil this great task by expressing words of genuine welcome combined with a reflection that explains the gravity of the sin committed, besides indicating a path of authentic conversion by which to obtain the true and generous forgiveness of the Father who renews all with his presence.”

It is important to note that under Church law, the priests of the Diocese of Toledo, for decades have in fact had this merciful authority delegated to them by the Bishop of Toledo to absolve the sin of abortion, and to lift any accompanying penalty. The same applies to virtually all of the dioceses in the United States. Anyone who has confessed and been forgiven of this sin in recent decades in our Diocese can be assured that the priest acted with the proper authority to absolve and reconcile them to the Lord and to the Church.

I invite any Catholic who has been involved in an abortion to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) and thereby experience the reconciling love of our Lord Jesus Christ. I invite anyone who has been involved in an abortion to contact Catholic Charities’ Project Rachel, which is the Catholic Church’s diocesan-based ministry to those suffering in the aftermath of abortion. This nationwide ministry cares for and assists mothers, fathers, family members, friends, and people of faith or no faith who seek compassionate, non-judgmental help. Project Rachel reaches out to all to extend God’s mercy, healing and love. If you or someone you know is suffering after abortion, please contact our Project Rachel Referral Line at 1-888-456-HOPE or 419-260-5811 or email projectrachel@toledodiocese.org. To learn more about Project Rachel, please visit www.HopeAfterAbortion.org or www.EsperanzaPosaborto.org.

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