



Archdiocese of Newark
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 20, 2018

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to share with you my decision not to attend the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which begins in Rome on October 2 and concludes the end of the month.

This Synod is a uniquely important moment in the life of the Church, and I was honored to have been named by the Holy Father as a member of this special gathering whose topic, *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, is of vital concern to the Church today and in the future.

However, as you are aware, the Archdiocese of Newark suffers greatly as a result of the crisis that continues to unfold. After the revelations of the past summer, I could not see myself absent for a month from our Archdiocese and from you, the people entrusted to my care. After prayer and consultation, I wrote to Pope Francis, asking that he dispense me from attending, but assuring him that I strongly support the objectives of the Synod and that I would obey whatever he decided.

The Holy Father responded the next day with a beautiful pastoral and compassionate message. He told me that he understands why I need to stay close to home, and he released me from the obligation to attend the Synod next month.

I am deeply grateful to Pope Francis for his pastoral care for me and for the people of our Archdiocese. My commitment to him—and to all of you—is to use the month of October to attend to all dimensions of the crisis we face.

On September 14, 2018, *Behold the Wood of the Cross: A Service of Prayer, Recognition and Hope* was held in the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart. During this solemn moment in the life of our Archdiocese, I promised that we will act decisively to address the sins and injustices that have been committed against our most vulnerable sisters and brothers and to ensure that victims receive justice. I also acknowledged that rebuilding trust in the leadership of our Church at all levels will require authentic and measurable change.

I am keenly aware that words alone are not enough. We must show by our actions that justice will be done. Never again will we permit the horrific abuses that occurred here and in too many other places in our Church. Never again will we return to “business as usual,” allowing human wickedness, sin or hypocrisy to blind us from the truth or prevent us from doing God’s work.

Archdiocesan Center

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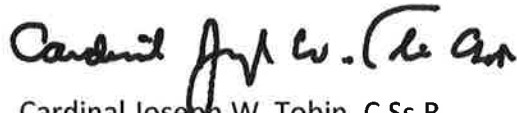
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During the month of October, and throughout the months and years ahead, I will do everything in my power to lead this Archdiocese through processes of renewal and change that break down structures and systems that permit or foster abuse in any form. I will work for justice, healing and compassion for all.

Please pray for Pope Francis and for the success of the XV General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops as it discusses the topic of *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*. Please also pray for me that, with the help of God's grace, I can do my part to help restore confidence in the leadership of our Church.

May the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of the Church, our Mother, intercede for us always and lead us to the Cross of Christ, our only hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

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