



## **Archdiocese of Newark**

Office of Communications & Public Relations  
171 Clifton Ave.  
Newark, NJ 07104  
[www.rcan.org](http://www.rcan.org)

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contact:

**Jim Goodness**  
**973-497-4186 (Office)**  
**973-202-2317 (Cell)**  
**[goodneja@rcan.org](mailto:goodneja@rcan.org)**

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### **Statement of The Most Reverend John J. Myers, Archbishop of Newark, On Pope Francis' Call for Absolution and Reunion During the Holy Year of Mercy**

During this upcoming Holy Year for Mercy His Holiness, Pope Francis, has called on all Roman Catholic priests around the world to bring forgiveness, healing and reunion with the Church to women and men bearing “in their heart the scar of the agonizing and painful decision” of participating in an abortion. I greet the Holy Father’s words most heartily, for they echo what priests in this local Church of Newark have long practiced to bring Christ’s love, healing and reconciliation to post-abortive women and men.

Sadly, all too often news coverage of the sin of abortion focuses only on the “politics” of the issue. For their own reasons, journalists tend to downplay the very real long-term human pain and anguish that grip and consume people who participate in or help make possible the ending of human life this way. The news stories rarely if ever speak of the pain of separation from the Family of Faith that so many post-abortive women and men experience, that so many feel they never can overcome. For this reason, the Holy Father’s words bring not only comfort, but hope.

Shortly after I arrived in the Archdiocese in 2001, I granted to all priests ministering within the Archdiocese the authority to absolve and welcome back to the Church anyone who had participated in any way in an abortion and who had sought reconciliation.

It was a practice that I began more than 25 years ago when I was first named a bishop in Illinois. It is a practice that is central to priestly ministry -- to act as Christ would toward someone who is hurting.

For my brother priests and me in Newark, this Christ- and humanity-loving gesture of mercy – to end a self-imposed separation from God and faith, to forgive a sad mistake, and to bring someone to healing – will not end at the conclusion of the Holy Year of Mercy. It is our mission every day.

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