

**For immediate release;**

St. Mary's Church, located at 783 Dartmouth Street in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, is pleased to announce a "Weekend of Healing and Reconciliation". This is an effort on the part of the church, its pastor and parishioners to reach out to those who no longer feel welcomed or at home in the Catholic Church. At a series of weekend Masses beginning on Saturday, November 16th at 4:00 p.m., and then Sunday, November, 17th at the 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. masses, parishioners and guests, led by Father Rodney Thibault, will reflect, pray, and listen to the work of our Lord in an attempt to begin the process of building bridges. We will ask Jesus to heal those who have been hurt or alienated by the Church due to the faults of her leaders or members, and to welcome the faithful of Christ back into the loving arms of the Church. After each Mass, there will be a time-appropriate social in the Parish Center during which time people can socialize and begin to feel at home and welcome.

This weekend is organized and sponsored by St. Mary's Parish Council members who have heard the voice of Pope Francis to be a much more welcoming and inviting community of the faithful. Our new Pontiff is a loving and humble man of all the people who through his recent actions and words is seeking to reach those who feel alienated and abandoned by their church. During a recent interview, Pope Francis said that the Church is like a hospital, which seeks to bring about healing. To that end, as parish leaders, we have recognized that before people feel empowered, they need to be healed from the effects of being hurt, alienated, and a general sense of not being welcomed by the church. Our Pastor, Father Thibault, shared with the Parish Council, that three years ago while he was the Parochial Administrator of St. John Neumann Parish in E. Freetown, he preached a homily and likened the Church to an Emergency Room where the faithful, and in point of fact anyone who has been hurt, should feel welcome to come and be healed of their wounds, whatever those wounds might be. To this end, we ask anyone who feels hurt or abandoned to join us at one of these masses and experience, anew, the loving and welcoming word of God.

If you have any questions about this Spiritual Weekend, please contact Fr. Rodney at 508-992-7163 or email us at [info@stmarysdartmouth.org](mailto:info@stmarysdartmouth.org).

Fr. Rodney Thibault and members of St. Mary's Church Council