

Liturgy for Peace and Solidarity. STCC: Monday 18 March 2018

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen +

Last Friday people were attacked whilst they prayed.

50 people died.

On Friday many people in our city were scared.

This fear rippled around the world.

Today we gather to reflect on Friday's tragic loss of life and to focus on two teachings in the Catholic Church: Solidarity and Peace.

It's a fact that we cannot live independently of others.

This interdependence is called solidarity.

Interdependence is something good, something positive, a thing to be cherished.

We are all one family in the world. <sup>[1]</sup>

Our community is made stronger when we share.

It's a fact that Muslims and Christians share many ideas and they are both called Abrahamic religions.

These things in common for Islam and Christianity can serve as a tool to build bridges between Muslims and Christians.

Peace between these groups is possible through collaboration, prayer and dialogue. <sup>[2]</sup>

Our beautiful country is a home for people seeking peace and freedom of religious expression.

We represent diversity, kindness, compassion.

New Zealand is a refuge for those who need it.

Many people who are scared in their own country call New Zealand a paradise.

New Zealand is a home for those who share our values.

See them written here on the wall.

And these values will not and cannot be shaken by this attack.

We are a proud nation of more than 200 ethnicities, 160 languages. And amongst that diversity we share common values.

And the one that we place the currency on right now is our compassion and support for the community of those directly affected by this tragedy. <sup>[3]</sup>

Let us now offer each other the Sign of Peace.

When a family member dies we feel deep grief and loss. Our tears flow from a pain that is deep and it feels as if the one we love is torn from us. Such grief is raw and real, and words are completely inadequate.

Today is such a day.

We are unable to express the confusion and pain we feel. Our grief threatens to overwhelm our community at the tragic loss of our sisters and brothers and the act of hate that has been inflicted.

Today is such a day of shared grief and pain.

We gather here this morning because we are at a loss about what to do or what to say. Many of us have already reached out to members of the Muslim community in our neighbourhoods and workplaces. Our acts of love are already overpowering the hate.

We know, in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers who gathered in the Christchurch mosques and around the world on Friday, that our only hope is in God. Our only hope is in God. Our only hope is in God.

Last month Pope Francis was in the United Arab Emirates and met with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb. They agreed that we are called to “live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace.”

Right now this is our shared mission in these tragic days in our city and in our land. <sup>[4]</sup>

We are people of love and peace. St Thomas of Canterbury College is not a place. It is a community of love and peace. We work and we pray to celebrate love and peace. We work and pray to honour the rights of people to be free.

Hussein Hazim Hussein Pasha Al-Umari attended STCC from 1998 to 2001.

On Friday Hussein prayed at his mosque here in Christchurch. He sacrificed his life trying to protect and defend others.

His family needs our love. He died as an instrument of peace and is now with God.

To honour his name and his sacrifice, let us pray as Saint Francis taught us:

Lord make me an instrument of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy  
O divine master grant that I may  
not so much seek to be consoled as to console  
to be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love  
For it is in giving that we receive  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life  
Amen [5]

On Saturday His Holiness Pope Francis wrote to all of us in New Zealand.

Pope Francis was deeply saddened to learn of the injury and loss of life caused by the senseless acts of violence at the two Mosques. He assures all New Zealanders, and in particular the Muslim community, of his heartfelt solidarity in the wake of these attacks. [6]

Let us now pray for peace and solidarity:

Lord, we pray for peace in our hearts.

Holy Spirit help us to listen to you when we call on your name.

Guide our decisions and our anxieties.

- Lord, we pray for peace in our hearts.

Lord we pray for peace in our school.

Holy Spirit help us to be mindful of each other and be gentle.

Help us to celebrate our strength as one family.

- Lord we pray for peace in our school.

Lord we pray for peace in our city.

Holy Spirit help us to restore, replenish and renew our home town.

We give thanks for the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way to deliver justice, medical attention and hope to those senselessly attacked. We give thanks for the life of Hussein Al-Umari.

- Lord we pray for peace in our city.

Lord we pray for peace in our country.

Holy Spirit guide our leaders to make decisions that always promote love and dignity.

- Lord we pray for peace in our country.

Lord we pray for peace in our world.

Holy Spirit guide all our brothers and sisters in the world to find peace in their hearts. We give thanks for the wonderful ways people collaborate and show love.

- Lord we pray for peace in our world.

Saint Thomas of Canterbury. Pray for us.

Blessed Edmund Rice. Pray for us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. +

Sources:

1. Saint John Paul II - Sollicitudo rei socialis:  
<http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/themes/solidarity/>
2. <https://mvslim.com/8-religious-beliefs-that-catholics-and-muslims-share-with-each-other/>
3. Jacinda Arden: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/further-update-jacinda-ardern-christchurch-mass-shooting>
4. Bishop Paul Martin, Homily delivered on 16/03.19 St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Christchurch.
5. Saint Francis: <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/saints-prayers/peace-prayer-of-saint-francis>
6. Pope Francis: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-03/pope-francis-christchurch-new-zealand-shooting-mosques.html>