

USCCB PRESIDENT CALLS FOR DIALOGUE, PEACE IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE

July 18, 2016

WASHINGTON—Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued the following statement in relation to the July 17 fatal shooting of police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Full statement follows.

"Stop, no more of this!" (LK 22:51)

A Statement from Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

I offer my prayers for the officers and families affected by the horrible shooting in Baton Rouge. We find ourselves amid a prolonged prayer of lament as we join to console the grieving and support the suffering. People are suffering because their uniform is blue, suffering because their skin is black and suffering simply because of their station in life.

The temptation to respond to violence with violence is strong. Even St. Peter himself lashed out upon the arrest of our beloved Savior. Jesus' response was clear. "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (MT 26:52). As followers of Christ, let us always embrace love and ask ourselves how we can best invite all people of good will to live with us in peace.

The reasons for so much suffering are complex and varied. As a society, we must come together to address the lingering evil of racism, the need to safeguard our citizens from the present danger of extremism and the overall breakdown of civility. As a Church, we will seek out ways to foster this life-saving dialogue. Answers will not come easily nor as quickly as we need. We must continue searching and listening until they do.

As we seek a dialogue that cultivates a true respect for every human being, we should also seek ways, large and small, to be a sign of hope in the everyday routines of life. The next time you are pulled over by a police officer or walk past one on the street, thank him or her for their service. For those in law enforcement, the next time you make a traffic stop, thank the person for their time. The task of building a society upon the strong foundation of love begins with each one of us every day.

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