

# Statement on the Buffalo TOPS Massacre



Beloved in Christ,

Earlier today, our beautiful day was shattered by the sounds of rifle fire as a hate-filled eighteen-year-old male viciously murdered ten people and injured three others in the Tops Supermarket on Jefferson Avenue in Buffalo. While full details are not confirmed, it appears that this heinous act was carried out because the white supremacist traveled to this location targeting our black brothers and sisters. The Erie County Sheriff has said "This was pure evil. It was [a] straight up racially motivated hate crime from somebody outside of our community, outside of the City of Good neighbors ... coming into our community and trying to inflict that evil upon us."

Hate and racism have no place in America. As we will hear tomorrow in church, we are called upon by Jesus to love one another. We are to show our love for another so that others know that we are Jesus' disciples.

Love takes many forms. It can be helping out a neighbor. It can be comforting those in sorrow. It can be taking a stand to show our solidarity that this type of violence does not belong in our neighborhoods, our cities, or our nation. I ask for each of you to pray for guidance, courage and creativity to confront racism in our own hearts as well as in others.

I commend to you this evening the prayer that is often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi:

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;  
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 is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

May God grant us all the peace that surpasses understanding.

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