



The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Condemns Anti-Semitic Killing and Calls for the Healing of Divisions



The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph joins with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and countless groups and individuals across the country and in Pittsburgh to condemn the slaughter of our brothers and sisters at Tree of Life Congregation in the community of Squirrel Hill.

Our hearts are heavy and our souls are pained at the intrusion of anti-Semitism and violence in God's sacred space. We join with LCWR and Catholic sisters across the nation to extend our sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives. We will mourn with you. We will pray with you. We will walk with you in the spirit of God's love.

We recognize that shootings at synagogues and schools, churches and mosques, in our homes and on our streets have become all too common. The current political climate and growing polarization of our communities feed hate and spawn violence.

In responding to this act of violence, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated that "Violence as a response to political, racial or religious differences must be confronted with all possible effort. God asks nothing less of us," he said.

"He begs us back to our common humanity as his sons and daughters," he continued.

We recognize that the role of racist rhetoric and the senseless rancor must stop. White supremacists and their white nationalist ideology must be exposed and denounced. Anti-Semitism, racism, and hate of all kinds must be clearly condemned by our religious and political leaders, and each of us as well.

We acknowledge that all of us have played a role in the polarization of our communities and the denigration of the other. Each of us must participate in the healing and binding of wounds for which our communities long. We offer our prayers for the members of the Tree of Life Congregation and for all who have been victims of hate and violence and we say loudly and clearly, enough.

Condemnation alone cannot bring change. Our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph, which calls us to unite neighbor to neighbor and neighbor to God, reminds us that we build community by being the neighbor to the one we don't know: the person next door, the person who works with us, the stranger we meet on the street. It is only by breaking down our own barriers of comfort and isolation that we can begin to understand and appreciate those whose religion, race, gender or lifestyle is different than our own.