
St. Martin Catholic Church of Douglas

St. Leo Catholic Church of Palmyra

330 W. 8th Street

Palmyra, NE 68418

(402)780-5535

Date: 3/24/2019

To: All the members of the community of Douglas, NE and those in our surrounding communities,

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There simply are no words to truly express the heartfelt sorrow I have for the tragedy that ravaged the Douglas community this past weekend. The simple innocence of our community was brutally violated by this senseless act of violence that affects every person in some way. It is during these times that one might experience many emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, confusion, uncertainty and even despair. However, to allow ourselves to be captive to these emotions will only allow the violence to steal our peace...again and again. Rather, it is in the midst of tragedy that we should strengthen our bonds as a community. We should embrace our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and remember that evil, no matter how hard it tries, has been defeated. Like a rebellious child the evil one will kick and scream and throw a tantrum but we shall remind him that he has no place in our community and we will not fall victim to his attacks.

So how do we respond to this kind of event? What do you say? What does our faith and this season of lent say about this? Our faith centers on the struggle between good and evil. But evil often seems distant almost philosophical. However, this shooting so close to home is hardly distant and certainly not philosophical. Evil has become real, tangible and frightening beyond words. It is because of evil in our world that God sent his Son to save us. The evil struggled to overcome the light who is Christ. But evil failed. The cross of defeat became the doorway for Christ's victory over evil and over death. This is why we look for Christ in this Lenten season because the light of Christ calls us to live as children of God, as brothers and sisters, as fellow pilgrims who will not tolerate the evil in our world.

But what can we do? That's the question we're asking ourselves. There are many things that we can do. Pray...pray for the victims and the family that is suffering unparalleled pain and a total loss of joy and life. Cling to our loved ones...wrap them in love and help them understand how important and how loved they are. Let go...let go of the petty grudges that we are holding against our brothers and sisters. Let go of the gossip that plagues our relationships with one another. But that isn't enough. I would beg you to be vigilant in continually working for the elimination of violence in our lives and the lives of our children. Do not surrender what is all our responsibility to insure that the evil of violence and hatred, the evil of prejudice and destructive behaviors are simply not tolerated, accepted, or supported or in any way. Let us spend more time in our lives recognizing what brings us together and what we have in common rather than our differences. Let us work to talk more about the strengths people in our community have rather than continually discussing their faults. Change begins with me, myself and I. It is up to us to look inwardly to examine our consciences and change our behavior in order to build a better community, state, country and world.

The Good News is that we are not alone without help! We have been given the grace from Jesus Christ who taught us to pray "thy kingdom come thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven." We therefore consecrate Douglas to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the name above every other name, that at His name every knee shall bow both on earth and under the earth to the glory of God the Father!

Please be assured of my continued prayers. As Pastor and Shepherd of St. Martin Catholic Church in Douglas and St. Leo Catholic Church in Palmyra my heart is with you. Regardless of if you are Catholic or not I am here to serve you in whatever capacity you might need.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Fr. Adam Sparsing