



Monday Memo

FROM BISHOP GERALD F. KICANAS

[Memo Archives](#)

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I am returning to Tucson today from Jerusalem, where I was participating in the annual Coordination of Episcopal Conferences for the Church in the Holy Land.

What a shock to see and hear on the news about the tragedy and senseless violence that took place in Tucson. I was stunned to learn that Rep. Gabrielle Giffords had been shot and that Judge John Roll and Christina Green, a young girl from St. Odilia Parish, had been killed and so many wounded.

To see the scenes from the Safeway at Oracle and Ina, to see the frantic efforts at University Medical Center to save lives, to see people I know being interviewed on national news was overwhelming. It broke me up. I could not sleep. I just wanted to return home as soon as possible. I could not believe that this would be happening in a community we all enjoy and love.

As I would expect, the community has risen to the occasion. Bystanders stepping up to help at the scene, medical staff working feverishly to care for those harmed, our public servants trying to find answers to a horrific act of violence perpetrated against innocent people, everyone praying and offering support and condolences.

Before I left the Holy Land, I concelebrated Mass with 10 bishops in a small Catholic church in Jericho. There are only about 50 Catholic families in the village, and they all expressed to me their condolences for what happened in Tucson and promised their prayers, as did each of the bishops from Canada, Albania, France, Germany, England and the Holy Land. Their comfort and heartfelt prayers meant a lot.

In the Holy Land, violence is feared and expected. Violence, too often, tears apart both the Israeli and the Palestinian people. Each community knows well the result of senseless violence. Their families have mourned the loss of loved ones and cared for those injured.

The people in Jericho, knowing well the life in their community and hearing about what happened in Tucson, asked me, "Bishop, how can we prevent these acts of violence that

destroy the lives of so many?" I wish I knew the answer. But, as the world continues to seek an answer to that question, we can, each in our own way, strive to respect others, speak with civility, try to understand one another and try to find healthy ways to resolve our conflicts.

But, right now it is important as a community to pull together and to reach out in care and concern to all who have been affected by this tragedy.

We will gather at 7 p.m. tomorrow at St. Odilia Parish in Tucson as a family of Faith for a "Mass for the Healing of Our Community, Remembrance of Those Who Have Died, and for the Consolation of All Victims and Their Families."

All in our community are invited.

I share with you the letter that I sent to our parishes over the weekend.

Saturday, Jan. 8, 2011

TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE OF TUCSON

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

While in the Holy Land, I have learned of the terrible violence that has occurred in Tucson.

It is incomprehensible that such a horrible tragedy could happen in the community that we love so much. I am shocked and devastated as I see the horrible pictures on the news and hear the reports of those who have been killed and injured.

We pray for the repose of the souls of those who were killed and for the comfort and consolation of their families.

We pray for the healing of those who were wounded, among them Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, and for the comfort and consolation of their families.

We pray for the comfort and consolation of our community. We share with each other the shock and the heartbreak of this tragedy. We weep in our sadness, and we seek comfort from each other.

We pray to be a channel of peace, that where there is hatred we will bring the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As a family of Faith, we unite in prayer for the repose of the souls of our sister and brother in Christ, Christina Green and Federal Judge John Roll, who were among those who died, and for the comfort and consolation of their families.

Christina, just nine-years-old, received her First Communion last year at St. Odilia Parish in Tucson. "Let the children come to me," Jesus said (Matthew 19:14). Christina is with Him.

Judge Roll was a person of great faith and great integrity. He lived his faith as a devoted parishioner of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Tucson. For many years, he would begin his day serving the early morning Mass at Sts. Peter and Paul. He proclaimed the Word of God as a lector at Sts. Peter and Paul and St. Thomas the Apostle. He lived his faith as a servant of our nation for the cause of justice.

In your Prayers of the Faithful at this Mass, please pray:

For all those who were killed and injured in the senseless and tragic violence of the shootings in Tucson, for their families and loved ones, and for an end to violence that brings so much harm to so many innocent people, let us pray to the Lord.