

Archbishop Miller's Statement

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Message to Parishioners

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we mourn with deep sadness the tragic and senseless loss of life that took place last night at Vancouver's Lapu-Lapu Festival. We grieve the deaths of 11 people and the suffering of so many others. We hold especially close our beloved Filipino community, who are a treasure to our parishes and to our city.

As we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, we are reminded that the Risen Christ is near to the wounded, the suffering, and the brokenhearted. We entrust the souls of the departed to his mercy and pray for comfort and healing for all those affected.

If you or someone you know is struggling in the aftermath of this tragedy, please reach out. Our diocese has information available about Catholic mental health counselors, and we can also help connect you with the Vancouver Police Department's Victim Services Unit, which provides support to those impacted by violent events. Please contact me or the parish office for more information.

Let us continue to pray for the victims, for their families, and for peace in our community.

Options for the Prayer of the Faithful

For all those who lost their lives and were injured in the violence at the Lapu Lapu Festival, and for their families and loved ones, and for health care workers and first responders on the scene – that the Risen Lord may bring them comfort, healing, and peace.

We pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our brothers and sisters in the Filipino community, and for all who mourn the loss of life from the tragedy at the Lapu Lapu Festival - that they may know the closeness of Christ's mercy and the support of our love.

We pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Resources

- Victim services are available 24/7 for those who witnessed or experienced trauma by calling or texting 1-800-563-0808 or emailing 211-victimlinkbc@uwbc.ca.
- Crisis response centre: Douglas Park Community Centre, 801 West 22nd Avenue, Vancouver

- VPD direct victim Liaison Line: 604-717-3321
- Filipino BC - for community support and resources, visit filipinobc.org
- Vancouver Crisis Centre 24/7 support at 1-800-784-2433 or visit crisiscentre.bc.ca
- Vancouver Coastal Health Mental Health Support Line: available 24 hours at 310-6789 (no area code needed)
- Youth in BC Distress Line: for youth-specific response, call 604-872-3311 or chat online at youthinbc.com
- To reach out to a local Catholic counsellor, go to <https://rcav.org/personal-counselling>.

Pastoral Response to a Mass Casualty Event

Trauma-Informed Talking Points

Introduction: Acknowledge the Pain

- "Dear friends, as we come together in the wake of this tragic event, we acknowledge the profound pain and sorrow many of us feel. Our hearts are heavy with grief for those who have been lost, and for those who are left to navigate the aftermath."

Offer Compassion and Support

- "In times of crisis, it's vital to recognize that each person may respond differently to trauma. Some of you may feel anger, confusion, sadness, or even numbness. Please know that these feelings are valid. We must create a space where everyone feels safe to express their emotions."

Encourage Connection

- "I urge you to reach out to one another. Whether through a phone call, a visit, or gathering in small groups, connecting with fellow community members can provide strength and comfort. Don't hesitate to lean on each other in this time of need."

Emphasize the Importance of Self-Care

- "As we support one another, taking care of ourselves is crucial. Ensure you're getting enough rest, eating well, and seeking professional help if needed. There's no shame in needing extra support; it's a sign of strength."

Invite Reflection and Prayer

- "Let's take a moment to pray together. We can pray for those who have been affected, their families, and for all of us as we navigate this difficult time. Let's seek peace, healing, and understanding."

Provide Resources for Help

- "I want to remind you that resources are available for anyone needing additional support:

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Conclusion and Hope

- "While we are faced with overwhelming sorrow, we can find hope in each other and in our faith. Together, let us be a beacon of light in this dark time. May we support one another and build a path to healing."