

Catholic Bishops of California Ask for Prayers in Observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 2-8, 2017

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SACRAMENTO – *Catholic dioceses in California are offering special prayers and Masses in observation of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, an annual event established in 1981 to draw attention to the people and families whose lives have been affected by violent crime. In recognition of those impacted by crime, the Restorative Justice Committee of the California Catholic Conference has issued the following statement. (Members of the Committee are the Most Rev. Richard Garcia, Bishop of Monterey, the Most Rev. Armando Ochoa, Bishop of Fresno, Most Reverend David O'Connell, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, and the Most Reverend Myron Cotta, Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento):* *Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey.* – Pope Francis “The harm to persons by the intentional criminal acts of others can be long lasting. Crime victims, survivors, and their families need to know they are not alone. Local Church communities will walk with them providing support and prayers on the road to healing and restoration. “Healing is a process aimed at restoring a sense of physical safety, security and their sense of self. “That process is called ‘restorative justice’. It has two goals—to help victims and their families heal from the traumatic effects of violent crime and to break the cycle of crime by increasing public safety through helping offenders rehabilitate as well as reintegrate into their communities. “Many California dioceses have an Office of Restorative Justice formed to provide healing and support to all of those affected by crime and the criminal justice system’s response. “During National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, California dioceses actively work to promote healing opportunities for individuals and communities. Some related activities include interfaith prayer services, candlelight vigils, and Masses for the intentions of crime victims and survivors. In addition, some dioceses are participating in local community-based events to promote awareness of victims’ rights, including related victim marches and conferences. “As Pope Francis reminds us ‘With the Cross, Jesus unites himself to the silence of the victims of violence, those who can no longer cry out, especially the innocent and the defenseless; with the Cross, he is united to families in trouble, and those who mourn the tragic loss of their children.’” *For more information about events in your area contact your local Diocesan Restorative Justice Director at www.restorejustice.com or visit the CCC website at www.cacatholic.org.*

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