



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Office of the Bishop

August 8, 2019

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Over the past few weeks we have watched in horror as scores of innocent lives have been taken, or were forever changed, due to multiple acts of gun violence. Sadly, these heinous acts all took place in venues where people---young and old alike---should feel most comfortable and are the most vulnerable: from a summer festival, to a popular back-to-school retail store, to an outdoor night-time entertainment area. Such unspeakable and indiscriminate taking of human lives reflects a troubling trend in our culture as we see the eroding of the value and dignity of all human life. We are also understandably shaken and disturbed as we experience a kind of loss of our own: we feel less secure and more anxious for ourselves and our loved ones.

Even in the face of these despicable acts, we must remain a prayerful, faithful and hope-filled people. Therefore, I ask that our entire Diocese designate next week's Holy Day of Obligation's celebration of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother into Heaven, as a Day of Prayer for Peace and an End to Violence. I am inviting all 59 of our Parishes to devote special prayers during their Holy Day Masses, as we all call upon the intercession of our Blessed Mother, and as we stand in solidarity for the protection of all human life. Next week, on August 15, 2019, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul, into her Heavenly Home. I feel this is a fitting time to once again turn to our Blessed Mother during these times of trouble to seek her protection, to ask for her intercession, and to know that she will stand with us and help us. I will be celebrating the 12:10 p.m. Mass on that same day at St. Augustine Cathedral as our diocesan celebration of this special day of prayer.

I also call our faithful Catholic people, and all people of good will everywhere, in addition to celebrating Mass on this Holy Day next August 15, 2019, to find ways to devote that day to special prayers, including the praying the rosary, as well as making it a day of fasting and offering up your personal sacrifices. Let us remember in a special way all victims of violence, as well as their families and loved ones, who must find the courage and hope to deal with their tragic losses. Finally, let us pray for peace throughout our country and our world. Most of all, let us pray for a conversion of those individuals who, for whatever distorted reasons, choose to perpetrate violence against others.

May God's Holy Spirit help us to work for peace, and may all our sisters and brothers in the human family feel the solidarity of our prayers and support.

Asking the blessings of our Loving God, and the maternal protection and intercession of our Blessed Mother, to come upon you, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo