



Office of the President

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Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President

December 21, 2012

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton
President, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
2500 Don Reid Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1H 2J2 Canada

Dear Archbishop Smith,

Thank you for your prayers and sympathies at this time of great sorrow in our nation, as we mourn the 20 young children and six adults slain at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14. The solidarity of Canadian Catholics with us in the United States, and especially with the families and community of Newtown, Connecticut and the Diocese of Bridgeport, help ease the pain felt by all.

This is indeed a tragic moment for the whole of North American society. As you write so eloquently, “each of us has been injured and hurt: every heart by the images of human suffering, every soul by the malice and cruelty at work in any act of violence.”

Both the United States and Canada have experienced many blessings, including an absence of war in our land in recent times, wonderful natural resources, beautiful landscapes and the ability to deal with the ravages of poverty that overwhelmingly assail so many other countries. At the same time, however, we live in a culture of violence, a fact driven home too dramatically last week. We pray, as you do, that this terrible tragedy reawakens in us the recognition of the sanctity of all lives, big and small, and young and all.

Your support as our northern neighbor comforts us and reminds us that the Catholic community is a single community, not divided by rivers and mountains, but united in the one family of Jesus. This truth is felt most deeply now as we prepare to celebrate the Prince of Peace, born in a stable in Bethlehem, geographically afar but close to our hearts.

Thank you again as we pray for God’s gift of healing and reconciliation in Newtown and its surrounding communities. We shall continue to work together so both our nations discover a rebirth of love and a renewed appreciation for the gift and value of each human life and every human family.

With the assurance of my prayers for God's blessings upon your work and witness, I am,

Faternally in Christ,

Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops