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Peace, Dialogue Needed Amid Violence in the U.S.

Archbishop Kurtz

After the shooting deaths of unarmed black men by police officers and the killing of eight police officers by black men, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called for peace and dialogue. "We find ourselves amid a prolonged prayer of lament as we join to console the grieving and support the suffering," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, in a July 18 statement. "People are suffering because their uniform is blue, suffering because their skin is black and suffering simply because of their station in life." Early July 17, a former Marine fatally shot three police officers and wounded three more, one

"The task of building a society upon the strong foundation of love begins with each one of us every day."

critically, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The gunman was killed at the scene. The city was still reeling from the fatal shooting of Alton Sterling by police during an altercation outside a convenience store July 5. The first week of July also saw the fatal shooting of Philando Castile, 32, in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota, by police officers July 6, followed by a sniper shooting in Dallas that killed five police officers July 7. The "temptation to respond to violence with violence is strong," Archbishop Kurtz said, noting that even St. Peter lashed out about Christ's arrest. "Jesus' response was clear: 'Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.'" Against a backdrop of "complex and varied" reasons for so much suffering, he urged people to come together "to address the lingering evil of racism, the need to safeguard our citizens from the present danger of extremism and the overall breakdown of civility." The archbishop's statement follows.

Stop, no more of this!" (Lk 22:51).

I offer my prayers for the officers and families affected by the horrible shooting in Baton Rouge. We find ourselves amid a prolonged prayer of lament as we join to console the grieving and support the suffering. People are suffering because their uniform is blue, suffering because their skin is black and suffering simply because of their station in life.

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July 28, 2016
Volume 46
Number 12