



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

4800 Union Deposit Road | Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710

bishopsoffice@hbgdiocese.org | (717) 657-4804 ext. 354 | www.hbgdiocese.org

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On October 7th we mark the one-year anniversary of the tragic attack by Hamas on Israel, where more than 1,200 people, many of them civilians, were killed. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called for a day of prayer and fasting on that day as we remember these somber events, saying during a recent Mass that: “The Church is always at the service of humanity... especially in this dramatic hour of our history, as the winds of war and the fires of violence continue to ravage entire peoples and nations.... I ask everyone to take part in a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world.”

Our hearts grieve for the countless lives lost throughout this conflict in the year that has passed. As Christians, we are called to hear the cries of those suffering and respond with compassion, showing Christ’s love to all people. I echo Pope Francis’ words and invite you, the faithful of our Diocese, to take time Monday and offer a prayer for all those affected by this conflict. October 7 is when the Church honors Mary under her title of “Our Lady of the Rosary.” Praying the Rosary would be one way to remember those suffering in this conflict. If possible, pray together with other family members. I also invite you to fast in some way. While we normally associate fasting with food, fasting can also include sacrificing some time that we would normally watch television or use our computers and tablets. Whether we decide to sacrifice eating dessert, or not watching a favorite show, may we offer these sacrifices for the deceased and those living in fear, particularly children, and for a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

We are all called to be peacemakers, to uplift one another in times of suffering, and to foster understanding and compassion in our communities. In prayer, we can find strength and hope. May we unite our voices, asking for an end to the violence that has plagued the Holy Land for far too long. Consider reaching out in friendship and support to our Jewish and Muslim neighbors, affirming our commitment to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Together, through our prayers and actions, we can contribute to a world where peace reigns and where love triumphs over hate.

May God bless you all, and may peace be restored once again in the Holy Land where Christ Himself once lived and walked.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior  
Bishop of Harrisburg