

Candle-lit vigil pays tribute to victims of Columbia Mall shooting

By Tom McCarthy Jr.

Catholic Review Staff

As the sun set on Columbia Jan. 30, hundreds gathered in the cold for an interdenominational candle-lit vigil outside The Mall in Columbia, where mall employees Brianna Benlolo and Tyler Johnson were killed in a shooting at the mall Jan. 25.

The ceremony featured local religious leaders and friends of the victims who reflected on the tragedy.

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The crowd stood silently holding their lit candles before the ceremony concluded with a closing prayer. A simple memorial with a banner reading “Forever in Our Heart” was erected outside one of the mall entrances where people, many of them mall employees, placed flowers, candles and other mementos before dispersing back into the mall or heading home.

The Brianna Benlolo Memorial Fund has been established to benefit Benlolo’s 2-year-old son and a fund in memory of Johnson has been formed by the Community Foundation of Howard County.

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