

# Texas, New Mexico dioceses unite in prayer after El Paso shooting

WASHINGTON (CNS) - The Catholic dioceses of El Paso, Texas, and neighboring Las Cruces, New Mexico, have joined in prayer after an August 3 mass shooting in a mall left several dead and many injured.

“Our prayers are with our neighboring city of El Paso and everyone affected by the active shooter situation near Cielo Vista and Walmart,” tweeted the Diocese of Las Cruces the afternoon of Aug. 3. “We ask our Las Cruces community to unite in prayer at this difficult time.”

The two cities are less than 50 miles from one another.

By early evening, authorities said 20 people died and another 26 were injured in the shooting rampage in a crowded Walmart Supercenter at the Cielo Vista Mall in El Paso. New reports said the alleged shooter has been identified as Patrick Crusius, 21, of Allen, Texas, and was taken into custody without incident.

The Diocese of El Paso also asked for prayers as the situation unfolds.

“Our prayers are with everyone involved,” the diocese said via Twitter, adding: “We ask everyone in the El Paso area to unite with us in prayer for everyone involved.”

The nonprofit Hope Border Institute of the El Paso Diocese asked anyone who could do so to donate blood at a center in the city. It also gave local directions via Twitter for those looking for loved ones believed to have been in the area.

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, an Aug. 3 Twitter message said Archbishop William E. Lori asks the faithful of the archdiocese “to join him in praying for the victims of today’s tragic shooting in El Paso and for an end to the senseless violence and its underlying causes that wreaks havoc far too often in our peace loving society. The violence must end!”

In Washington, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the

chairman of the USCCB domestic policy committee said that “as people of faith, we continue to pray for all the victims, and for healing in all these stricken communities,” but they said the Texas shooting a week after a California shooting shows “something remains fundamentally evil in our society.”

Action is “needed to end these abhorrent acts,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, Chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

The Catholic leaders called the El Paso mass shooting “terrible, senseless and inhumane.”

“Something remains fundamentally evil in our society when locations where people congregate to engage in the everyday activities of life can, without warning, become scenes of violence and contempt for human life,” they said, calling gun violence a “plague” that “continues unchecked and spreads across our country.”

“Things must change. Once again, we call for effective legislation that addresses why these unimaginable and repeated occurrences of murderous gun violence continue to take place in our communities,” Cardinal DiNardo and Bishop Dewane said in a statement.

Several U.S. bishops also asked for prayers in tweets Aug. 3.

News reports said police were looking at the alleged shooter’s social media accounts to see if they could find a motive for the shooting.

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