



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Catholic Bishops of California Ask for Prayers in Observance of
National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 8-14, 2018**

SACRAMENTO – *Catholic dioceses in California are offering special prayers and Masses in observation of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, an annual event established in 1981 to draw attention to the people and families whose lives have been affected by violent crime. In recognition of those impacted by crime, the Restorative Justice Committee of the California Catholic Conference has issued the following statement. (Members of the Committee are the Most Rev. Richard Garcia, Bishop of Monterey, the Most Rev. Armando Ochoa, Bishop of Fresno, Most Reverend David O'Connell, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, and the Most Reverend Myron Cotta, Bishop of Stockton):*

No one can learn to hope on their own, because Christian hope needs to be
"embodied" in a community of mutual support and loving concern.

– Pope Francis

Local church communities are encouraged to walk compassionately and accompany people harmed and those who created the harm on the journey of healing and restoration.

"Many California dioceses have an Office of Restorative Justice formed to provide a safe space for all of those affected by crime and the criminal justice system's response.

"During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, California dioceses actively work to promote healing support for individuals and communities. Some related activities include interfaith prayer services, candlelight vigils, and Masses for the intentions of crime victims and survivors. In addition, some dioceses are participating in local community-based events to promote awareness of victims' rights, including related victim marches and conferences.

"During this week, the California Catholic Conference (CCC) will provide a statewide train-the-trainer bereavement ministry workshops that will provide insight and understanding of the impact of homicide on survivors, and explore ways to minister to them. They will also learn about the criminal justice system's response to survivors and things to consider when developing opportunities for ongoing support."

For more information about events in your area contact your local Diocesan Restorative Justice Director at www.restorejustice.com or visit the CCC website at www.cacatholic.org.

The California Catholic Conference (www.cacatholic.org) is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in California. There are nearly 12 million Catholics in California and the Catholic Church is the largest private provider of health care, social services and education in the State. Catholic institutions include 42 hospitals, which annually assist 7.7 million patients; 12 colleges and universities, which enroll 48,600 students; 115 Catholic high schools, which serve 73,000 students; 558 Catholic elementary schools, which enroll 162,000 children; and the 12 diocesan Catholic Charities agencies.