Because we are Catholic

The Catholic Church in California serves and advocates for the poor, vulnerable and those in need not because they are Catholic, but because we are Catholic.

“With the Cross, Jesus unites himself to the silence of the victims of violence, those who can no longer cry out, especially the innocent and the defenseless; with the Cross, he is united to families in trouble, and those who mourn the tragic loss of their children.”

Pope Francis, July 26, 2013, World Youth Day

Bringing Healing to Neighborhoods Hit by Violent Crime

The list of homicides in the greater San Francisco area is long. In 2013, San Francisco had 54 homicides. San Mateo had 16, and Marin had two.

All too often, victims of crime and their families are quickly forgotten, left alone in their grief with little support. The Archdiocese of San Francisco’s Ministry for Victims and Families of Violent Crime reaches out to those families who have been torn apart by violent crimes. They go to the streets where murders have taken place, light candles and facilitate prayer circles with the grieving families and friends, and speak out for the victims and for the community. They do this each and every time there is a murder. Sometimes the group starts small, but then people come out of their homes and businesses to stand as a community in support.

Julio Escobar, Restorative Justice Ministry Coordinator said, “We become present on the streets and the community feels that someone cares. We bring a message of faith and love where a person has died.”

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Bringing Healing to Neighborhoods Hit by Violent Crime (continued)

Along with this ongoing outreach, the Archdiocese brings the community together for a yearly memorial service for victims of crime.

On January 11, 2014, Bishop William J. Justice of the Archdiocese and other clergy joined families and friends of victims of violence for a Mission Street Prayer Walk for Peace followed by a memorial service for last year’s victims of violence. Participants held white crosses, each one representing a person whose life was taken by violence. In the memorial service at the Cathedral, each victim is named, families are prayed for and the community stands together in solidarity. This is just one of many restorative justice programs offered by the Catholic Church in California.

Victims Walk, San Francisco

Mission Street Prayer Walk

For more information, go to:

www.cacatholic.org
www.restorejustice.com
www.sfarchdiocese.org