

A PLEDGE TO OUR COMMUNITY FROM THE SAN BERNARDINO CLERGY ASSOCIATION

The eyes of the world have been focused on our city since December 2nd when the horrific murder of fourteen innocent men and women took place along with the injury to many more. This event has brought people together from every walk of life to pray and to gather comfort from one another. It has also motivated the members of the San Bernardino Clergy Association, the organization which for decades has been comprised of clergy serving many faiths and denominations, to reaffirm some basic principles:

We affirm the remarkable diversity of our city and region. The city of San Bernardino is a virtual rainbow of ethnicities, cultures, and faiths. We prize that diversity and are committed to nurturing it in the days and years to come by engaging in opportunities to know more about each other and to develop cooperative efforts to bring about genuine respect for each other. Our diversity is a strength that we do not take lightly.

We affirm that our community is especially blessed with dedicated people whose commitment and skill have been so evident in these past few days. Police, fire, emergency medical personnel and others have provided for the world a model of professionalism and sensitivity. We commend each and every one of these devoted public servants for their ongoing efforts.

We affirm the fundamental religious teachings of all our faiths that transcend any differences - an abhorrence of violence, an insistence that justice be pursued in every sector of life, and a belief that all human life is sacred, and that in the words of the Psalms, "It is good and pleasant for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity."

We deplore the statements and actions of those who call into question the patriotism of our sisters and brothers of the Islamic communities here and throughout our nation and who distort the fundamental teachings of Islam. We welcome the spirited participation of the religious leaders of our local Islamic communities in our association.

We condemn all forms of extremism - political and religious - that infringe on the rights of others and that lead them to engage in acts of violence. We will hold all - even those in our own communities - responsible for their actions.

We, clergypersons of a variety of congregations and organizations, commit ourselves to personally engage in those strategies which can make our beloved city of San Bernardino a place of uncompromised safety, security and progress and we commit ourselves to teaching those whom we are privileged to serve that they must express their religious principles in word and deed.

Just as we dedicate ourselves to the creation of a more harmonious religious community in our city and area, we commit ourselves also to the immediate goals of creating educational opportunities to help us learn about each others' religious traditions, the creation of a city-wide festival of peace to focus on interreligious cooperation, and the support of current fund-raising efforts to provide financial assistance to the victims of the December 2nd attack and their families.

We are motivated in this time to expand the San Bernardino Clergy Association geographically and denominationally so that we can be an effective force for good in our communities.

In the midst of our communal grief we sense the powerful mandate to create for ourselves, our children, and all future generations a city which is marked by love, harmony, and creativity and which can be a model for many other communities throughout our nation in expanding our blessings.

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San Bernardino Clergy Association
3041 N. Sierra Way
San Bernardino, Ca 92405