

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Canada, I wish to extend to you our deepest condolences and assure you of our solidarity and support during this terrifying time. On the evening of 14 March, we learned about the horrendous shootings which took place at both Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Mosque, in Christchurch New Zealand, during Friday prayer, a time of worship and peace disrupted by violence and hate. We are horrified that the attack injured and killed so many people, and left behind a feeling of fear and uncertainty in your homes and places of worship. For Canadians, and especially Muslim Canadians, this act of horrific violence is a painful reminder to the shooting which took place 29 January 2017 at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec, in Canada.

As the Muslim communities and the entire population of New Zealand mourn the dead and care for the injured, the Catholic community of Canada extends to you its fraternal proximity and assurance of prayers and support.

The Catholic Bishops of Canada reiterate the sentiments of peace and love so beautifully expressed by The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb and His Holiness Pope Francis, on 4 February 2019, when they declared together:

*“In the name of God who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace; In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity.”*

May God Almighty grant you mercy and compassion in abundance.

Sincerely yours,

+Lionel Gendron, P.S.S.

Bishop of St-Jean-Longueuil and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops