



Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith Office of the Bishop

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January 31, 2017

**Dear Clergy, Religious Sisters, Lay Leaders, Brothers and Sisters of the
Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith:**

Re: Recent Tragedy at Quebec City Mosque and Support to Our Muslim Brothers and Sisters

I join with all of you in offering prayers and support for the members of the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec, and to Canada's entire Muslim community. We are all very shocked and distressed by the news of such a terrible assault in our own country – and in a place of prayer and worship – in this case a mosque on a Sunday!

With Muslims, Catholics revere the faith of Abraham, and with Muslims, we call in prayer on the one, holy, and merciful God, asking for solace at this tragic time.

After being alerted by a CBC reporter about a vigil being held at the Islamic Center last evening, I attended the service at the Yellowknife Islamic Centre. I was struck by the outpouring of support by many Yellowknifers – and the words shared by Nazim Awan, the community's chairperson. He shared his tremendous gratitude for the outpouring of support to the Muslim community across the territory and the country, and reminded all who gather about the need to stand up in solidarity to an attack on one group, because this is an attack on us all.

May we continue to reach out in solidarity to the Muslim community here in the NWT and across Canada. We join with all people of good will in denouncing this kind of attack and bloodshed, and with honoring the freedom to worship in peace and safety.

We join with Pope Francis, who in response to this attack offered prayers for the victims and stressed the importance of Muslims and Christians being united in prayer.

In Our One Creator,

✙ Mark A. Hagemoen
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith