

## **“Dialogue is the Only Way” – Pope Francis**

### **A Statement in the Wake of the October 27, 2018 Synagogue Attack in Pittsburgh**

The Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University, along with the entire university community, is appalled and sickened by the mass shooting at a synagogue on October 27, 2018 in our own Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Worshippers gathering for Shabbat services were brutally gunned down by an assailant who shouted murderous antisemitic slogans as he did so. The fact that this atrocity occurred in the sacred spaces of a synagogue where several congregations worship only multiplies the revulsion we feel. This episode is also an assault on the principle of freedom of religion that is fundamental to the American experiment in democracy and pluralism. As Pope Francis said today, “all of us are wounded by this inhuman act of violence.”

We wish to express our deep sorrow and solidarity with the Tree of Life community in Pittsburgh, as well as to the Jewish communities who are the near neighbors and friends of Saint Joseph's University. In the words of the traditional Jewish prayerbook:

*HaMakom yenachem et'chem b'toch shar avay'lay Tzion vee'Yerushalayim.*

May the Ever-present One comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

At the Western Wall in 2000, Saint Pope John Paul II forever committed the Catholic Church “to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.” At the Roonstrasse Synagogue of Cologne in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI lamented “the rise of new signs of antisemitism and various forms of a general hostility towards foreigners,” urging that Jews and Christians “must come to know one another much more and much better.” More recently in 2014, Pope Francis has written that “Dialogue and friendship with the Jewish people are part of the life of Jesus' disciples.”

May the Holy One lead us all along the path of dialogue, remove all hatreds from us, and bring us all to divine shalom.

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