

Ngā mihi kia koutou

The shocking events in Christchurch, with tragic and senseless loss of life, are impacting on us all.

It's tempting to think the killers were deranged, yet all was meticulously planned and calculated. Our reactions while varied probably carry a common element too. One person put it to me this way: "I just can't understand how someone more or less my age could be filled with such hate".

One 'positive' from such tragedy is that it weaves the goodness of the human spirit closer together, at least for a while. From the Church world, I've received messages of concern and support from Ireland, England, Latvia, Brazil, Panama, Italy, the Vatican and Australia.

This Sunday's first reading talks of Abraham. It is through Abraham and Sarah that we Christians are brothers and sisters with all Muslims. The Abrahamic religions – Jews, Christians and Muslims - are the faith communities that descend from, and are united in, the worship of the God of Abraham. What a power for good that unity can be, in a world where so many seem to seek to divide and exclude.

Please follow the links to our NZ Bishops Statement in the wake of the killings and also to a comforting message to us from Pope Francis.

This Sunday 17 March we are hosting at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit a Memorial Interfaith Service at 7.30pm. All welcome to come and join with our Muslim brothers and sisters of Palmerston North, to pray for the deceased and their families, for forgiveness, and for peace in our world.

+Charles.