



Diocese of Tucson

My brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

It is with profound sadness that we hear of the continued, escalating and senseless attacks on innocent civilians in Gaza, most recently the unconscionable attack on the Holy Family Catholic Church there. The direct military attack took the lives of Saad Issa Konstantinos Salameh, Foumia Issa Latif Ayyad and Najwa Abu Dawood and seriously injured many more, including Father Gabriel Romanelli who has served the people of Gaza for nearly 30 years. I have met this priest and the community of Holy Family Catholic Church. He loves and is committed to his people.

For some time now, since the beginning of hostilities, civilians, Christians and Muslims, have taken shelter at the Church, hoping to avoid death and injury in a place that should have remained sacred and safe. Regretfully civilians cannot safely seek sanctuary even in the Church.

Let us join Pope Leo XIV and Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, in their urgent call for an immediate ceasefire and urging meaningful dialogue to end the conflict that has taken far too many innocent lives on both sides. We cannot remain silent. Let us continue to advocate and pray whenever we gather for an end to war in far too many places around the world where war still rages. We echo Pope Paul VI's words at the United Nations in 1965 "No more war. War never again!" We are called to be peacemakers. As President John F. Kennedy declared in 1961 "Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind."

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Gerald Kicanas

Apostolic Administrator, Diocese of Tucson ¹