



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Bishop David Ricken invites all to pray for peace in Israel and throughout the Middle East**

GREEN BAY, Wis. (Oct. 13, 2023) – The following statement from Bishop David L. Ricken is offered as a Prayer for Peace for the people of Israel and all those affected by the war in the Middle East.

#### **Pray for Peace**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5: 9)*

After viewing the evil and horrific actions committed against the people of Israel, I am deeply disturbed and grieve the loss of innocent life. I also feel compelled to speak out against and strongly condemn the violent attacks against vulnerable and innocent people that unfolded before our eyes.

I am particularly grieved that these acts of violence come against our elder brothers and sisters in the faith, the Jewish people. Scripture is clear that the Lord chose to walk closely with the Jewish people, the Chosen People of Israel. Yet throughout history, they have repeatedly been the object of violence, attack, even genocide. This hatred for the Jewish people must come to an end.

All of humanity are God’s children, made in his image and likeness (Gn 1:26) and worthy of respect and dignity. Every person living in the Middle East is a child of God. The events of Oct. 7 were an atrocious violation of the value and worth of every human life. The violent images will haunt us for a long time to come.

A nation unjustly attacked has the right to lawful self-defense to restore peace (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 2307-2309 for a fuller explanation of “just war”). Israel has a right to defend itself and protect its people from future terrorist attacks and unjust incursions. Yet our long-term hope and prayer is that peace be restored.

The cycle of violence in the Middle East and throughout our world must end. Even as peoples and nations defend themselves from unjust aggression and evil structures are ended, we pray that more and more innocent people are not thrown into the path of violence, destruction and war. It is my fervent prayer that nations will confront terrorism and violence throughout the world while also using their civil authority and power to protect the innocent and vulnerable and promote long-term peace.

As Catholics and as Christians, I pray that, when we see the violent and horrific images from Israel and Gaza, we do not just stop at feeling anger and dismay. Instead, I hope that we are moved to prayer and pleading for God’s intervention in this tragedy and in our fallen human condition. We may feel helpless as we hear of children, young people, elderly and innocent civilians being murdered and kidnapped. Innocent lives are lost, and families torn apart. While we condemn evil, let us even more resolutely turn to the only one who can bring peace to our world, the Prince of Peace.

My brother in Christ, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa sees and experiences the violence and atrocities affecting the people he lovingly serves. Yet amidst the violence, he asks all to unite in prayer for peace. In the face of evil. He asks that we turn our hearts to the Lord. He recently asked his

brother bishops and all Catholics to offer a day of fasting, abstinence and prayer on Oct. 17, 2023, for an end of the violence and for peace. He encourages Eucharistic Adoration and the recitation of the Rosary. I encourage you, your family and parish to unite with Christians around the world in prayer for peace.

Lord, we cannot see a way out of this cycle of violence and constant strife, but you promise us in your Word: "He shall judge between the nations and set terms for many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again" (Is 2: 4).

Lord, only you can bring peace amidst war and violence, we turn to you in this time of great need. Jesus, we trust in you.

###

**Who we are:** As friends and followers of Jesus, the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is devoted to fostering households and communities of discipleship through the mission and ministry of the Catholic Church. We are missionary disciples striving to lead all people to the Kingdom of God. Established in 1868, the diocese is composed of 256,000 Catholics in 16 counties: Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago.

**Contact:** Justine Lodl, communications and marketing director, at 920-272-8213 or [jlodl@gbdioc.org](mailto:jlodl@gbdioc.org); or Sarah Gietman, senior marketing coordinator, at 920-272-8209 or [sgietman@gbdioc.org](mailto:sgietman@gbdioc.org).