

October 2, 2017  
Beloved in the Lord,

*“The fear of man lays a snare,  
but he who trusts in the Lord is safe.”  
(Proverbs 29:25)*

It is with a troubled and sorrowful heart that I greet you today in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Like each of you, I was shocked and greatly grieved to hear of the horrifying attacks in Las Vegas, Nevada, which have killed fifty, and injured over four hundred people.

In the face of what is now the deadliest mass shooting in our country’s history, I ask that we first begin by turning to our God in prayer. We must pray that our Lord give rest to the souls of those innocent people and that He comfort their families and friends, as well as the survivors; but likewise, I ask that we pray for the soul of such a disturbed individual, who could seek to express himself only by bringing pain and sorrow to others.

Truly, as we continue to experience events of this magnitude and sobering character, it is both good and proper to turn to God. The alternative—continuing to drive ourselves and our society away from our Creator—is what produces such feelings of terror and helplessness, which in turn lead to horrific actions.

I also encourage each and every one of us to act as witnesses in the face of tragedies. These acts of terror are just that: they are created to send fear and uncertainty to all of us. In the face of ever-increasing vigilance at public events, we must not let ourselves become despondent, or reluctant to continue living our lives. Should we choose to become paralyzed, then we would only be allowing the Evil One to claim victory over our souls. The Proverb illustrates this beautifully: fear and depression are the ways of human beings in this fallen world, “...but he who trusts in the Lord is safe...”

As we continue to learn more in the coming days, let us continue to offer up our prayers and condolences to the families of those affected. May our Lord bestow upon us the hope and strength to minister and support our grieving brothers and sisters. As we

chant during the Great Compline, *“Lord of the Powers be with us, for in times of distress we have no other help but You. Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us.”*

May their memories be eternal!

**+ ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta