

Statement for Women's Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace and Unity
Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr
December 16, 2015

This is a time of fear in our nation. Those with a radical and violent interpretation of the Islamic faith and ties to extremism abroad have committed atrocities in our midst. These acts of terrorism occur in concert with a cacophony of other mass shootings and criminal violence already in our local neighborhoods and around the nation. We must respond with prayers and support for victims and their families as well as with increased security. However, we must not allow those who terrorize to tell us what to think about almost every other Muslim or about any community, whom they do not represent.

The Catholic Church has expressed its serious objections in recent years concerning what we sincerely feel are infringements upon our own religious liberties here and around the world. We extend our embrace of concern to our brothers and sisters in other faith communities, especially those who feel they are the focus of exceptional suspicion. The Archdiocese cherishes its relations with members of local Jewish, Muslim, and other religious communities. We stand in prayer and solidarity with the American Jewish Committee, Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati, and Christ Church Cathedral, who have organized this vigil, and those other faith communities here who share our commitment to justice, peace, and a better future for our nation.

Pope Francis has just begun for us a Jubilee Year of Mercy, and, last Sunday here in the Archdiocese, we opened wide the doors of our Cathedral. We hope that this ritual will serve as a reminder to all that God still urges us to keep open our hearts to the divine presence inside each other, especially when other forces tempt us to close them off. As evil forces bring darker times upon us, we can choose the isolation of fear it brings or the mercy of God.