

June 13, 2016

Beloved in the Lord,

*“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;
I have overcome the world.”
John 16:33*

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 grieved to learn about the tragedy that took place in Orlando, Florida. Let us join together and extend our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy to the parents, families and friends of the people who were killed. This mass shooting yesterday has affected our entire nation; messages of hope and encouragement are pouring in from around the world. Together, we are praying that our Ascended Lord bestow us with hope and strength to minister and support our grieving brothers and sisters.



In the face of such terrible events, we may feel confused and angry: why would anyone do such a horrible thing? Yet we only have to open the newspaper or watch television to be reminded that such evil does indeed occur, and that we live in a broken world, in desperate need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with its eternal message of love, forgiveness and peace.

I am reminded once again, that in spite of differences among people, the Lord our God does not condone even the smallest measure of violence towards those with whom we might disagree. For this reason, we as Orthodox Christians have a sacred responsibility to vocally protest these actions that harm the very fabric of this nation's spiritual and emotional psyche.

While we may not be personally affected, the families and friends of the fallen remain in our thoughts and prayers. May our loving and merciful Father comfort and strengthen them during this difficult time and as they face the future without their loved ones.

May their memories be eternal!

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta