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ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

August 18, 2014

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are all aware of the turmoil and tragedy our St. Louis community is experiencing. The residents of Ferguson, Missouri, are struggling to find peace in the chaos. As people of Christ, we are struggling to find direction in the unrest.

I have personally visited Ferguson and Michael Brown's memorial to offer my prayers for everyone affected by this tragedy. As I have been observing this situation and reflecting on it through much prayer, I find strength in the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." In all circumstances, but especially in these difficult times, we are all called to be instruments of peace through our words and actions. Pope Francis recently stated that, "All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace."

To that end, **I invite the Catholic faithful to attend a Mass for Peace and Justice which I will celebrate at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, on Wednesday, August 20th, at 5 p.m.** During the Mass a special collection will be taken to assist food pantries and parishes in the Ferguson area that offer assistance to those who have been affected by the looting and destruction of property. Additionally, I encourage all parishes to offer Masses for peace in our community. The Office of Worship will contact pastors to provide the appropriate resources. Additional parish activities could include Holy Hours, a parish rosary, or a special collection this week to assist in the effort.

Because many Catholic schools are beginning classes both this and in the coming weeks, I have asked our Catholic schools to begin a daily rosary for peace and to offer special intentions during all school Masses. Catholic Family Services, an agency of Catholic Charities, has made counselors available to any Catholic school that requests assistance. Catholic Family Services has also publicized tips for parents and schools when dealing with crisis situations.

Pope Francis has encouraged us again and again to ask Our Lady, the Undoer of Knots, to intercede for us in difficult circumstances. So too, I ask all the faithful in the Archdiocese of St. Louis to join me in praying to Our Blessed Mother and to her son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, for peace and justice in our community.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis