

**Keynote Address – San Antonio Police Department**

**May 10, 2017**

**The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. . . Their going forth from us seemed utter destruction. But they are in peace. (Wisdom 3:1-3)**

**In the Bible the ultimate goal for every person, every community, every nation is peace, *shalom*. To greet someone by offering peace is commonplace among faith-filled Christians, Jews, and Muslims everywhere. It is also clear in Scripture that peace is only attained by justice – by establishing, maintaining, and restoring (when necessary) right or just relationships – within ourselves, with our environment, with one another, and with God.**

**Law enforcement is a noble and vital vocation in our society – charged with establishing, maintaining, and restoring civic order, preserving and promoting justice in accord with our laws and statutes. Officers of the law are entrusted with preventing and ending violence, mediating disputes, seeking and restoring good order among our citizens with equal regard for the fundamental and innate rights of all persons. Our society owes an enormous debt of gratitude and appreciation to all of you who serve in law**

enforcement and public safety. We also have a shared responsibility to honor and support your families who depend upon you.

Today, we honor officers who have paid the ultimate price in carrying out their responsibilities: the fifty-eight officers who have died in the line of duty, including the most recent, Detective Benjamin Marconi who died last November 20th.

We honor their memory as a sacred trust, remembering their dedication to their work and the ultimate sacrifice they made, laying down their lives in service of others. Our prayer today is that they are, indeed, at peace – in God’s good, loving hands.

Our prayer and pastoral embrace also accompany those left behind – their families and friends, their co-workers and partners. There is no way to prepare adequately for a loved one’s death, especially when it is sudden and violent. Families and friends learn to cope with constant anxiety for the safety of those who serve in local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. And members of this larger public safety community reach out to one another and to families who are grieving the loss of a loved one. The larger community, including churches and parishes, synagogues and

mosques and temples, play an important role in supporting survivors emotionally and spiritually. Chaplains have a special relationship with those who serve in law enforcement and their families – in their roles of healing the hurts, strengthening family ties, helping to cope with the loss – a process of grieving that often extends over years.

I trust you will accept my presence among you this morning as a sign of the special place all of you have in my thoughts, my prayer, and my heart. Thank you for your service to the community! Peace be with all of you!