

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CATHOLIC CHARITIES TO HOST *REACH FOR PEACE*,
AN INTERFAITH PRAYER FOR PEACE**

(Pittsburgh) – On September 9th between 11 and 11:30 am, Catholic Charities will host an inter-faith Prayer for Peace in our Communities, led by Bishop David A. Zubik, at Market Square.

"This is a time for each of us to take a moment to commit to diligently embracing opportunities to be kind and respectful – embracing opportunities to welcome peace," says Bishop Zubik of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh; "by uniting in prayer, participants will all play a role in combating the tragic violence that has so saddened all of us."

The event, entitled *Reach for Peace: An Opportunity for United Prayer*, comes in response to Archbishop Joseph Kurtz's call for a Day of Prayer for Peace in our Communities. On September 9, Catholic Dioceses and Charities across the nation will be uniting in solidarity in the face of recent brutality and hostility in the US. Archbishop Kurtz, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), has also appointed a special task force to address violence and promote peace.

Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh designed *Reach for Peace* as an inter-faith gathering in order to highlight and strengthen unity across diversity as a medium for peace.

"As the religious director of the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, I believe there is no inter-faith without faith," says Imam Abdul Wajid, who will be leading one of the prayers. "A meaningful dialogue is only possible when people have a conviction that their faith has something to offer the society in which they live. Mutual understanding cannot be strengthened unless both convergence and divergence are held in a creative relationship."

Imam Wajid and Rabbi Aaron Bisno of Congregation Rodef Shalom will join Bishop David A. Zubik to lead the service. Larry Richert of Radio KDKA will emcee. Guests of all creeds are invited to gather in Market Square at 11 am, rain or shine. (Cover will be available in case of inclement weather.)

"It's crucial that people of faith come together across all that might otherwise divide us, and unite around our common belief that each and every one of us has been created in the same divine image, says Rabbi Bisno; "we need to work together to ensure mutual respect and a profound peace for all our citizens. The harmony of our society depends on our realizing this essential goal."

Participants will enjoy performances of "Yours in Service" and "Let There Be Peace on Earth," presented by singers Megan Vargo, Steven Steinbeiser, and Felicia Niebel; and will have an opportunity to make their own pledge to "reach for peace."

Susan Rauscher, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, maintains that small acts of kindness and the daily practice of mutual respect have great power to cultivate harmony and non-violence. "The truth is that there will be no grand, astonishing event that will lead us to world peace," she says; "we will achieve peace by committing to treating each other with kindness and respect, without exception."

The Pledge for Reach for Peace includes commitments to listen carefully, especially to those with whom we disagree; to consider others' feelings; and to treat all with respect, compassion, and care. Catholic Charities will also distribute "Passing Peace Bracelets": each guest is invited to take two bracelets, one for him or herself, and one to "pass" to another. By "passing" the second bracelet to another person, each symbolizes his or her promise to "reach out for peace."

Catholic Charities invites every person who is invested in working towards peace to join its social media campaign, and share daily kindnesses given or received on twitter with the hashtag, #passpeacetoday.