News



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The Diocese of Oakland, California, issued a statement of support for those suffering after a Nov. 19 attack on an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado.

The diocese also clarified that comments made by one of its deacons on Twitter following the shooting are "not representative of the church's teachings."

Five people were killed and 25 were injured just before midnight Nov. 19 in Colorado Springs after a gunman opened fire on the crowd in the club before being stopped a few minutes later by others in the crowd who grabbed his weapon and beat him, authorities said.

Many, including Catholics, took to Twitter after the attacks to show support but also repudiation of the LBGTQ community in general.

In a blog post written for Patheos.com, writer Mary Pezzulo explained Nov. 21 what happened when a friend took to Twitter:

"I have a friend who is transgender: a gentle, empathetic, compassionate person, a Catholic who goes to Mass every Sunday, and a person who suffers from depression and suicidal thoughts. All he said on social media, in response to the shooting, was 'being LGBT hurts.' And a total stranger quote tweeted him with 'Being gravely disordered shouldn't be a piece of cake.'"

The comment by the stranger she mentioned was made by Deacon Rob Federle of the Oakland Diocese. Many criticized him, others supported him.

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The Oakland Diocese tweeted a response of its own Nov. 21, saying the head of the diocese, Bishop Michael Barber, was asking all for prayers and support for the LGBTQ community and those who rushed in to help after the attack, emphasizing the deacon had made the comment "on his personal Twitter account."

The diocese noted that the original post by Federle "is not representative of the Church's teachings," adding a screenshot of his Twitter account that said: "I apologize for the post I made Sunday following the tragedy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It lacked the Christian charity and is not befitting of an ordained clergy, or of anyone who professes to be a follower of Jesus Christ."

That account no longer seems to exist on Twitter.

The diocese went on to quote the bishop as saying that no one should suffer from violence.

"As Christians, we are called to witness to the dignity of all human life. In this moment of tragedy, we mourn with those who mourn, and weep with those who weep," Barber said.