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Flowers lie outside a Central Maine Medical Center's emergency entrance, following the Oct. 25 mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine, Oct. 28. (OSV News/Reuters/Shannon Stapleton)

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"Evil is part of the world in which we live," said Bishop Robert Deeley of Portland, Maine during a Mass Oct. 27 in Lewiston, Maine. "It's how we deal with it which is important."

Deeley made his comments during his homily while he celebrated evening Mass in the adoration chapel at Holy Cross Church in Lewiston two days after 18 people were shot and killed during a shooting spree in the city. It was the country's deadliest mass shooting since 21 people were killed at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, in May 2022.

Authorities found the suspect, 40-year-old Roert Card, dead Oct. 27 from an apparent self-inflicted gun wound, according to Maine Gov. Janet Mills, who said she was "breathing a sigh of relief tonight knowing that ... Card is no longer a threat to anyone."

"Now is a time to heal," she said.

Shelter-in-place orders for Lewiston and surrounding areas had been ordered from the night of Oct. 25 until the afternoon Oct. 27, and people were asked to stay home and stay safe. Prince of Peace Parish in Lewiston moved all liturgies online and offered multiple opportunities for the community to come together in virtual prayer while the shelter-in-place order was in effect.

With the lifting of the order, Masses were once again held in person, and Holy Family Church was scheduled to be open during the day for "prayer and quiet reflection," according to the parish website. The parish is also raising funds to help families who lost loved ones with funeral arrangements and medical costs.

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We have been "joined with you in prayer" during "this time of trial," Deeley told those gathered in person and online Oct. 27. "It has been a very difficult time, I know, for all of you and we are reminded in the Eucharist that of course the Lord is with us."

During his homily, Deeley said it's important to pray for those in need during times of difficulty, and to share that fact.

"It is good to hear the words 'I'm praying with you and for you,' " he said. "It is good for us to promise someone thoughts and prayers because it is the reality of passing on to another the deepest part of my life; my belief that I am created in the image and likeness of God and his love and so are you.

"When we offer someone thoughts and prayers, we're precisely conveying that truth of faith which is our hope," he said. "It is the way in which we know in our hearts that indeed God is with us. In moments of difficulty it's sometimes hard to get our heads around that, and it sometimes takes time, but it is the truth of who we are, it is the truth of our faith, it is the truth that God wants us to hear."

"We may not be able to explain why bad things happen in this life but what we do know is that his love is eternal, and that we will never be lost — that God is always with us. He welcomes us to life and to eternal life."

During the Mass, prayers were offered for those who lost loved ones in the tragedy, that God would comfort them, hold them in his hand, and bring them strength and hope. Those attending and viewing the Mass also prayed for the injured, their families, the children, and the community.

During night prayer, Fr. Daniel Greenleaf, pastor of Prince of Peace Parish, shared that while Mass would be in-person as scheduled over the weekend, the parish would be putting certain protocols in place to ensure that parishioners felt safe while worshipping together — perhaps even locking doors once Mass begins.