News



Firefighters walk past a law enforcement checkpoint June 30, 2025, a day after two firefighters were shot dead while responding to a fire and the body of a man was later found with a gun nearby in the Canfield Mountain area outside Coeur d'Alene. (OSV News/Reuters/David Ryder)

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COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — July 1, 2025
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An Idaho pastor told OSV News his parish turned to prayer and Eucharistic adoration, following a deliberate and deadly attack on first responders.

Two firefighters were killed and a third wounded after a man began shooting at them like a sniper as they responded to a June 29 blaze on Canfield Mountain, located just over 4 miles from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Authorities believe the now-deceased gunman — whose cause of death remains undisclosed, and who has been identified by The Associated Press as Wess Roley — deliberately started the fire to attack the first responders. A motive has not yet been specified.

That same evening, faithful gathered at St. Pius X Church in Coeur d'Alene for a Holy Hour dedicated to first responders, ahead of a regularly scheduled 6 p.m. Mass.

"What else can you do but double down on our faith and our connection with each other?" said Fr. Len MacMillian, pastor of St. Pius X. "I loved how people wanted to gather and to pray."

The injured first responder is "a close friend of two of our parishioners," he noted.

MacMillan said the trauma of the shootings "kind of felt like 9/11 again, a heartbreak."

"There's so much anger in the world, in the United States," he said. "What we don't need is more anger."

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Instead, said MacMillan, "what we need is hearts that have been pierced."

The tragedy "reminds me of when Christ says, 'Blessed are those who mourn,'" said MacMillan, quoting Matthew 5:4. "Those who are mourning the loss (from) injury and of life, and children (who) are going to find out their father's not returning home. Wives are going to find out (their husbands are gone)."

With the weight of such sorrow, he said, "why wouldn't I let my heart be broken and pour out with prayer?"

In the end, he said, "getting angry is not going to help. A broken heart will."

And, MacMillan said, "when a community prays together, that's what we can do. It's not a solution, but it's a better way of life."