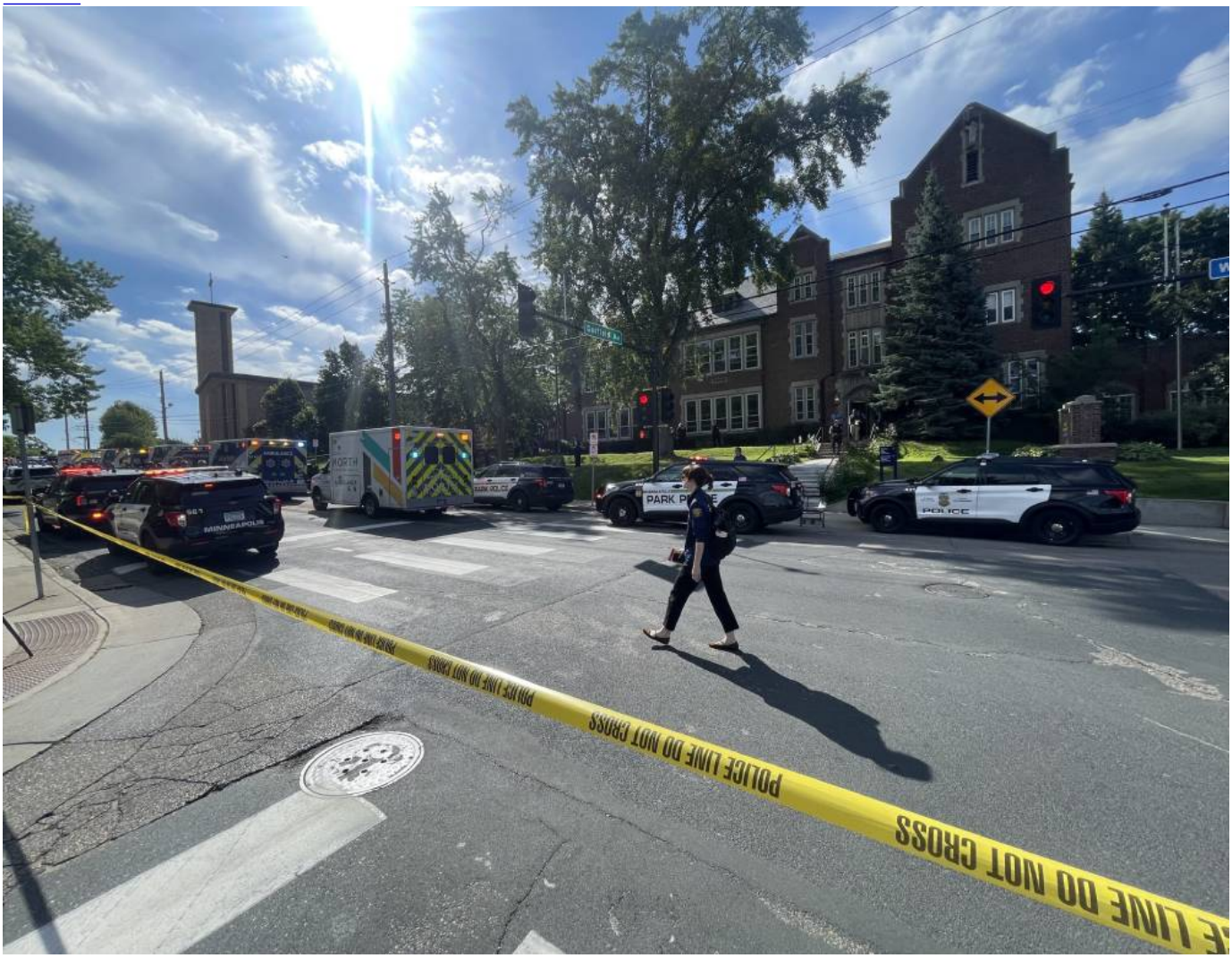
News



First responders block off the crime scene following a mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic School in Minneapolis Aug. 27, 2025. The Richfield Police Department is reporting there are up to 20 victims; two children and the suspected gunman are dead. (OSV News/The Catholic Spirit/Dave Hrbacek)

NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Cindy Wooden

View Author Profile



Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

August 27, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Pope Leo XIV sent his "heartfelt condolences and the assurance of spiritual closeness" to all those affected by the "terrible tragedy" of a shooting at a Catholic church in Minneapolis that left two children dead and 17 people injured.

The pope's condolences went particularly to "the families now grieving the loss of a child," said an Aug. 27 telegram to Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

The shooting took place while the children of Annunciation Catholic School were in the parish church for the first Mass of the school year.

Related: Minneapolis shooter, firing through Catholic church windows, kills 2 children

The papal message to Hebda said that "while commending the souls of the deceased children to the love of Almighty God, His Holiness prays for the wounded as well as the first responders, medical personnel and clergy who are caring for them and their loved ones."

"At this extremely difficult time, the Holy Father imparts to the Annunciation Catholic School community, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the people of the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area his apostolic blessing as a pledge of peace, fortitude and consolation in the Lord Jesus," it said.

In a statement, Hebda acknowledged the pain of seeing children and families exposed to violence in a sacred setting. "My heart is broken as I think about

students, teachers, clergy and parishioners and the horror they witnessed in a Church, a place where we should feel safe," he said.

Archbishop Bernard Hebda

Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis (OSV News/Courtesy Catholic Extension Society)

The archbishop also noted the wider toll of recent violence in the community, referencing the deadly shooting near Cristo Rey High School just one day earlier.

"We need an end to gun violence," Hebda said. "Our community is rightfully outraged at such horrific acts of violence perpetrated against the vulnerable and innocent. They are far too commonplace. While we need to commit to working to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies, we also need to remind ourselves that we have a God of peace and of love, and that it is his love that we will need most as we strive to embrace those who are hurting so deeply."

> 'We need an end to gun violence. Our community is rightfully outraged at such horrific acts of violence . . . They are far too commonplace.'
> —St. Paul and Minneapolis Archbishop Bernard Hebda
>
> Tweet this

He said that archdiocesan staff were coordinating with parish and school leaders to ensure support and resources were available. Hebda invited the public to attend a prayer service at 7 p.m. local time at the Academy of Holy Angels in Richfield.

U.S. bishops' prayers, calls for action

Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich also decried gun violence in a statement released Aug. 27.

"Tragically, we know no place or time when Americans — even children — are safe from the curse of gun violence," he said. We must "cry out for action to prevent even one more such tragedy."

Common sense attempts to limit guns' availability "have been largely rejected in the name of a freedom not found in our constitution," Cupich said. "Cutbacks in funding for health care and social service programs will only exacerbate a national mental health crisis and increase alienation."

He urged prayer "for those who hold the power to make the safety of our people a national priority. … give them the courage to take the steps they know will alleviate if not eliminate the fear parents must feel sending their children off to school and Americans feel leaving their homes for simple errands. … Please pray and please act. Now."

In a statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop William Lori, vice president of the USCCB, expressed solidarity with the Minneapolis parish and school community.

"As a Church, we are following the tragic news from Annunciation School in Minneapolis with heartbreaking sadness," Lori said. "Whenever one part of the Body of Christ is wounded, we feel the pain as if it were our very own children. Let us all beg the Lord for the protection and healing of the entire Annunciation family."

Advertisement

Bishop David M. O’Connell of Trenton, New Jersey, chair of the USCCB’s Committee on Catholic Education called for prayers, saying, “There are no words sufficient to convey the depth of evil behind such a deliberate act of violence against innocent children. Nor can language fully express the sorrow and compassion that fill our hearts at this moment. These young students and their school community were gathered in prayer at Mass, marking the beginning of a new school year — a time meant for hope, not horror. It is simply unfathomable.”

Archbishop W. Shawn McKnight of Kansas City, Kansas, in a statement said his heart was heavy with grief.

“No parent should ever fear for the safety of their children at school, especially as they gather to encounter the Lord in the Holy Sacrament of the Mass. No child should ever have to carry such grief and fear. No teacher or staff member should ever fear for their lives as they go about the noble work of caring for God’s children,” he said.

This story appears in the **Minneapolis church shooting** feature series. View the full series.