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Silver Rail Shooting

People take part in a candlelight vigil at Drake Park for victims of the Silver Rail Elementary School shooting, in Bend, Ore., Oct. 15, 2026. A 16-year-old opened fire at the elementary school killing at least three children and a teacher before he was shot by a person at the scene who pursued him into the school, authorities said. (OSV News/Reuters/Rob Kerr)



by OSV News

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Oregon's Catholic bishops expressed sympathy and encouraged the community to support those affected by a shooting at a Bend, Oregon, elementary school that left five dead and two wounded.

A 16-year-old opened fire at Silver Rail Elementary School the afternoon of Oct. 15, killing three children – ages 5, 8 and 11 – and a teacher, before he was shot and killed by a person at the scene who had seen him enter the school. A 7-year-old and another teacher were also taken to a hospital with critical injuries, said Bend Police Chief Mike Krantz in a media briefing that evening.

"We expect that our schools are safe places for our children and all who pass through their doors. When a tragedy like this occurs, it shakes us to our core," wrote Bishop Thomas J. Hennen of the Diocese of Baker, whose diocesan boundaries include the city of Bend, in an Oct. 15 letter expressing his "heartfelt prayers for those whose lives were taken in the shooting."

"No family should ever have to experience such fear and heartbreak. Please know that you are not alone," said Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of the Archdiocese of Portland in an Oct. 15 statement. "I hold you close in prayer, and the Church stands with you in this time of sorrow."

Investigation into details of the shooting is ongoing.

"We are working hard to ensure that we conduct a thorough investigation," Krantz said at the press conference. He was unable to say at this point in the investigation if the shooter had attended or had a connection to the school, what guns were used by the shooter or his pursuer, or how many shots were fired; however, the police's initial investigation revealed the shooter forced his way into the school by shooting at locked doors.

Krantz also said the families of the victims have all been notified, and that students and staff at the scene were transported by bus to a nearby church for reunification with families and guardians.

"In the coming days, there will be opportunities to gather, including a community vigil tonight, to mourn together, honor those affected and those lost, and begin the difficult process of healing," said Bend Mayor Melanie Keibler.

Bend-Lapine School Superintendent Steve Cook said the school district is rallying crisis counselors across the region to help support the community, with counselors available at the central library starting the morning of Oct. 16.

Oregon Governor Tina Kotek said the state's Department of Emergency Management is also coordinating state support for the community.

"We must come together and support each other, neighbor to neighbor, Oregonian to Oregonian," she said.

An afternoon media conference is also planned for Oct. 16, police spokesperson Sheila Miller said at the evening briefing.

"It is only natural that we would be flooded with emotions at a time like this – shock, grief, fear, confusion, anger," Hennen said.

"Even as more is known about what happened, there are no adequate answers for why this happened. We can only mourn, support each other, and pledge ourselves to doing everything in our power to prevent such tragedies in the future," he added.

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