

From: Bishop Mauney

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is the evening of this long day of tragedy at Virginia Tech. Phone calls could not reach people in the area, but Pastors Gary Schroeder and Bill King in Blacksburg across the street from Virginia Tech have been in touch with us. They speak of a campus 'hunkered down' this evening with students who remain in their dorm rooms and apartments.

Our pastors and people in the Blacksburg area have been responding with a host of others all day long. It will be a day for them that they will not forget. I am grateful for the presence of our campus ministry at Virginia Tech and for our campus pastors, Bill King and Joanna Stallings. I am grateful for the parish of Luther Memorial, Pastor Gary Schroeder, who work with the campus ministry at Va Tech. I am grateful for the vibrant support of St Michael and Pastor John Wertz, Our Saviour, Christiansburg and Pastor Fred Hodges, Shiloh and New Mt. Zion and Pastor Paul and Ellen Hinlicky. I am grateful for the Dean of the New River Conference, Pastor John McCandlish.

It is a long, troubling night as families wait to be contacted either by their children or by authorities. It is the time between seeing the great cloud of the explosion and knowing that there is yet a powerful shock wave that is coming. The shock wave will come as the names of victims are released.

We all wait to hear, parents and children. At this international university the names could be from anywhere, and they are all precious to our Lord who knew the violent death at the hands of others and a heavenly Father who has known the death of an only Son.

It is also a time of prayers for healing for those wounded or injured. There will be wounds of mind and heart and soul to be healed as well. It is a time for prayers of forgiveness.

For many, this night is a time of some quiet thankfulness as children have called home.

Tomorrow, Pastors Bill King, Joanna Stallings, Gary Schroeder, John Wertz, Fred Hodges, Paul Hinlicky and pastors across Virginia and the

United States and world will begin the powerful ministry of presence for those who begin to hear the news about loved ones and friends injured, wounded, or killed. I am very grateful to God for these gifted pastors we have in the Blacksburg area. I am grateful to God for the vast array of gifted, talented law enforcement personnel, rescue workers, nurses, physicians, chaplains, pastors, teachers, and a host of others who have risked and served for everyone who was in need before them this day.

Let us remember all the administration, staff, faculty, students, campus ministry, and families of Virginia Tech in our prayers this night. It is yet a time of coming lamentation.

Jan Tobias, LFS's person who oversees the Lutheran Disaster Response in Virginia, and I will be at Luther Memorial in Blacksburg tomorrow.

Come Lord Jesus, come to us. Be with those who wait, those who mourn, those who are dying, those who need healing, those who are grateful, those who are exhausted, those who cannot sleep, those who will keep serving with long hours in the coming days.

Come Lord Jesus, as you have revealed the loving intent of the Father for us all, by your Spirit give to our pastors and people your Word and presence for hurting ones you love.

Come Lord Jesus.