

## Vox Populi

18 April 2024

Recent violent events in Sydney have been distressing and confronting for all of us.

What unfolded at Bondi Junction last Saturday was horrific. Six innocent people losing their lives during a seemingly ordinary afternoon shopping.

Many more critically and seriously injured. Hundreds traumatised. Please continue to keep all of them in your prayers along-with those shoppers, store staff, paramedics and police who showed extraordinary courage and complete selflessness in what we soon discovered were harrowing circumstances.

While we were all challenged and struggling to come to terms with these events, another shocking and violent attack unfolded on Monday evening in a church in southwestern Sydney.

Parishioners and those watching a live-stream saw Assyrian Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and Fr Isaac Royel attacked, repeatedly stabbed, at Christ the Good Shepherd Church in the suburb of Wakeley.

Bishop Mar Mari is recovering in hospital. A 16-year-old boy has been arrested and is also in hospital. Television images of the crowd that gathered outside the church and the ensuing violence were extremely confronting.

Our churches are sanctuaries; our religious services a place and time for prayer, not violence and fear.

It is in these extreme and challenging times we need to come together as a community, to support each other, to be respectful of everyone. That is showing true strength.

When division and violence threatens God's people, we can pray for one another. We are united when we unite in prayer.

“Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”  
(Matthew 18:19-20)

Let us ask our Holy Mother Mary, Patron of our Diocese, that through her heavenly intercession those whose lives have been taken from their loved ones may attain the joy of eternal life; that those who have been harmed may make a complete recovery; and that those who have been traumatised, angered or destructive find peace and unity.

