

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



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MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

MAYOR'S STATEMENT

The events of Friday in Christchurch New Zealand were profoundly shocking even in an age as afflicted by terrorism and hate as our own.

On Saturday night, Chief Geissberger and I were honored to attend an interfaith vigil hosted by the Pacifica Institute, an organization based here in Albany that seeks to build connections between people of its own Islamic faith tradition and others, so that the sharing of insights and understanding can create real opportunities mutual respect and appreciation. Prayer leaders from Islamic, Jewish, Christian and Buddhist traditions joined to mourn the lives of 50 people murdered while at prayer and we offered Albany's support reiterated the strength of its commitment to being a welcoming and safe community for all.

Since Friday at least two more attacks – one in the Netherlands and one in the West Bank – have already taken several more lives.

How do we face what is happening in our world? We can and we must examine many facets of society from the availability of guns to the popularity of websites spewing hate to the resurgence of white supremacism.

I believe we also need to keep in mind that, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn said “the line between good and evil runs through every human heart.” If that is so then we must consciously work to keep ourselves and the groups to which we belong working from the good side of our natures and be vigilant to avoid turning towards any dehumanization of people viewed as ‘others,’ as such dehumanization far too often finds its ultimate expression in violence.