



## New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interfaith Relations

15 December 2025

Tēnā tātou, greetings, members of Jewish communities at this difficult time,

On behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Committee for Interfaith Relations, we write with heavy hearts and with deep solidarity following the recent shootings that targeted Jewish people on the first day of Hanukkah. We grieve the loss of life, condemn all acts of hatred and violence, and stand alongside Jewish communities in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and around the world at this painful time.

We understand Hanukkah to be a festival that proclaims hope in the midst of darkness, faithfulness under trial, and the quiet yet enduring power of light. That such violence should occur at the very time when Jewish families and communities were focussing on the light of the menorah makes the suffering all the more heart-breaking. We pray that the light of Hanukkah will not be extinguished by fear, but will continue to shine as a sign of goodness, memory, and hope.

As Catholic people of faith, we recognise our profound and enduring bond with the Jewish people. We share sacred scriptures, worship the God of Abraham, and acknowledge with humility in the spirit of Nostra Aetate the sacred inheritance we have received through Judaism. Attacks based on faith stand in direct contradiction to the call for peace and to the dignity of the human person. Violence against Jewish people wounds not only its immediate victims, but the whole human family.

We reject any attempt to justify violence in the name of religion or ideology. From our lived experience of interfaith friendship and dialogue, we know that authentic faith leads not to hatred, but to compassion; not to division, but to a deeper commitment to peace. As Pope Francis reminded the world, and Pope Leo affirms, faith calls us to recognise one another as brothers and sisters, bound together by our shared humanity.

In this spirit, we reaffirm our commitment to walking with Jewish communities as neighbours and friends. We pray for healing for those who have been injured, comfort for those who mourn, and strength for all who feel vulnerable or afraid. We also renew our resolve to continue working together for harmony, understanding, and the rejection of all forms of prejudice and violence.

May the light of the Hanukkah candles, small yet steadfast, be a beacon that dispels fear, softens hearts, and renews hope for peace. May it remind us that light is strongest when it is shared, and that even in the darkest moments, goodness endures.

Peace, Shalom,

Colin MacLeod

*On behalf of committee members:*

+Michael Dooley, Maya Bernardo, Adele Churchman, Teresa Fernandez, Colin MacLeod (chair), Beate Matthies, and Nick Wilson.