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## **Vatican responds to handwritten letters from Uvalde Children**

*Sacred Heart Catholic School students share sorrows and hopes, asking Pope Francis to pray for their friends, family, and community*

Chicago, IL — The Vatican responded to letters written by the children of Uvalde, Texas, after they were personally delivered by [Catholic Extension's](#) chancellor, Cardinal Blase Cupich, following the May 2022 shooting at Robb Elementary School that killed 19 fourth graders and two teachers.

The letters come from students at Sacred Heart Catholic school in Uvalde, many of whom transferred to Sacred Heart from Robb Elementary through scholarships provided by Catholic Extension, which also facilitated the letter-writing project. Among those who penned letters to the pope are students who were shot and survived, as well as students who lost family and friends during the massacre on May 24, 2022.

The letters showcase, in the children's own words, the heartbreak and trauma they have endured—but also the hope that they still have. One letter-writer, Noah, was shot and is recovering. He received one of Catholic Extension's scholarships to attend Sacred Heart and, told the pope he now feels "safe and loved" in his new school.

Sister Maria Luisa Aldape, STJ, Sacred Heart's school librarian and minister at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, shared the handwritten letters to Pope Francis on the children's behalf, saying, "We have invited the children to write to you and share with you their pain and their hopes for the future. Some bear the scars on their flesh and all in their hearts."

In response, the Holy Father has pledged his prayers for these children, their families and all those harmed by the violence in Uvalde. The letter from the Vatican reads, "His Holiness will remember the students, their families and all of those suffering from the recent act of violence in Uvalde."

The Vatican letter continues, "Commending each of them to the protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, His Holiness imparts his blessing."

"We thank His Holiness for keeping the suffering children and families of Uvalde, Texas in his prayers, especially those who lost loved ones in this senseless act of violence," said Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension. "These letters written by Sacred Heart Catholic school students symbolize their pain and hopes for their future as they continue to grieve the loss of life and innocence that struck their community."

Catholic Extension, a Chicago-based nonprofit, whose mission is to build vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities in the poorest regions of the U.S. helped build Sacred Heart's church and school in the early 1900s. Today, Catholic Extension has provided financial assistance for more than [30 Robb Elementary students](#) who were closest to the tragedy to attend Sacred Heart Catholic School.

Catholic Extension continues to work with Catholic leaders in Uvalde to respond to the needs of this devastated community, including ongoing mental health services, and scholarships at Sacred Heart School.

For more information on ways to support the Catholic Church and children in Uvalde, please visit [catholicextension.org/ualde](http://catholicextension.org/ualde).

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**About Catholic Extension:** Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor and in America's poorest regions. For more information visit [www.catholicextension.org](http://www.catholicextension.org); follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicextension](https://facebook.com/catholicextension) or on Twitter at [@CathExtension](https://twitter.com/CathExtension).