

Archdiocese of Seattle Launches First Responder Ministry

Mass for First Responders on Oct. 28

SEATTLE, Oct. 21, 2025 – Today, the Archdiocese of Seattle announced a new ministry dedicated to providing spiritual and pastoral care for first responders in Western Washington. One of a handful of ministries like it across the country, this First Responder Ministry will specifically focus on caring for the chaplains serving first responders – as well as building a community of Catholic first responders.

“First responders and the chaplains serving them are continuously sacrificing for the needs of others, but they often don’t have opportunities to network with other Catholics serving in the field,” said Joe Cotton, executive director of the vicar general’s office for the Archdiocese of Seattle. “We recognize that there is a need to bring first responders and public safety chaplains together in a Catholic context so they can celebrate their Catholic faith and receive support from their Church.”

The ministry will primarily offer spiritual retreats and gatherings for Catholic first responder chaplains, including monthly peer support sessions for chaplains to debrief incidents. However, the ministry will directly support first responders as well.

First responders, given their work schedules, often encounter unique barriers to practicing their faith. “Firefighters, for example, have a 24-hour workday and an eight-day week,” said Seattle firefighter Liam Roney. “We’re oftentimes disconnected from the normal rhythms of our families and support networks. Additionally, we’re in a desperate staffing crisis, which compounds the physical and emotional trauma we experience and reduces our ability to recover. We need support efforts that recognize the demand our trade places on us and our families.”

To better prepare chaplains to meet this pressing need, the ministry will promote ongoing training and certification through the National Association of Catholic Chaplains. It will also provide ecclesiastical endorsements for Catholic ministers seeking to serve as police or fire chaplains and connect them with agencies in need of their services. Lastly, to help foster a community of Catholic first responders, the ministry will regularly celebrate Masses to honor police officers, firefighters, paramedics/EMT’s, emergency ministers and 911 dispatchers, etc.

The first Mass for first responders will be celebrated by Bishop Frank Schuster on Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 5 p.m. in St. James Cathedral’s chapel. All are welcome and first responders and their families are encouraged to join.

To learn more about the ministry, please visit <https://archseattle.org/ministries/outreach-ministries/first-responder-ministry/>. For details about the Mass, please visit <https://archseattle.org/events/mass-for-first-responders/>.

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 74 Catholic schools, 174 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, please visit www.archseattle.org.

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