



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



**Statement on Community Response to Issues Surrounding
the Trial of Aaron Dean for the Murder of Atatiana Jefferson**

The tragic death by gunshot of Atatiana Jefferson in her own home and in the presence of her young nephew naturally evokes emotions of grief, fear, and anger within each of us as fellow human beings. These emotions should not prompt anyone to turn to violence, intimidation, or lawlessness as tactics to protest injustice and express a desire for justice for individuals and for our larger community. Nobody benefits from such tactics whether they be employed by people within our community or by people who have come from other places for advocacy of their cause. Those who are poor and most vulnerable in our society are the most jeopardized by such tactics.

The current trial of Aaron Dean for the murder of Atatiana Jefferson, whatever verdict it delivers, should prompt our community not to be indifferent to Atatiana's death but to face our fears and to resolve to work together on addressing such pressing social and moral issues as race, gun violence, police security, and the rule of law for the common good and protection of the vulnerable of our community.

Law is rightly understood as an ordinance of reason, not as the imposition of will to power by any individual or political group of individuals upon other members of society or upon society itself. This is an indispensable measurement for us in our desire for peace and in our shared work for justice.

This time of year when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, hailed as the Prince of Peace, it is also a time for everyone to ask God for our deliverance from violence, our conversion of heart and mind from fears and prejudices against those who are strangers to us, and for the inspiration and willingness to change and to do what God asks in treating each person as our neighbor worthy of respect, attention, and love.

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson
Bishop of Fort Worth
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