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Amid a season of joy, a note of sadness for shooting victims

50 in Copley Square honor Conn. fallen

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT DECEMBER 24, 2012

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BILL BRETT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Boston's Copley Square was the site of a candlelight vigil to commemorate victims of the Newtown, Conn. school shooting.

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In memory of the deadly elementary school shooting in Newtown, Conn., about 50 people took a break from the holiday rush and gathered at Copley Square in Boston Sunday night for a candlelight vigil to remember the victims and their families of the Newtown massacre.

“It’s just so sad,” said Kerry Curley, who teaches at an elementary school in Canton.

“We’re being thankful for what we have,” said her husband, John Curley. “You almost feel guilty in a way.”

The couple’s children are 11, 10, 7, and 6 years old.

On Dec. 14, 16 6-year-olds, four 7-year-olds, four teachers, a principal, and a school psychologist were shot to death at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. The gunman

allegedly killed his mother at their home before traveling to the school, where he took his own life after murdering the others.

At religious services in Newtown on Sunday, church leaders received standing ovations from parishioners they have been helping to cope.

“This has been the worst week of my life,” said Monsignor Robert Weiss of the St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church, which lost eight children and two adults in the massacre. He thanked the community for giving him strength to get through the week filled with funerals.

The vigil in Boston Sunday night featured song, prayer, and silent reflection. Towering above the somber crowd was a tall Christmas tree, glowing with colorful lights.

People carrying shopping bags walked around the busy retail area surrounding the plaza. Occasionally, they would stroll past the gathering. Some slowed, before continuing on their way. Other holiday shoppers, like Lee Razook, stopped, picked up a candle, and joined.

“I can’t imagine,” she said, referring to the families of the victims. “I don’t know how you go on with such young life snuffed out like that.”

Kara Paladino and Caitlin Smith, friends and co-workers at a realty office in Brookline, helped organize the vigil.

“We want the people of Newtown to know we are with them,” said Paladino. “I know the holidays bring a lot of feelings for everyone who has lost someone. Hopefully, this will bring some hope and peace.”

The names of the victims were read aloud. As each was said, a person from the crowd would step forward and place a white carnation that had ribbon tied to it with that victim’s name. After the 27 flowers were piled, the crowd sang “Silent Night” in unison.

New Jersey residents Mona and Lou Lopez were in Boston visiting family for the holidays.

“It’s beyond devastating whenever you lose a member of your family, but especially your own child and particularly at Christmas,” said Mona Lopez. “I don’t imagine any of the parents [of victims in Newtown] will ever get over it.”



Material from the Associated Press was used in this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com.

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