

12-Year-Old Shot in the Head at Church, Now Making a 'Miraculous' Recovery

A Minnesota family is celebrating what they describe as a miracle after their 12-year-old daughter, Sophia Forchas, survived being shot in the head during a mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis on August 27.

Hennepin Healthcare, where she has been receiving treatment, released a statement from the Forchas family this week updating the public on her progress. "Sophia is winning! Your prayers are working," the family said.

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Her parents added that the support they have received from around the world has been overwhelming. "We are humbled by the countless individuals across the globe who have lifted her up in prayer, including His All-Holiness Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew and His Holiness Pope Leo XIV," the family said. They also noted that "each day we uncover new revelations of moments and circumstances that kept her alive and made her recovery possible. God has heard our prayers and wrapped Sophia in His healing embrace."

On the day of the shooting, Sophia underwent emergency surgery after a bullet became lodged in her head. Fr. Timothy Sas of St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, where the Forchas family are members, wrote that she endured a "long and difficult" operation. Her neurosurgeon, Dr. Walt Galcich, later confirmed the extent of the damage caused by the bullet but also said there were encouraging signs as her condition began to improve.



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Now several weeks later, Sophia is preparing to leave acute care and begin an inpatient rehabilitation program. Her family explained, "Though she still has a long journey ahead filled with extensive therapy, her resilience continues to inspire hope at every step. Sophia is strong, brave and unwavering in her fight toward healing."

The Forchas family also expressed gratitude for the dedication of hospital staff and the support of their church and school communities. "To our extended family, the Orthodox Church, our Annunciation school family, our friends and colleagues and the many strangers who have become prayer warriors for Sophia, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts," the family said.

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Sophia's mother, who works as a pediatric critical care nurse at Hennepin Healthcare, was on duty when she learned her daughter had been critically injured. A GoFundMe page established for the family revealed that Sophia's younger brother was also present during the attack but was not physically harmed.

The shooting, carried out during the first Mass of the school year by identified gunman Robin Westman, left two children dead and 18 others wounded. Witnesses recalled chaos in the sanctuary as gunfire shattered stained-glass windows and parishioners shielded children from the attack.

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Even in the aftermath of tragedy, Sophia's story has emerged as a testimony of courage and faith. In their most recent

update, the Forchas family urged the community to continue praying, not only for Sophia but also for peace. "Please continue to pray. Pray for peace and when you pray, move your feet. Let us worship God together and walk forward in Faith, Hope and Love. Together, we can create a better tomorrow," the family said.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to Charisma magazine.