

Mollie Tibbetts' Priest Calls for a Spirit of Forgiveness for Her Murderer

Mollie Tibbetts, a devout Catholic, was allegedly murdered by an illegal immigrant when she was out for a jog. In the wake of this travesty, an Iowa church has come together in prayer with the priest leading the charge for forgiveness.

On Wednesday night, many who knew Tibbetts shuffled into St. Patrick Catholic Church in Brooklyn, Iowa, for a prayer vigil.

"We need to pray for a spirit of forgiveness for the one who did this," Rev. Corey Close said. "Faith teaches us that Christ came to forgive us. We're all in need of forgiveness. We're all sinners. None of us are exempt."

Tibbetts' life was marked by her faith, according to the *Des Moines Register*:

Tibbetts was confirmed into the Catholic Church in 2015, and she was public about the influence of her faith.

In a now widely circulated video taken in fall 2016, Tibbetts tells a youth group about the time she got down on one knee to pray for strength before a conference cross-country meet. She had not run in a meet for more than a week and was nervous.

She ended up getting her best time of the season.

"It's not a huge, big story," she told the crowd. "But it really meant a lot to me to see God working in my life."

Tibbetts was first reported missing in July.

A body believed to be Tibbetts was found Aug. 21.

Investigators say Cristhian Bahena Rivera led them to her body.

According to CBS:

Cristhian Bahena Rivera, 24, has been charged with first-degree murder in Tibbetts' death. Federal officials said Tuesday Rivera, originally from Mexico, is an undocumented immigrant.

Investigators believe Rivera followed Tibbetts and abducted her as she was out for a jog. He appeared in court Wednesday, where his bond was set to \$5 million cash.

Tibbetts' family thanked people for their support in the search for their missing daughter.

"Our hearts are broken," according to a statement. "We thank all of those from around the world who have sent their thoughts and prayers for our girl."

Her brother spoke at another vigil in Iowa City this week.

"Carry on her legacy, remember this as a time the country came together for one girl, one girl that loved everyone, one girl that wanted the best for everyone," Jake Tibbets said.