

Prayer: Gun Violence Sabbath Weekend

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December 11-13, 2014

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Call to Prayer:

Leader: The Advent- Christmas season is about God's promise to a people who had walked in the darkness of grief and despair. It is to these people, and to us, that these words of the evangelist John are spoken: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not, and will never, overcome it."

During Advent, the National Gun Sabbath Weekend will be observed from December 11-14, 2014. As we gather during these days to remember the second anniversary of the Newtown shootings on December 14, we are also called to remember more than 60,000 Americans nationwide who have died from gunshot wounds in this same period of time.

As we enter more deeply into the meaning of Advent hope this season, we must continue to shine a light on the epidemic of gun violence in our nation until gun deaths are eliminated. Jesus is the Light that shines in our darkness. As we journey through the darkness of this season, we light our Advent candles, casting the light of Christ, the light of hope, on the epidemic of violence in the United States and we sing:

All: O Come, O Come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Child of God appear
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.



Opening Prayer: *Did you know?*

All: O God of all people, we know that you are as near as our next breath;
wherever we go, you are already there. Thank you for creating us in your image, and claiming us as your children.

Reader: Each year nearly 30,000 Americans are killed by guns. (Pause)

All: O Lord, we confess that we have forgotten who we are; that each of us belongs to you.

Reader: More than half of all gun deaths are suicides. (Pause)

All: We confess that we have forsaken your peaceable kingdom, and allowed gun violence to shatter our communities. Forgive us O God.

Reader: Firearms are the second leading cause of death (after motor vehicle accidents) for young people ages 19 and under in the U.S. Eight American children are killed by guns every day. (Pause)

All: Remind us that your love is more powerful than any gun and that your spirit will sustain us as nothing else can.

All: Give us the courage to live not by the gun but by your spirit. Let us desire, as you desire, forgiveness rather than revenge, reconciliation rather than retribution. Open our hearts to you so that we may open them to each other. Guide us, this Advent and every day on the path of peace.

(Adapted from Rev. Rachel R. Smith)

Reading: Taken from “*End Gun Violence; Save Children’s Lives*”

By Arlene Flaherty OP and Kathleen Phelan OP, in LCWR Resolutions to Action, Winter, 2014.

The extent to which violence is shaping US culture seems to grow every day. Road rage, excessive aggression in sports, violence glorified in media and video games are but a few examples. Guns, for sure, are a deadly ingredient in the brew of violence, but our nation’s culture of aggression forms the base and we even profit from it. The United States not only sells three quarters of the world’s weaponry but also most of the world’s violent entertainment. Fueling the culture of violence is big business in the United States.

Reflection and Conversation: Reflect on one or more of these quotes. What do they mean to you: How do they inspire you to take action to end gun violence?

Let the arms fall from your hands. One cannot love while holding offensive arms—Pope Pius VI

*I will not carry a gun. I’ll carry your books, I’ll carry a torch, I’ll carry a tune, I’ll carry on. But, I will not carry a gun --Hawkeye, M*A*S*H.*

The truth is that what happened in Newtown can happen in any town. Mother of six year old Ana, killed in Newtown.

We are compelled to work toward a world where reverence for all living beings finds expression in an approach to life free from violence. LCWR Assembly, 2013

Song:

1. Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Chorus: Oh, Master grant that I may never seek, so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love with all my soul.



2. Make me a channel of your peace
where there's despair in life,
let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy.