



Honoring Human Life and Dignity in the Face of Gun Violence

Excerpts from Recent Statements of the US Catholic Bishops

Addressing the Problem: “Move Toward Preventative Action”

“We can never again believe that mass shootings are an isolated exception. They are an epidemic against life that we must, in justice, face. God’s mercy and wisdom compel us to move toward preventative action. We encourage all Catholics to increased prayer and sacrifice for healing and the end of these shootings. We encourage Catholics to pray and raise their voices for needed changes to our national policy and national culture as well. . . . The Conference [the USCCB] has long advocated for responsible gun laws and increased resources for addressing the root causes of violence. We also call upon the President and Congress to set aside political interests and find ways to better protect innocent life.”

—*Joint Statement of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development (August 4, 2019). [Excerpt]*

Action Is Needed: “Things Must Change”

“Something remains fundamentally evil in our society when locations where people congregate to engage in the everyday activities of life can, without warning, become scenes of violence and contempt for human life. The plague that gun violence has become continues unchecked and spreads across our country.

Things must change. Once again, we call for effective legislation that addresses why these unimaginable and repeated occurrences of murderous gun violence continue to take place in our communities. As people of faith, we continue to pray for all the victims, and for healing in all these stricken communities. But action is also needed to end these abhorrent acts.”

—*Joint Statement of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, USCCB president, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development (August 3, 2019). [Excerpt]*

A Call to Civility: “Stop Using Hate-Filled Language”

“The anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, anti-Muslim, and anti-Semitic sentiments that have been publicly proclaimed in our society in recent years have incited hatred in our communities. . . . We, therefore, renew our call to all to act swiftly to stop using hate-filled language that demeans and divides us and motivates some to such horrific violence. Instead, we ask our leaders and all Americans to work to unite us as a great, diverse, and welcoming people.”



—*Joint Statement of Statement of Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin (chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration); Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida; (chairman of the Committee on Domestic Social Development); and Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux (chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism) (August 8, 2019). [Excerpt]*

A Path Toward Healing: “We Must Look to the Cross”

“The Lord calls us to comfort those who mourn and to be peacemakers in a violent world. We pray, and we must, for the victims and their families. The Church should act in ways that heal and support all those affected by gun violence. It is disturbing that our society would seem to allow some to feel comfort in being violent. Our legislators must make changes to our gun policy to prevent the loss of life. As Americans, we must be honest with ourselves that we have a sickness, almost a plague, with the problem of gun violence. As Christians, we must look to the cross, repentant of the ways that have led us to this point and, with God’s grace, abandon such senseless, inhuman acts. Let us resolve to make the sacrifices necessary to end the violent killing that saturates our nation.”

—*Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development (July 30, 2019).*