

PRAYERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Lord, have mercy | Christ, have mercy | Lord, have mercy
Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.

Prayer: Let the Shooting End

God, our hearts are broken with pain at the senseless deaths caused by gun violence. Families mourn, children live in fear, and some in our nation respond by arming themselves with more guns with greater capacity to end life. Our disconnection and alienation has caused some to turn to guns for protection and safety. We ask that you touch our hearts with your love, heal our brokenness, and turn us away from violence toward peace. Help us to transform our own hearts and to seek peaceful ways of resolving our differences. Let our hands reach out and connect with those who feel alone, those who live in fear, and those suffering from mental illness. Let our voices be raised asking our legislators to enact gun laws to protect all in our society, especially those most vulnerable. Let our pens write messages demanding change while also scripting words of hope and transformation. We ask this in the name of the God who desires that we live together in peace. *Amen.*

From the [Sisters of Mercy](#)

Sad, Tired and Angry: A Prayer in the Face of Gun Violence

Almighty God,

I come before you,
once again,
after another shooting.

I am sad, God.

So I ask you
to receive into your loving care the souls of those who were killed,
to care for those who were wounded or hurt in any way,
to console the family members and friends of those who died or were wounded,
to strengthen the hands of the rescue workers, medical professionals and caregivers

I pray too for the shooter, as I must as a Christian.

All this makes me inexpressibly sad, God.
But I know that the sadness I feel is your sadness.
It is the same sadness your son expressed

when he wept over the death of
his friend Lazarus.

I know that the sadness I feel is your sadness.

I am tired, God.

I'm tired of the unwillingness to see this as an important issue.
I'm tired of those in power who work to prevent any real change.
I'm tired of those who say that gun violence can't be reduced.

All this makes me tired.
But I know that the tiredness I feel is your tiredness.
It's the same tiredness that Jesus felt after his own struggles against injustice
that led him to fall asleep on the boat with his disciples.

I am angry, God.
I'm angry at the seeming powerlessness of our community to prevent this.
I'm angry at the selfish financial interests who block change.
I'm angry that these shootings happen at all.

But I know that this anger is your anger
It's the same anger Jesus felt when he overturned the tables in the Temple,
angry that anyone would be taken advantage of in any way.

Help me see in these feelings as the way that you move me to act.

Help me see in these emotions your own desire for change.

Help me see in these feelings your moving me to act.
Help me see in these reactions your pushing me to do something.

Because I know this is the way you move people to action.
And I know that you desire action.
For Jesus did not stand by while people were being hurt.
He plunged into their lives.

So help me to answer these questions:
How can I help?
How can I fight against gun violence?
How can I urge my political leaders to enact change?
How can I help people understand that this is
an issue about life?

I am sad over the loss of life,
tired of excuses for the loss of life,
and angry that we are paralyzed by the loss of life.

Turn my sadness into compassion. Turn my tiredness into advocacy.

So

Turn my sadness into compassion.
Turn my tiredness into advocacy.
Turn my paralysis into the freedom to act.

Help me
to be compassionate,
to advocate
and to act,
as your son did,
Almighty God.

By: James Martin S.J.

A Prayer to End Gun Violence

Merciful Lord, we come to you heavy hearted, for we have heard the cries of the slain calling to us from the ground. We come remembering all the lives lost to the weapons of war that have flooded our communities. We come reminded of the many bodies locked in jails and prisons all across this country. And we ask for your mercy.

Although we find ourselves in a broken world – a world in which hurting people hurt other people, it is no mystery that you are a God capable of healing our world through justice and fairness. Your own revelation has shown us that you stand firmly with those people whose backs are against the wall. Your own life demonstrates how you came from heaven to earth to redeem creation, our communities and our own lives. So we ask for this same redemptive power to be unleashed among us as it was on the day of Pentecost. May we be empowered by your Spirit to reverse the conditions that produce young men and women who are driven to resort to violence and destructive behavior in their fight to stay alive and struggle to remain free.

We know that you have no pleasure in the death of anyone, so we boldly come to the throne of grace today dear Lord, seeking your wisdom as we create strategies that provide pathways and lifelines to hope and healing. Help us to remember we are all your children, created in your image, and we are connected by a single garment of mutuality and destiny. Cause us to never forget how our needs are the same and our calling to address these needs are the same. Reveal to us Lord, that the pain felt in Newtown is the same pain felt in Chicago. The tears shed in Oak Creek are the same tears shed in Oakland. The lives lost in Tucson are the same lives lost in Camden. The children being buried in Aurora are the same children being buried in Detroit.

We cry out to you, heal our souls from this scourge of violence. Endow us with the courage to step down from the pulpits and out from behind our desks to seek the peace of the city. In the coming days and weeks as our leaders debate solutions, Lord we ask that you grant us the voice to speak truth power and demonstrate sacrificial compassion to the hurting.

Teach us your ways, O God. Bless us with the wisdom and strength to put down our swords and be peacemakers. Use us, work through us and, if necessary, work in spite of us to mend our nation's brokenness.

We thank you for your protecting embrace and unfailing love.

All of these requests we bring to you, in the name of Jesus the Christ we pray.

Amen.

From: [People Improving Communities through Organizing \(PICO\)](#)

Gracious Lord who loves us so perfectly, help us to better love you and each other. We weep for the gun violence that kills children and so many others, where guns replaced prayers and homes without you bred frustration. May hearts be changed through your Holy Spirit that justice, mercy, money and, yes, even guns might be used rightly under Heaven, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

[Episcopal Diocese of Newark](#)

Christ, you wept over a city. We are in deepest despair. As we weep over the dead and injured killed by guns, in anguish, we recognize the blood stains of hatred. We hear the sounds of fear, the echoes of gunshots — once again, once again.

Christ, you came to bring us peace. We turn to you in overwhelming sorrow. How can we end this nightmare of violence? How can we build a world of inclusion, of solidarity? Give us the grace to reflect deeply and to work ceaselessly to heal the hearts; to stop the guns; to cherish all God's children.

Christ, you endured violent suffering to bring us light. We pray for the dead, may they rest in peace. We pray for the wounded, may they find healing. We pray for our nation, may we end the hate. We pray for our global family, may we learn we are one.

Amen.

[Education for Justice](#)

A Prayer for Peace After Gun Violence

“Thus says Yahweh: a voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and bitter weeping. Rachel, weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted, for her children are no more.”

Jeremiah 31:15

God, comforter of the broken and disheartened, We come to you plagued with an agonized grief after yet one more outbreak of senseless gun violence.

We come to you, from the East to the West, from the North to the South, people of all ages, ethnicities, and walks of life.

We represent one voice, the voice of bitter weeping echoing throughout our cities and resounding in communities throughout the world.

As violence abounds, we sit in the darkness, sitting alongside the suffering on the mourner’s bench.

We are Rachel, mourning with wordless sobs, the lives of those sacrificed on the altar of violence.

We are Rachel, weeping for the wounded, for those whose minds and bodies are etched with painful memories of men’s unjustifiable rage.

We are Rachel, lamenting with the families who have lost loved ones whose cries of despair join with those from tragedies of gun violence.

We are Rachel, perplexed with troubled souls, and searching for answers, seeking to understand what would cause humans to inflict pain on their fellow sisters and brothers.

We are Rachel, exasperated, grasping—crying out, “How long, O God?” How long will this wave of violence consume your people?

[Education for Justice](#)

Against Gun Violence

G-d of the slain,
G-d of the murdered and the victim,
The voice of lamentation echoes across the land.
Wailing beside graves opened too soon,
Weeping beside stains of blood
From the dead and the injured
Pouring forth from bullet wounds:

The child shot,
The suicide,
The domestic assault,
The gang violence,
The mass murder,
The long night of death made easy by guns
And automatic weapons.
The long night of sorrow made easy
By reckless access to machines of slaughter.

Source of justice,
Rock of strength and truth,
You call upon us to stand
In the name of common sense and reason:
To witness on behalf of the innocent and the cut down –
The widowed, orphaned and bereaved –
To answer the scourge of senseless loss,
To advocate for gun control,
To remove military weapons from a civilian population,
To return sanity to our laws, our policies and our lives.

Bless those who dedicate themselves to gun control.
Grant them fortitude and perseverance.
May the work of their hands never falter
Nor despair deter them from their holy calling.

Bless those who are mourning the dead.
Grant them solace and comfort.
Bless those who are healing from the trauma of gun violence.
Grant them lives of health and prosperity,
Joy and peace.

Blessed are You, G-d of All Being,
Who summons us to choose life,
First, choose life,
Above all,
Choose life.

By Alden Solovy and tobendlight.com

A Prayer In Response to Gun Violence

Let us lament with all those who are touched by gun violence
Let us lament the shooter's choice for violence
Let us lament laws that allow violent men easy access to guns
Let us lament our politicians' unwillingness to work for change
Let us lament with the hearts broken by loss today

Let us lament all the lives cut short today
Let us lament, O God, and then let us rise from our knees to work for change
In the name of Christ, the prince of peace. Amen.

The [Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark-King, Executive Pastor and Canon for Social Justice](#)

Prayer for Victims of Violence

Let us prayer together: Loving God, you are the author and sustainer of our lives. You know the anguish of the sorrowful, you are attentive to the prayers of the brokenhearted. Hear your people who cry out to you in their need; strengthen their hope in your lasting goodness.

We pray today for those who have died because of violence, of terrorism. Draw them to yourself; let your face shine upon them. May they be greeted with choirs of angels and experience your eternal peace and joy.

Be near to all those who have been touched by violence: those who have been hurt, lost their loved ones or lost their sense of security. Be for them a steady comfort and safe resting place.

Soften the hearts and steady of the minds of those who would do violence to others. May hate be replaced with love, violence with peace and darkness with your light. **Amen**

Leader: Gracious God, inspire us with the gift of Shalom, the gift of wholeness and the promise of your presence. Give us wisdom to seek nonviolence as an answer to the violence of our lives and world. Give us courage to seek wholeness in a fractured and divided world, to find reconciliation rather than revenge, to abandon the instruments of violence and death and entrust our lives, our homes, our ministries and our families to you. May your presence fill us and others with the thirst for unity, wholeness, and the desire to see all people valued as created in your image and likeness. May we, and others, receive your Shalom that we be faithful instruments of your love and peace in our world today. **Amen.**

Pause: *Let us reflect upon those we remember are/were victims of gun violence.*

Litany of Remembrance:

Leader: Let us remember all who have been harmed by violence. We acknowledge the strength to those who survived and of those still struggling to heal. For their sake and for ours, we commit ourselves to building each other up and to healing – together.

Response: Let us remember the families and loved ones of those who have died from gun violence. We acknowledge their pain and their deep grief. They too, are part of our community and need our love and help towards healing.

Leader: Let us remember the perpetrators, and the families of those who commit violence. We

acknowledge that their lives, too, are devastated and their hopes dashed. For their sake and for ours, we remember that pain goes in many directions from each act of violence.

Response: We will stand up to violence. We stand together expressing our unity, our connection to each other and to the divine; our hope for healing and for transformation. Let the Spirit of our Creator move through us. Help us to transform and heal our communities. And let us begin by transforming ourselves.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

The word which Isaiah, son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountains of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills, and all the nations, shall flow to it and many peoples shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war and more.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the path of the Most High.

All: That we may beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks.

Leader: Nation shall not lift up sword against nations. Neither shall they learn war any more.

All: We mourn the loss of all of our brothers and sisters killed by guns in our own country and throughout the world.

Leader: We are a nation at war with ourselves, a people who have forgotten who we are.

All: We gather today to remember that we are each a child of God. We gather to claim our belonging to each other and our commitment to living the way of God's peace.

Leader: Come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the path of the Most High.

All: That we may beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks.

Leader: Neighbor shall not lift up gun against neighbor. Neither shall they learn violence any more.

All: And none shall be afraid for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

Leader: O guiding Shepherd and Refuge from the raging storm, we seek the comfort and consolation of your warm embrace and sheltering care from the violence that swarms around and within us. Everywhere we turn we're told that vengeance and war are the cure for the wrongs waged against us. We are a culture prone and addicted to violence and in need of a disciplined recourse of withdrawal from this dangerous drug.

All: Lord, help us and rescue us.

Leader: Rescue us from ourselves; our self-absorbed anxieties that overwhelm us with destructive behavior and suicidal tendencies. Release us from a fear and hatred of others that garner our need for guns as a means of protection and insulation from them. Breathe in us your Spirit that radiates life and hope; that enables us to interact positively with others and live as emissaries of your peace.

All: Enable us to take delight in you, O Lord, for you are the desire of our hearts.

Leader: Nurture our children in your ways; feed them abundantly by your wisdom and truth. Reorient their desires from violent video games; suppress their greed for gangster rap; harness their hunger to humiliate and degrade others because of their gender, race or sexual orientation; and free their minds, mouths and bodies of derogatory terms and foul gestures, for these also are destructive weapons.

All: Lord, help and rescue us.

Leader: Grant us, O God, the will to turn all weapons of individual or mass destruction into tools of global sustainability and medical advancement. Inspire in us the courage to rid our streets of gang warfare and stray bullets; to rid our homes of domestic violence and accidental shootings; to rid our neighborhoods of police brutality and our highways of racial profiling; to rid our bodies and environment of toxic abuse and our world of international conflict. Grant every individual a faith in you that affirms your likeness in all humanity and creation, and that never again uses religion as a sword severing anyone from an ultimate sense of worth and dignity. Enable us again, O God, to worship you with an ever burning faith that melts the metal of all vengeance, weaponry and war. Make us instruments of your justice, compassion and peace that your real may come, and Your Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

All: Enable us to take delight in you, O Lord, for You are the desire of our hearts. Blessed are You who come in the name of the Lord.

Leader: Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds. Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves. Let us be aware of the source of being, common to us all and to all living things. Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own

compassion – towards ourselves and towards all living beings. Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other. With humility, with the awareness of the existence of life, and the sufferings that are going on around us, let us practice the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth.

Closing Prayer:

All: O Holy God, make us a receiving people. Let us walk with your feet. Let us touch with your hands. Let your voice speak in and through us. Let your wisdom be transformed into right action within us. Let us carry forth your Spirit into the world. Let us be at one with You, O God. And may each who feels as one with You know also that we are one with every other, until all creation is unified in the light of love. May we go in peace and in the light of God's love. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer [Sr. Karen Hartman, sfp](#)