
OF PRESENT MOMENTS

BISHOP' S COMMENTS ON PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS



We were preparing to leave for the House of Bishop's gathering in Alaska when the news reached me on Wednesday morning that another school shooting had taken place. I am shaken every time this happens, as it does all too frequently. But this one was different, if that is even possible, only because it happened at my small rural high school a short distance away. And it involved families I know. It also happened just the day before our group Bishops United Against Violence would be on a phone call to discuss initial plans for our meeting in Alaska where we would be discussing our presentation and presence on this issue at General Convention next summer. Those discussions had become much more personal.

And we could not have known as we gathered in Alaska that less than a week later we would be confronted with the devastation that occurred today in Las Vegas. The number killed and wounded in that melee stagger our hearts. One young teenager was killed, and three wounded at the Freeman High School shooting - slight in comparison.

But the reality is one life lost to such violence is one too many.

I offer to you the following statement developed by the leaders of our Bishop's group this morning following the shooting - they speak clearly of what I am feeling this morning as well.

Statement from Bishops United Against Gun Violence Following the Las Vegas Shooting

Bishops United Against Gun Violence, a group of more than 70 Episcopal Church bishops working to curtail the epidemic of gun violence in the United States, released this statement today: October 2, 2017–

We share in the grief and horror of people across our country and, indeed, around the world in the wake of last night's mass shooting in Las Vegas. We have spoken with our Bishops United Against Gun Violence colleague and brother in Christ, Bishop Dan Edwards of the Episcopal Diocese of Nevada, and we have offered him and the people of Nevada our

prayers and promises of assistance. We stand in solidarity with the diocese and the people of Nevada as they cope with this massacre.

It has become clichéd at moments such as these to offer thoughts and prayers. But as Christians, we must reflect upon the mass killings that unfold with such regularity in our country. And we must pray: for the victims, for their loved ones, for all who attended to the victims in the immediacy of the shooting, for the first responders who do so much to mitigate the awful effects of these shootings, and for the medical personnel who will labor for many days to save the wounded. We must also enter into the sorrow of those who are most deeply affected by our country's crippling frequent outbursts of lethal gun violence. We must look into our own hearts and examine the ways in which we are culpable or complicit in the gun violence that surrounds us every day.


And then, having looked, we must act. As Christians, we are called to engage in the debates that shape how Americans live and die, especially when they die due to violence or neglect. Yet a probing conversation on issues of gun violence continues to elude us as a nation, and this failure is cause for repentance and for shame. It is entirely reasonable in the wake of mass killings perpetrated by murderers with assault weapons to ask lawmakers to remove such weapons from civilian hands. It is imperative to ask why, as early as this very week, Congress is likely to pass a bill making it easier to buy silencers, a piece of equipment that make it more difficult for law enforcement officials to detect gunfire as shootings are unfolding.

Even as we hold our lawmakers accountable, though, we must acknowledge that a comprehensive solution to gun violence, whether it comes in the form of mass shootings, street violence, domestic violence or suicide, will not simply be a matter of changing laws, but of changing lives. Our country is feasting on anger that fuels rage, alienation and loneliness. From the White House to the halls of Congress to our own towns and perhaps at our own tables, we nurse grudges and resentments rather than cultivating the respect, concern and affection that each of us owes to the other. The leaders who should be speaking to us of reconciliation and the justice that must precede it too often instead stoke flames of division and mistrust. We must, as a nation, embrace prayerful resistance before our worse impulses consume us.

We join with the people of God in fervent prayer that our country will honor those murdered and wounded in Las Vegas by joining in acts of repentance, healing, and public conversation about the gun violence that has ripped us apart, yet again.

Prayer for those Caught up in Tragedy and Disaster

Lord of all compassion
 We pray for all of those caught up
 in the midst of tragedy or disaster.
 For those who have lost life
 and those working to save life
 For those who are worried for people they love
 For those who will see their loved ones no longer
 Lord Have Mercy.
 For those in need of the peace
 that passes all understanding
 For all who turn to you in the midst of turmoil
 For those who cry out to you in fear and in love
 Lord Have Mercy.
 For those in confusion and those in despair
 For those whose tears are yet to dry
 For those in need of your unending love
 Lord Have Mercy
 Amen.



OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

- I want to publicly express my deep gratitude for The Rev. Roy Green who shared his significant talents of leadership with the good people of St. Mark's, Hood River, over the past year. Fr. Roy served as interim there during their transition period. Driving to The Gorge weekly, he took time away from his home and his beloved, The Rev. Nancy Sargent McGrath Green (Sunriver Christian Fellowship, Sunriver), to share life with the community of Hood River. His ever present kindness, rich sense of humor, and deep passion for God has certainly given our congregation in that place a more solid foundation on which to continue their life together. They continue in their search for a new rector, so please uphold them in your prayers. And offer your prayers of thanksgiving for Fr. Roy - I certainly do!
- And having referenced The Gorge - I must offer thanksgiving to God as well for the recent ordination of The Rev. Marilyn Roth to the priesthood. The celebration at St. Paul's, The Dalles, was a most joyous event. I was most honored to be present for what was my first ordination as Bishop.
- Just a reminder, which I would be remiss to not mention: Diocesan Convention is only two weeks away, October 13-15 in Bend. Please keep us all in your prayers.
- I want to thank those who gathered last weekend from our Diocesan Cursillo Community. It was a fruitful weekend culminating an effort over several months to pray, discern and work toward a renewal of this movement. I am convinced that the Cursillo ministry has much to offer our Diocese, and see it as a vital ministry in our midst. I was also thrilled to discover that Gretchen Kimsey was chosen as the new President of Cursillo in Eastern Oregon. Please be watching for further developments from this exciting group.



TinaMarie aboard the Alaska Railroad train from Anchorage to Fairbanks, with the Tanana River in the background.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS MEETS IN ALASKA

We were privileged to gather with other Bishop and spouses in Fairbanks, Alaska for a week of discussions around the theme of "Culture, Creation and Reconciliation: Bishops in the Jesus Movement." We were given the honor to listen to native elders speak to us of their culture and current life, and to invite us into their communities to participate with them in a blessings of water, land and sky. From our time there, we affirmed a call to protect the remainder of the arctic wilderness untouched by oil exploration and drilling. I hope you will give attention to this essential need to protect land, animals, and indigenous people. Click on the link below, and click open if necessary, to read our statement.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/word-church-episcopal-churchs-house-bishops>

“If we have abandoned ourselves to God, there is only one rule for us: the duty of the present moment.”

Jean-Pierre de Caussade

