

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

By Father Jim Martin, SJ

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.