



October 5, 2025

## Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

*"How long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen." Habakkuk 1: 2*



Dear Friends,

Last weekend six separate mass shootings brought the total of mass shootings this year to 324 in the United States.

### Saturday, September 28, 2025

- *Grand Blanc, Michigan: a shooting at a church killed four people and injured eight.*
- *Eagle Pass, Texas: An incident in the city resulted in at least six injuries.*
- *Highland Park, Illinois: A shooting left at least four people injured.*
- *Selma, Alabama: At least four people injured in a shooting.*
- *New Orleans, Louisiana: A shooting on Bourbon Street injured at least four people and killed one.*

### Sunday, September 29, 2025

- *Southport, North Carolina: A shooting at a waterfront bar left three dead and at least eight injured.*

This underscores the continuing crisis of gun violence in the United States. With the Prophet Habakkuk we cry out to God, *"'Violence,' but you do not intervene."* In what may be the first time in Israelite literature someone questions the ways of God, and calls God to account for his governance of the world. Violence seems to be an intractable problem; but God has a non-violent vision for our world. Habakkuk tells us God's vision will have its time, will be fulfilled, *"and will not disappoint."* He calls on the just to be *'loyal'* to God's vision and they will live.

Habakkuk speaks from a dangerous and violent time for his country, Judah. The Babylonian Empire just had a great military victory, and the country was on the verge of invasion. Judah was desperate and in chaos, with widespread political corruption and intrigue. They worshiped the gods of violence and militarism who they thought could save them rather than the Lord of Life. The prophet sees the capture of Jerusalem as a chastisement for the lack of loyalty (faith). Habakkuk ends his prophecy professing confidence in the God who saves.

In our passage from Luke, the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith. We usually think of *'faith'* as belief in certain abstract propositions about God. But in the cultural context of the New Testament *'faith'* is better translated as *'loyalty'* or *'reliability.'* Jesus was the founder of a faction devoted to the renewal of Israel. He demands loyalty to himself and his project. When the disciple is faced with a choice, they should prefer him to their family of origin (Luke 14: 2ff). Jesus also warns about destroying the loyalty of the little ones who are loyal to me (Luke 17:1-4)

Loyalty to Jesus demands being faithful to the work of the gospel. Faith or loyalty must be translated into service. The master in our parable appears to only have one servant who both works in the fields and does the cooking. The meaning of the parable is clear. Good servants do what they are told. A master never has to thank a servant for doing their job. Jesus' final advice to disciples gets confusing calling disciples to say, *"we are worthless servants."* Is an obedient and dutiful servant really *"worthless?"* *"We are obedient servants who deserve no credit"* may be a better translation.

As Christians we are not called to be passive servants waiting for God to do something. Our faith in the Incarnation tells us that God works through us. When it comes to fighting gun violence, we need dogged perseverance to overcome the weapons industry and the money with which they fund politicians. I often see online messages from parents who lost their children at the shooting at Sandy Hook School. They formed *Sandy Hook Promise* and have been at it for years and have not given up. These are what it means to be loyal servants!

Peace,

*Fr Ron*

Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)