



May 25, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters

Tragically, we live in a culture of violence and death. The recent mass shootings in New York and now Texas break our hearts, as both adults and children are murdered in the course of a normal day of grocery shopping or attending school by a troubled loner who has embraced some crazed ideological mix of racism, carnage, and/or revenge. The Gospel of Life challenges us to embrace our own human dignity, to build a culture in which every person is welcomed, nurtured, respected and loved. The Church proclaims the right to life, not only for the unborn, but for every human being, created in the image and likeness of God.

This Gospel of Life condemns abortion, racism, mass killings, gang murders, abuse of any kind, the marginalization of the vulnerable, and any other sin which violates the life and dignity of any person. Many people live in hopelessness, despair, and fear in this country. Our children are fed on a culture of violence which is glorified in video games and popular entertainment. The disintegration of marriage, family, and social bonds leaves many young people feeling abandoned and alone. We do not offer the help needed to those who suffer from mental illness and addictions.

We can and must do better. Our hearts are broken by the recent mass shootings, which again raise the question of gun violence. Other countries do not suffer this epidemic of murderous insanity, at least not with the frequency with which it occurs in the United States. Reasonable and just restrictions on the production, sale, and possession of assault weapons, designed specifically to kill people, are a needed step forward to help stop this epidemic of mass murder.

Christ calls us to live in peace and to seek reconciliation with God, with each other, and within ourselves. This peace is more than the simple absence of violence and war; it is the fruit of a civilization of love and mercy, of justice and morality. All religious believers and persons of good will can certainly agree to work for the common good, to strive for a just social order, to eschew violence as the solution to our problems, and to be peacemakers in our communities. While suffering the terrible violence of His crucifixion, Jesus forgives His enemies and offers His life for the salvation of the world. This mystery of Christ's redemption is the source of our healing and peace, standing as the eternal model of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Now is the time to affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every person, to take steps to break the culture of violence in our country, to live out the Gospel of Life, which proclaims that every human being has the fundamental right to be born, to have a loving family, to receive the nutrition, nurture, love, and care we all need to flourish, to live free of prejudice, racism, fear, violence, and the destruction of the common good and the communal bonds which hold a free society together.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Donald J. Hying
Bishop of Madison

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