Opinion
Editorial
A woman prays in front of a makeshift memorial in Nashville, Tennessee, March 28, by the en

A woman prays in front of a makeshift memorial in Nashville, Tennessee, March 28, by the entrance of the Covenant School the day after a mass shooting. Three adults and three children, all 9 years old, were fatally shot at the school. (OSV News/USA Today Network via Reuters/Mark Zaleski)

by NCR Editorial Staff

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Editor's note: *We first ran a version of this editorial in May 2022, following the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. We are republishing it again in light of the Aug. 27 fatal shooting at Annunciation Church in Minneapolis. See our coverage of the Minneapolis shooting here.*

It all just feels so hopeless. Another mass shooting in America. At least three elementary school children and three of their teachers murdered in Nashville, Tennessee. A space designed for learning turned instead into a killing field. A community that will never, ever be the same. Survivors and family who will carry unimaginable grief, trauma, heartbreak for generations to come.

And yet, and yet, and yet. We know all too well how this song goes. "Thoughts and prayers" will be on offer aplenty. But the NRA and other gun lobbies will exert pressure on Congress. Passage of sensible gun control measures will be deemed out of reach. It's just too radical, of course, too inimical to our exceptional, untouchable American ideal of liberty.

The chorus repeats, awaiting a new verse. Nashville will be followed by somewhere else, just as it was preceded by Uvalde, and Buffalo, and Sacramento, and San Jose, and Colorado Springs, and Indianapolis, and Rock Hill, and Boulder, and on, and on.

If only, if only. If only someone could take the country by the shoulders and scream the scream of a mother, or a father, or a grandparent, or an aunt, or an uncle now looking to years and years of pain and someone always missing from their kitchen table.

If only, if only. If only someone could speak with a voice of unquestioned moral authority and say, "No more, not again, we must do something this time!" We are better than having to send our children — our children! — off to school each day, knowing that any person can walk in with an assault weapon and annihilate them.

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After Uvalde, Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, responded differently. He let loose with what sounded like holy anger.

"Don't tell me that guns aren't the problem, people are. I'm sick of hearing it," he said on Twitter. "The darkness first takes our children who then kill our children, using the guns that are easier to obtain than aspirin. We sacralize death's instruments and then are surprised that death uses them."

We're sick of hearing it, too. We're also sick of hearing the same song, always with a new verse — but always one where more of our children are butchered and no one in authority does anything. How long must this song go on?

This story appears in the **Minneapolis church shooting** feature series. View the full series.
A version of this story appeared in the **April 14-27, 2023** print issue under the headline: If only someone did something about the murder of children.