Opinion
Letters to the Editor

by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 26, 2023
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

During the first week of May, NCR columnist Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan found himself "in the infuriating position of responding to the news of yet another horrific mass shooting in the United States." He was referencing an April 28 event in Texas. The same day NCR published Horan's column, Conventual Franciscan and Atlanta Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer released a statement following two mass shootings in Georgia, reported Gina Christian for OSV News. Meanwhile, NCR Bertelsen Editorial Fellow Aleja Hertzler-McCain reported on a gun buyback event April 29 in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Following are NCR reader responses to our coverage with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

Violence and anger can come easily to everyone. How we deal with it is the question. As children we learn how to live by observing life around us. If our parents insist that we say we're sorry after picking a fight, the chances are that we will learn to do that. If our parents and neighbors show us how to make friends, be honest, play games, be courteous, we learn to live our lives that way.

Yet we raise children in front of television that shows them violence. Details of horrible situations are explored in living color, with emphasis on how to win a confrontation with guns and other violence. Taking guns away looks like the easy way out, but guns are just a symptom of what is wrong. The Church needs to go into communities who have no hope. Over 2,000 years ago the Church spread the faith throughout the world. How can we continue to bring that hope into a gun-weary nation?

GAYLE WITTMAN
Harmony, Pennsylvania



***

Fr. Horan is disturbed by the lack of meaningful action when children are killed here in the states, as if this inaction hasn't been preceded by decades of U.S. weapons killing children all over the world resulting in the same lack of meaningful action. The slaughter of children in the U.S. is evil, but it is not a "special" evil compared to the slaughter of children by U.S. weapons outside of the U.S.

How many innocent people around the world, including countless children, have been killed by Americans guns and other American weapons in the decades after the Second World War until today? Is the liberal imagination so limited, so stubbornly myopic, that it is unable to comprehend that the bodies of the innocent being torn apart by American weapons is an international issue, and not simply a domestic one? American violence does not end at the colonial borders of the U.S. settler-state.

JEFFREY JONES
Hamburg, New York

***

It is time to ask God to forgive us for allowing the murder of our children due to our "right to own guns." It is no longer enough to ask for "comfort and strength."

JOHN GRAHAM
Wallkill, New York

Advertisement

***

Atlanta Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer's "thoughts and prayers" are vacuous because decades of thoughts and prayers, while the gun industry continues to be supported, have resulted in more mass murders. If the archbishop doesn't have a plan to address the frequent mass murders, he's not the person for the job.

The archbishop's "thoughts and prayers" administration is evidence the Catholic Church has little relevance and lacks the moral authority to lead. As a Good Shepherd he can help make Greater Atlanta a safer sheep pen preserving the lives of his flock. Sadly, though unsurprisingly, Hartmayer does nothing of the sort. He admits to "not having concrete actions," though claims, without proof or a timeline "to commit to action" in the indeterminate future, in essence kicking the can down the road as we have so often seen in government and church circles when the real plan is to do nothing.

Hartmayer is not a leader nor a shepherd. He is a CEO encumbered by political and business alliances that kill his flock and prevent him from faithfully proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus.

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT
Texas, United States

***

Chicago's cop-loving cardinal is best ignored on the issue of guns. Thankfully, Chicago is home to several fine anti-capitalist imperialist, class conscious, internationalist left organizations, and one can look to them for serious analyses. I note that the keynote speaker at last month's Peace Summit 2023 at Loyola University, which was co-organized by Chicago Area Peace Action student affiliates, was Margaret Kimberley of Black Alliance for Peace. That is the same Black Alliance for Peace that held an online panel in March on "Countering Colonial Policing in U.S. Domestic Colonies," which anyone who takes exception to the state murder of

Brother Clay should watch. Kimberly herself recently authored "Why Americans Are Shot at the 'Wrong House'" for Black Agenda Report, in which she offered a significantly more insightful analysis of U.S. gun violence than Cardinal Cupich ever has.

JEFFREY JONES
Hamburg, New York