



## **ANCC Presiding Bishop George R. Lucey's Statement on the Sutherland Springs Shooting**

Once again, God grieves, as do people of good will everywhere.

Barely a month after the Las Vegas shooting horrified the nation, another mass murder has occurred. On 5 November, as worshippers prayed in the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, a gunman burst through the doors and began firing at them with a military-style weapon. Twenty-six perished, and a score of others were wounded. Some of the victims are children, including the pastor's 14-year-old daughter.

May perpetual light shine on them and comfort their families and friends.

The senseless gun violence that infects the United States calls for renewed self-examination and prayer on the part of everyone. But as a people called to evangelize, to bring to the world the Good News of Jesus Christ, Christians are also called to act, in Christ's name, for peace and justice.

We do well to recall *Ad gentes*, the Vatican-II document on the mission of the Church. It reminds us that we Christians should "have a lively awareness of [our] responsibility to the world," and that the "first and most important" expression of this responsibility is "to lead a profoundly Christian life" (VI.36). We are called, as Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, to be the "light of the world" (Matt 5:14) and "the salt of the earth" (Matt 5:13).

One of the pillars of Catholic social teaching is that leading a Christian life includes an active concern for the common good. Surely a key ingredient of the common good is doing everything possible to free people from the fear of being indiscriminately gunned down. Consequently, as "salt of the earth" commissioned to represent Christ, we Christians are called to accompany our prayers for peace with social action aimed at (1) raising awareness about gun violence and (2) laboring for public policies that limit the availability of firearms, especially assault weapons.

As Presiding Bishop of the American National Catholic Church, it is my fervent prayer that Christians from all traditions join in thought, prayer, word, and deed in the godly labor of diminishing gun violence in this nation. May we do this in joyful anticipation of that peaceable kingdom where every tear will be wiped from our eyes because there "will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Rev 21:4).