



AMERICAN NATIONAL
CATHOLIC CHURCH

**A Pastoral Letter from Presiding Bishop George Lucey, FCM,
on the Mass Shootings in California, Texas, and Ohio**

August 5, 2019

Feast of the Dedication of St. Mary Major

In the name + of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Once more, the nation reels in stunned dismay at gun violence, on horrific display no fewer than three times in the space of a single week. Innocent men, women, and children in Gilroy CA, El Paso TX, and Dayton OH are the latest victims of the rage and hatred that roams the land like a ravenous lion seeking prey. (1 Peter 5:1)

The people of the American National Catholic Church offer heartfelt prayers for those killed and wounded in these three tragedies. We offer prayers as well for their loved ones, for officers of the law who stopped the attacks and EMT and emergency room personnel who treated victims, and for all past survivors of similar tragedies forced to relive their trauma again and again whenever a new shooting occurs.

Prayer is more than appropriate because we are people of faith. As Christians who worship a Messiah of peace, compassion, and love, and who was himself cruelly murdered by agents of violence, we turn to the Lord in all circumstances, but especially in troubled ones like this.

But as Christ's disciples, we know that we're called to complement our prayers with action. The Lord tells us that whenever we come to the aid of those in need, we serve him as well. (Matthew 25: 34-40) As St. Teresa of Avila reminds us, we are the hands and feet of God.

Between them, the three killers exemplify two toxins eating away at this nation's moral fiber: the easy availability and out-of-control abundance of semi- and fully automatic weapons, and the rise of white nationalism. As of now, the motives of the Gilroy and Dayton shooters remain mysterious. But we do know that the weapons they used were designed for rapid kills. In the case of the El Paso tragedy, the shooter's motives are clearly stated in a white nationalist statement he posted online shortly before his rampage. It indicated rage at what he styled the "Hispanic invasion" of Texas.

I call upon Christians everywhere—and indeed all persons, regardless of their faith—to insist that local, state, and federal government leaders act swiftly and decisively to enact restrictions on the private ownership of semi- and fully automatic weapons.

I call upon the president to cease his recklessly incendiary language about immigrants and repent the anger and ethnic violence that his public statements have encouraged during his time in office.

And I humbly and with grieving heart ask Mary and all the saints to intercede on behalf of this hurting, bleeding nation, that everyone who dwells in it or who come to its borders in search of asylum might live without fear of violence and be treated as the beloved children of God which they are.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop