

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES



Prayer for A Safer Country

Gathering Song

“Choose Life” - Colleen Fulmer (YouTube)

Prayer

Loving God, you sent Jesus to show us how to choose life always. Open our hearts and minds that we may know this path and allow it to take root in our lives. Open the hearts and minds of our leaders to make “life” decisions in all that touches us and the peace of our nation.

Readings and Reflection

Spend some time slowly reading and pondering these reflections. *(In a group, each person slowly read a selection. Pause between each. Spend time in quiet reflection.)*

Thich Nhat Hanh

All violence is injustice. Responding to violence with violence is injustice, not only to the other person but also to oneself. Responding to violence with violence resolves nothing; it only escalates violence, anger and hatred. It is only with compassion that we can embrace and disintegrate violence. This is true in relationships between individuals as well as in relationships between nations.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and religion enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil and this can only be done through love.

M. Gandhi

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.

Robert Kennedy

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

Desmond Tutu

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.

Teilhard de Chardin

The badge of the violent is his weapon, spear, sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the nonviolent.

St. Francis of Assisi

You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love.

Thomas Merton

When embraced, the rod of violence breeds danger and fear.

Buddha

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time, there would be no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed ...

True nonviolence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.

Group Sharing

Following a time of stillness, share some of your reflections.



Change happens
when enough
people
speak up
in one voice

Litany of One Voice

*"Thus says Yahweh: a voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and bitter weeping. Rachel, weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted, for her children are no more."
Jeremiah 31:15*

God, comforter of the broken and disheartened, we come to you plagued with an agonized grief after yet one more outbreak of senseless gun violence.

We come to you, from the East to the West, from the North to the South, people of all ages, ethnicities, and walks of life.

We represent one voice, the voice of bitter weeping echoing throughout our cities and resounding in communities throughout the world.

As violence abounds, we sit in the darkness, sitting alongside the suffering on the mourner's bench.

We are Rachel, mourning with wordless sobs, the lives of those sacrificed on the altar of violence.

We are Rachel, weeping for the wounded, for those whose minds and bodies are etched with painful memories of men's unjustifiable rage.

We are Rachel, lamenting with the families who have lost loved ones whose cries of despair join with those from tragedies of gun violence.

We are Rachel, perplexed with troubled souls, and searching for answers, seeking to understand what would cause humans to inflict pain on their fellow sisters and brothers.

We are Rachel, exasperated, grasping—crying out, "How long, O God?" How long will this wave of violence consume your people?

- Taken from www.socialjusticeresourcecenter.org/prayers/gun-violence/

Closing Prayer

Our God, you lovingly welcome victims of violence and terrorism. Comfort their families and all who love and grieve for them. Strengthen all who work for peace. And may the peace the world cannot give, live in our hearts.

Closing Song

"Blessing Song" – Jan Phillips (YouTube)

