

## Spring's Anticipation Broken

The anticipation and hopefulness of spring continue to be shattered by gunfire. There have been 30 mass shootings (incidents in which 4 or more people were shot) this month alone and 104 such events so far this year. We do not hear about all of them in the news. 2 people were killed and 2 injured in an incident in Cleveland on Monday. Did you know? The mass shootings this month have taken place in Phoenix, AZ; Stockton, Yuba City, & Compton, CA; Boulder, CO; Washington D.C; Tampa, Orlando, & Clearwater, FL; Acworth, GA; Chicago, IL (2); Indianapolis, IN (2); New Orleans, LA; Detroit & Edwards, MI; Greensboro & Fayetteville, NC; Ohkay Owingeh (Chamita), NM; Brooklyn, NY; Cleveland, OH; Gresham, OR; Philadelphia, (2) & Erie, PA; Richmond, VA; Huston (2) & Dallas, TX. In these 30 incidents, 50 people died and 112 people were injured. There are also more potential mass shootings that are discovered intime to be prevented then we know (This happened in Atlanta just today [Wednesday]).



It is easy to attribute these events to a few 'crazy people'. That is nearly always the first 'reason it happened' proposed in news coverage of a shooting, and keeping guns away from the mentally ill is often the focus of any discussion of the 'gun problem'. However, most of us know that mental illness does not mean gun crazy, violent, or dangerous, and that this is not the primary issue. Most of us also know our culture's relationship to guns is longstanding and complicated. "Safety" issues from many different perspectives are involved, but so are personal identity, value, and independence issues. This mix makes much of our gun culture much more destructive than we want to admit. "For a highly developed and wealthy nation, the United States has an unusually high rate of mass shootings. However, it is a common misconception that it is the worst country globally in terms of mass shooting rates. The truth of the matter is that the United States is number sixty-six on the list of countries in terms of mass shooting rates per capita, but they have had more mass shootings than any other country in terms of overall numbers." (World Population Review Mass Shootings by Country 2021 ([worldpopulationreview.com](http://worldpopulationreview.com))). This is not something to be proud of.

As part of our Lenten reflections and self-examination, we should pray for those who have been devastated by the effects of gun violence in this country (and elsewhere). Lord, also help us consider what we as a society need to do to keep our communities safe and free from these weapons and tactics of war.

### This week, remember in prayer:

- **The victims of gun violence.** More people have lost their lives this week in mass shootings & other gun violence.
- **People dealing with COVID-19.** The number of vaccinated people is growing, & there is currently a decline in new cases in some places, but an increase in others. With spring gatherings in the works, help us not to back off on safety measures. The future of this virus is still a work in process. There is still much we do not know about it. Also remember Brazil where the number of young people getting sick and dying is on the rise for reasons not yet fully understood (a new variant and recent large gatherings of young people are thought to be factors).
- **Refugees and those displaced by violence** – especially during this pandemic, & especially the children. Remember that people do not flee their homes unless forced or because conditions there are far worse than the difficult conditions, they know they will face when fleeing.

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