

A Statement from the Bishop of New Jersey following the Mass-shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas

*'A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'* Matthew 2:18



Once again, our nation is confronted with the brutality of a mass-shooting in which innocent children were killed. This time it was in Uvalde, Texas. At least 19 children—most of them 9 and 10 years old—and two adults from Robb Elementary School have died as a result of the

shooting. Also dead is the lone 18-year-old gunman, a student at a nearby high school who reportedly shot and critically wounded his grandmother before committing his other heinous acts of murder and mayhem. Several other children were also wounded at Robb Elementary. Families in Uvalde are only now beginning to realize the horror of what has occurred, some just discovering that their child was among those killed.

The Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations released a [statement](#) in response to the Uvalde School Shooting observing:

Since at least the 1970s, The Episcopal Church has resolved to support legislation that would reduce the risk of gun violence. More than a dozen times, General Convention has urged Congress to act to restrict the ownership, sale, and use of firearms, to do all it can to prevent gun violence, to limit the availability of weapons, and to lament the lives broken and destroyed by violence. We have recognized the efforts of Bishops United Against Gun Violence and commended the leadership of young people who desperately want to end this violence. Decades later, we see gun violence continuing on a daily basis, in communities with high rates of

violence, acknowledging the disproportionate impact in communities of color and the impact of racist violence. We acknowledge the harm caused by intimate partner and family violence, the lives lost to suicide, and those terrorized by mass shootings. **We reiterate today our urgent call for legislation that will restrict who can own firearms, require background checks, eliminate loopholes, tighten laws against gun trafficking, require gun safety training, fund gun violence prevention programs, and address gun violence as a public health crisis [emphasis added].**

The statement also provides access to resources that can help people become actively involved in preventing future acts of violence. The proliferation of guns and gun violence in the United States of America is a sin against God and against humanity. In [calling his diocese to prayer](#) in the aftermath of the Uvalde tragedy, Bishop David Reed of West Texas wrote:

Words of outrage are not enough to express our hatred of this evil done to little children who simply went to school this morning. Expressions of sorrow scarcely touch the depth of families' grief tonight. There is nothing we can say today to comfort the parents, siblings, and grandparents whose lives were left in ruins by this evil violence.

He is right of course. Bishop Reed also observed, "We have received power to love and to resist hatred," and added:

And we can pray. We must pray. Ignore the cynics, and pray with all your heart. Let your cries reach to the heavens. Let your anger and despair be your prayer. And listen to God answering in return. Look for God's tears revealed and listen for his perfect and righteous anger. Give yourself over to opportunities to join in the Spirit's work of binding up and healing. Love with all you've got, and never, ever surrender to the darkness.

I agree with him here as well. We are people of prayer. We can pray. We must pray. But prayer must lead us to action. I am thankful to be a part of [Bishops United Against Gun Violence](#), a coalition of more than 100 bishops of The Episcopal Church who have been advocating for common sense gun safety laws from before the Sandy Hook mass shooting.

I encourage all the faithful to reject the violence that is so much a part of our nation's DNA. I urge all the faithful to reject the "gun idolatry" that has elevated human manufactured weapons of death above the lives of human beings, and especially above the lives of innocent children. I urge the faithful to act by joining with others who are advocating for common sense gun-legislation to stem the proliferation of guns and gun violence in this nation. Unite with one of the agencies below and join your voice with most Americans who want to see common sense gun legislation now.

[Everytown for Gun Safety](#)

[Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#)

[Ignatian Solidarity Network](#)

Pray for the people grieving in Uvalde, Texas. Pray for those injured. Pray for the parents whose innocent children have been slain. Pray for all who held these precious children in love. Pray for the 18-year-old shooter who is a product of American gun culture gone mad. Pray for his grandmother who was another of his victims. Pray for the children and adults who were killed in Uvalde. Above all, pray for our nation which has lost its way and continues to sacrifice its young on the altar of violence.