



DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

Office of the Bishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With much sadness we learned of a new shooting, of another massacre, this time in El Paso, Texas and in Dayton, Ohio. They were innocent victims of people who were destroying and killing out of hatred, racism, revenge, supremacy, or who knows why else. These were innocent lives who were killed by hate - which is the complete absence of Love and the tool of destruction. How sad!

In our country we say: "In God We Trust" but we have gradually taken God out of public life, relegating him to the sacristies of the churches. He is a God who has been silenced and with him, the law of Love. The lack of God in society creates a vacuum of love and results in the opposite of love - violence.

We have gradually become accustomed to this violence. These violent acts cause shock at first. Then, as the days go by, they remain as another statistic, and then we all return to the usual. Sadly, what happened becomes a "Reality Show," with a large audience, but with the passage of time will not be interesting news.

Victims of violence, those who died and were injured, are mourned by everyone. Unfortunately, later they also will become victims of indifference, because nothing changes. The saddest thing is that there are not government leaders willing to change. Why? Because we live in a society where God is and has been silenced; where love has been silenced. And without love and the desire to do good, respect for others and respect for life get lost too.

These sad and painful events move us. So many lives were lost and families were affected by the loss of a loved one. These events should help each of us discover that change should not only result in banning weapons - something that is necessary and just - we must also transform our society from within, giving priority to God and his law of Love, so that the dignity of each human being and the value of life can be rediscovered.

The love of God is the best medicine to destroy the cancer of violence that consumes our nation.

Let us join in prayer for all the innocent victims who were killed or injured, and for their families, so that in these moments of pain the Lord may give them comfort and hope.

In Christ,

† Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.
Bishop of Raleigh