



Mass school shootings have been on the rise in America over the past twenty-five years. Let us begin with the spring of 1999 when two teenaged students at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO killed twelve students and one teacher, injured twenty-one additional students, and three more were injured while attempting to escape. As a nation we offered our thoughts and prayers... not legislation? And we continued to offer prayers in 2012 for Sandy Hook Elementary School victims and families. Then President Obama tearfully begged our government to act and give the US people regulations on assault weapons and still no legislation came out of that? In February 2018 in Parkland, FL a nineteen-year-old shot and killed seventeen students and staff members with a semi-automatic rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. On May 18th of the same year in Santa Fe, TX, a seventeen-year-old opened fire killing ten students and injuring thirteen others. In both instances, as a nation we again offered thoughts and prayers... but still no legislation...?

Places of worship have not been spared from gun violence, evidenced by the shootings at the Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston, SC in 2015; the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX in 2017, and the Pittsburgh; PA synagogue shooting in 2018. There have also been mass shootings at arbitrary locations like the Aurora, CO movie theater in 2012; the 2016 LGBTQ Nightclub in Orlando, FL; the 2018 Waffle House in Nashville, TN; and the 2019 Walmart in El Paso, TX in 2019. In 2021 there was a shooting at a FedEx Warehouse in Indianapolis, IN, at a music festival in Las Vegas, NV, followed by shootings at massage parlors in Atlanta, GA. The common denominator in all these incidents are guns, automatic assault weapons.

Most recently, gun violence has taken the lives of some of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters – our elders in Buffalo NY murdered at Tops Supermarket and now in Uvalde, TX where yet again an eighteen-year-old first shot his grandmother, then entered Robb Elementary School with an AR-15, and shot nineteen 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students and two teachers. One of the murdered teacher's husband died shortly thereafter of a massive heart attack – leaving their 4 children orphans. As a nation we again are offering our thoughts and prayers... however, no legislation...?

How long must we pray over the bodies of dead children and seniors; while only offering thoughts and prayers to their families? As a nation we must muster the courage to stop this carnage from re-occurring time and time again. When will enough be enough? We should not be praying for the repose of the souls of grade school children or those of eighty-year-old women murdered while buying groceries.

As American citizens, we believe in the 2nd amendment and affirm the right to bear arms. We recognize that within the ranks of our Claver Family there are several card-carrying NRA

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The Knights of Peter Claver, Incorporated, established in 1909, is a Catholic Fraternal Order headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana and founded in Mobile, Alabama USA by four Josephite priests and three laymen. Dedicated to mutual aid to its members, spiritual and leadership development of the youth, and called to Catholic action for social justice concerns

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members. While we admit that background checks would not stop every madman with a gun, it is at the very least a step in the right direction toward trying to prevent tragedies that have been playing out for over a quarter of a century. There is a cry for a bipartisan agreement in the fight for better gun control laws. Our nation deserves better, and our elected officials must do better. We must end the vicious cycle and push toward a new tomorrow, free from gun violence for our children and grandchildren.

Mass shootings can be prevented or at least dramatically reduced by stricter gun laws. Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, and Norway have all tightened gun laws after mass shootings in their countries. Large scale mass shootings have triggered new limits on gun ownership and access in numerous more countries. Gun education, weapon safety qualification trainings and a national registration requirement along with mental health screenings, in other countries after one mass shooting, have been able to almost curtail mass shootings substantially.

Most Americans want sensible bipartisan gun legislation. We must call, write, email as well as lobby our State Representatives as the NRA does. We must organize and use the power of our vote to urge Congress to act now. The House of Representatives has already passed HR 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, and the Senate must now act to save Americans from the ongoing terror of gun violence. How many more times must we watch communities mourn the loss of innocent lives to gun violence? How can we continue to call ourselves Pro-Life when it comes to abortion yet be silent on gun control? GUN CONTROL IS PRO-LIFE. A ban on automatic assault weapons is one desired answer.

We, The Knights of Peter Claver and the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary offer prayers for the people of Uvalde; for every parent who lost a child, every sibling who won't understand the loss of their sibling, every child who lost a friend. We also pray for the recovery of those injured. May they and their families receive comfort, strength, and the peace that surpasses all understanding. Faith without works is dead. We must pray for our elected officials to have a change of heart and pass meaningful legislation that will minimize access and availability of guns, especially assault weapons.

Heavenly Father, we come before the throne of grace seeking You, asking for Your endless love and protection over your children. Protect our educators and guide the skilled hands of all medical professionals, first responders and law enforcement officers while keeping them safe as they protect and serve.

May the Holy Spirit guide our elected officials to enact the laws necessary to reverse this path of death and destruction.

Eternal rest grant unto to the school children and the teachers who sacrificed their lives, O Lord, and let your perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

In Jesus name we pray... Amen!

Yours in Christ and in Claver,



Most Worthy James K. Ellis,
Supreme Knight
Knights of Peter Claver, Incorporated



Most Esteemed Micaela J. Le Blanc,
Supreme Lady
Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary

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