

LETTER FROM BISHOP HOSIBATA, AUG 6, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of the Desert Southwest Conference,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Christ, who liberates us from hate and violence.

These days, our world is darkened by deep despair at the proliferation of violence and hatred that calls us to action. As disciples of Jesus, who proclaimed the realm of God, we should now be angered to do something to stop the evil that is upon us. Now is the time to keep praying for the families and friends of those who lost life or love in recent mass murders.

But it is not the time to stop with "thoughts and prayers," as we who are horrified are wont to do. I am asking all of us in the Desert Southwest Conference to rise to the occasion to do something in addition to bowing our heads in prayer.

I am offended by the lack of action by those who are in authority to move beyond an impasse, especially those who blame the current frequency of violence against others solely on mental health issues, or social media, and neglect the connection of these concerns to other issues, such as:

- The continued proliferation of the scourge of racism and white supremacy;
- The bold expressions of hate and contempt for others;
- The disregard of the precious gift of life we have been given by God;
- The rampant availability of weapons, especially weapons designed for mass destruction; and,
- The refusal to countermand organizations like the NRA that roadblock efforts to address common sense gun laws.

I encourage you, if you have not yet done so, to rise to action.

- **Write** to those in authority, especially Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, to reconvene the Senate to consider legislation that has been held up by his design. I have signed such a letter along with others in leadership in the Desert Southwest Conference, and invite you to send a similar letter. You might also copy your letter to your state senators.
 - Senator Kyrsten Sinema in Arizona
 - Senator Martha McSally in Arizona
 - Senator Catherine Cortez Masto in Nevada
 - Senator Jacky Rosen in Nevada
- **Make a donation** to an organization that is lobbying for sensible gun laws.
- **Campaign for, advocate for, and vote** for those candidates who have the courage and moral imperative to stand up against racism and gun violence.
- **Revisit prayerfully your baptismal vows** to resist evil and injustice in this world.
- **Invite your congregation to study** the roots of racism and explore the issues related to gun violence. Here are just a few suggestions:
 - General Board of Church and Society *Gun Violence Prevention*

- Desert Southwest Conference Gun Violence Task Force
- Giffords Courage to Fight Gun Violence
- Moms Demand Action
- March for our Lives
- The General Commission on Religion and Race has abundant resources on the issue of racism.

And finally, **pray with me** that there can be some movement in our call to respond to our United Methodist stance against violence.

Let's put our faith into action. Your voice matters, so let it be heard. Your faith in Jesus Christ mandates that we do so!

In Christ,
Bishop Bob

