

Pray for Orlando

June 12, 2016

Dear Friends in Christ,

Once again hate has erupted into unspeakable violence. The mass shooting in an Orlando, Florida club apparently targeted gay and lesbian people, but also American values of freedom for all citizens and our Christian duty to respect the dignity of every human being were under attack as well. We join with the dozens of families grieving, praying, hoping, waiting, and trying to cope with this massacre. And as people of faith, we have something much more powerful than hatred and terrorism.

Today we heard a good news message in our churches about love and forgiveness from Luke 7. It tells a story about the compassion of Jesus as over against the religious bigotry of his day, and it is another example of Jesus reaching beyond those considered acceptable in his society. That's the gospel message we must continue to proclaim. Today's shooting is unfortunately further proof our world is hurting and crying for such a message of love and reconciliation.

As members of Bishops United Against Gun Violence we will continue to work for common sense gun laws that have been shown to reduce gun violence. And we must work to remove military assault weapons and high capacity ammunition clips. Those weapons are designed to do only one thing: kill a lot of people quickly. There's no reason such weapons need to be widely available in a civilized society.

Tonight we pray for the victims who now rest in the arms of their Creator. We pray for those fighting to stay alive, for their families and the medical teams working to save them. We pray for Orlando, the latest community forced to experience this avoidable horror.

And we pray we will have the courage to do what the Gospel commands, to engage the world with the message of love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Faithfully yours,

The Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland
The Right Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen, Assistant Bishop