

## Minister's Reflection on Las Vegas Shooting

One of the saddest aspects of life in America in our current era is the number of times that we have had to bear witness to the horror of mass shootings. In fact, since the shootings in Orlando on June 12, 2016, some 585 people have been killed and more than 2,000 injured in mass shootings in the U.S. (events in which four or more people are killed or injured by gunfire).

Our hearts ache for the victims, their friends, and their families. When we think of the hundreds of lives that each of these victims' lives touched, it is clear that millions have been directly affected by these horrific incidents.

Our hearts ache for those who are on the front lines of dealing with these tragedies—grief and crisis counselors, emergency and medical personnel, law enforcement officers, and others. So many have been traumatized by the sheer scale of suffering and death.

Our hearts ache for those whose past traumas are triggered every time a new shooting occurs. Many thousands of people are forced to relive some of the most tragic and appalling moments of their lives time and time again.

In the midst of all this heartache, we are also disgusted and discouraged by our elected officials' seeming unwillingness or inability to enact legislation that might mitigate this senseless violence.

While I am not naïve enough to believe that such legislation would prevent all or even most of these shootings, I also know that inaction on this issue is shameful and inexcusable. Any legislator who does not act to pass more stringent gun control has no clear moral compass.

In an era when many of our elected representatives have refused to consider even the most meager of firearm control ordinances and regulations, it is incumbent on the people—you and me—to make our voices heard.

Inaction and silence are not options for any person of conscience. Doing nothing is the equivalent of passing a death sentence on the thousands of people who will be killed by gun violence in the coming months and years.

Grieve, yes. But act, too. Let our elected representatives know the NRA is not the only group that matters in this country. Let them know that we are watching. Let them know that the failure to act is not just cowardly, it is malevolent, sinister, and utterly unacceptable.

Love demands action. Compassion demands action. Justice demands action now.

Rev. Jim Magaw  
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