

Faith Leaders Mourn the Loss of Precious Children and Teachers in Texas

Many leaders in the faith community today are mourning the loss of 19 children and two teachers who were massacred in a mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, Tuesday.

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, issued the following statement Wednesday, mourning the tragedy of the primarily Hispanic city 80 miles west of San Antonio:

“Broken people break people. A young man, mentally and spiritually broken, manifested an evil, extinguishing the light of our most innocent and vulnerable,” Rodriguez said. “It was not an inanimate object that took the lives of our fellow Americans. It was a young man filled with darkness. Any politicization of this tragedy can only be described as morally reprehensible. New laws will not push back darkness. Political rhetoric will not push back darkness. Divisive declarations will not push back darkness. Only light overcomes darkness.

“When we call upon the name of the Lord, we turn on the light. When we repent, we turn on the light. When we seek unity and recognize the image of God in each other, we turn on the light. It’s time to be light. For the sake of our children and our children’s children and those whose lives were cut short in Texas, let’s honor them by being the light. Because every single time light stands next to darkness, light always wins.”

Following the senseless shooting tragedy in Buffalo, New York, a couple of weeks ago, J. Drew Sheard, presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ, said of the Uvalde incident:

"Last week, we witnessed yet another horrific racial mass shooting that targeted our own. Now, we find ourselves perpetually thrown back into what seems like a never-ending sea of despair with yet another school shooting. A total of 19-plus elementary students and teachers have been snatched from their families, their community, and this world. I find myself asking two simple questions, 'When is enough going to be enough and when are we going to do something?' Hasn't America buried enough of our children? Our people? How many more mothers will have to walk behind small caskets? There have been approximately 288 school shootings in the United States since 2009.

"The United States Senate/Congress should immediately send H.R. 8 to our president's desk for signature, as an overwhelming number of Americans support this bipartisan bill for background checks. We stand at the intersection of continuing calamity and the call to be courageous. We pray for the lives lost today and the families who mourn them. Enough is truly enough. It is time to act now."

On Twitter, evangelist Franklin Graham also responded to the ever-increasing violence across the country:

"We are seeing more & more violence displayed across our nation. One day this country is going to have to come to grips with an entertainment industry that feeds a constant stream of violence to our youth. Contrary to what some want America to believe, it isn't the guns."

Jentezen Franklin, senior pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia, tweeted: "Praying for God to comfort the families today who have been affected by this senseless tragedy. 'Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies & God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.' 2 Cor. 1:3-4."

Jack Hibbs, senior and founding pastor of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills in Chino Hills, California, tweeted this prayer: “Lord in heaven, we grieve the loss of these dear little ones and teachers. We pray for your supernatural peace, healing and guidance for all impacted by this act of pure evil. #PrayForTexas”

Evangelist Mario Murillo said on Facebook: “As you pray and intercede ask the Father ‘How would You have me partner with You, Father to bring Heaven’s redemption and healing to this situation?’ There are no words to express the horror. And yet we keep our eyes on Jesus ... we weep, we mourn, we love the broken hearted, we love them with the heart of Christ ... and we invite His Holy Spirit to minister and to heal. Only *Jesus* can be all that is needed in this culture—and in this hour. Holy Spirit COME to this community and to this nation!”

Author Joel C. Rosenberg tweeted, “My heart is breaking again for American families in Texas, as well as in Buffalo, whose lives have been shattered yet again by sheer evil. Thank you @ShannonBream for having Pastor @GregLaurie on your program to bring a biblical perspective to such spiritual darkness & confusion.”

Laurie, senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, tweeted: “This is every parent’s worst nightmare and our hearts are all breaking, but none are feeling the pain that those families who lost their precious loved feel. This is a moment where we all should ‘Weep with those that weep’ (Rom. 12:15).” {eo}

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