



July 9, 2024

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Like many of you, I have witnessed the devastation and tragedy brought on by the senseless gun violence that plagues our nation, cities, and neighborhoods. Far too often than I would like to count, I have prayed for and wept with victims, families, and communities when another human life was lost to an act of violence.

The disturbing frequency of these events calls for serious reflection on why people carry out these senseless acts of violence. It is also appropriate to consider the use of guns in society. Gun violence is a human life issue — a quality and dignity of life issue. Those who are threatened by gun violence are not able to fully and freely live the way that God intends for them.

My fellow Missouri bishops and I have come together on several occasions to address this violence and to call for changes in our laws and our society. Last year, I convened an archdiocesan summit, “Addressing Gun Violence: It’s A Matter Of Life” and established the Archdiocese Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention to develop advocacy, education, parish involvement, and pastoral care guidelines.

Hundreds of people in our very own Archdiocese are killed and many more are injured by gun violence every year. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to combat the unholy trinity of poverty, racism, and violence and to engage in actions that honor the worth and dignity of every human being. So let us all engage in the work of gun violence prevention.

This epidemic calls for bold and faithful action. The Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention has provided us with resources for Catholics across the political spectrum to help engage neighbors and parishes to work together to prevent all forms of gun violence: crimes, suicides, domestic violence, and unintentional shootings. Please review these materials and share them. I pray that you join me in this effort. Together, we can effect change in our Archdiocese and serve as a prophetic sign of hope in our nation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell T. Rozanski".

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski
Archbishop of St. Louis