



# GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

## JUNE IS GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Gun violence devastates individuals, families, and communities in the United States and the St. Louis Archdiocese. As Archbishop Rozanski has noted, “Gun violence is a human life – a quality of life – issue. Those who are threatened by gun violence are not living the fullest potential of their lives.”

The Archdiocese of St. Louis is providing FREE gun safety locks. Contact your parish office.

More than 43,000 Americans are killed with guns, and approximately 76,000 more are shot and wounded. In Missouri, nearly 1,400 people die by guns every year. Missouri has the 4th highest rate of gun violence in the country.

IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE



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## JUNE 5-7 IS WEAR ORANGE WEEKEND

Wear Orange is a movement to honor victims and survivors of gun violence and to raise awareness of the impact of gun violence, which began in 2013 by friends of Hadiya Pendleton. Hadiya marched in President Obama's second inaugural parade. One week later, she was shot and killed on a playground in Chicago. Soon after this tragedy, Hadiya's friends commemorated her life by wearing orange, the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others.

Let us stand together in solidarity this weekend with many Americans who wear orange in tribute to more than **43,000** Americans killed with guns and **76,000** more shot and wounded each year. May our act of solidarity reflect Jesus' words of "Peace be with you."

FREE GUN LOCKS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS' TASK FORCE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION. ASK THE PARISH OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE ONE.

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## GUN VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN

Guns are the leading cause of death for American children. In a typical year, **2500** children die by gun homicide, **1300** by firearm suicide, and **150** by unintentional shootings. In addition, **15,000** children are shot and wounded.

Today's Gospel tells us, "At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned." One way we can protect children who might be troubled is to lock our firearms and store ammunition separately to reduce unintentional shootings involving children and child suicides by firearms.

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THE ARCHDIOCESAN GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE  
HAS MADE FREE GUN LOCKS AVAILABLE AT ALL PARISHES.  
CHECK WITH THE PARISH OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A LOCK.

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## THE LESSER-KNOWN SIDE OF GUN VIOLENCE

Most people are surprised to learn that nearly 60% of all adult gun deaths are suicides by gun. The dynamics of suicide are complex, but research indicates that a combination of several risk factors is often present in the lead-up to suicide. One of those risk factors is access to lethal means of harm. Nearly 90% of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal, compared to 5% of all other suicide attempts.

In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus encourages the disciples not to be afraid of speaking in the light. We, too, are called to bring light to our brothers and sisters in an attempt to reduce suicide by reaching out, letting them know that they are not alone, sitting with them in their desperation, and loving them. Using gun locks or securing firearms in a gun safe is an act of love that can reduce the risk of suicide by gun in an emotional, impulsive response to a stressful situation.

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**CHECK WITH THE PARISH OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FREE GUN LOCK. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED THAT SOMEONE YOU KNOW – OR YOU YOURSELF – MAY BE CONSIDERING SUICIDE, THE 988 SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE OFFERS 24/7 SUPPORT FROM TRAINED COUNSELORS.**

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## GUN VIOLENCE AND WOMEN

When it comes to gun violence, women in the United States are **28** times more likely to die by firearm homicide than women in peer high-income nations. **Two in five** female firearm homicide victims were killed by a current or former intimate partner. In other words, every **16** hours, a woman is shot dead by her current or former partner, an average of **70** women every month. Access to a gun makes it **5** times more likely that an abuser will kill his female victim.

As St. Paul notes in today's second reading, we are called to live for God in Christ Jesus. In the St. Louis Archdiocese, St. Martha's, one of the ministries of Catholic Charities, lives this call by providing shelter, resources, and compassionate care for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

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