

Uvalde school shooting: faith leaders call for reform of gun laws

by [Religion News Service staff](#)

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With the news of 19 children and two others killed in a school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, religious leaders from across the spectrum express their sorrow, with many saying now is the time for a new approach to gun control.

Pope Francis

“I pray for the children, the adults killed and their families. It is time to say ‘enough’ to the indiscriminate trafficking of guns.”

Catholic bishops of Texas

“We pray for those who lost loved ones, for the first responders, and for those in leadership. Archbishop (Gustavo) García-Siller (of San Antonio) offered Mass within hours of the tragedy, a true shepherd for his people. ‘Let us help one another to spark light and warmth,’ Archbishop García-Siller said.

“Human beings are not created for death. The killing of defenseless children and their teachers is evil and an offense against God and human beings.

“Each one of us has a responsibility to address the root causes of this kind of evil. Our only path forward is through love, mercy, and deeper respect for God’s gift of human life.

“May the Prince of Peace guide us as we work together to end gun violence.”

Greg Epstein, humanist chaplain, Harvard University

“I officiate funerals as part of my job and just cannot imagine what I’d do or say if asked to preside over a ceremony for one of...it hurts too much. These children.

People's babies. Our society is in deep crisis. We desperately need to relearn how to sacrifice for one another."

Church World Service

"We are heartbroken for the victims of yesterday's horrific mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. Our prayers go out to all those affected by this tragedy. We demand clear solutions and swift action to protect our communities—and our children—from gun violence."

Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago

"The Second Amendment did not come down from Sinai. The right to bear arms will never be more important than human life. Our children have rights too. And our elected officials have a moral duty to protect them."

B'nai B'rith President Seth J. Riklin and CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin

"We would like to think we can never become numb to this madness. Yet it seems our country is paralyzed by an irrational fear of taking action to stop this plague. But what about the fear now growing in more and more of our citizens: fear of going to school, of attending services at a house of worship, fear of stepping into a grocery store or a movie theater.

"Our hearts ache for the victims and the families of this massacre. And for all of those who have been touched by gun violence."

Archbishop Elpidophoros, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

"The massacre of so many innocent today in Uvalde, TX, must challenge our Nation to finally address gun violence. This bloody sacrifice of children enabled by the death-culture of guns cannot be justified by appeals to 'rights.' What of the right to their lives?"

Raymond Chang, president, Asian American Christian Collaborative

“We need God to intervene and His people to stand against gun violence by pressing for stricter gun control measures. This is out of hand.”

Bishop Michael W. Fisher of the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo

“Today’s horrific tragedy at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas—robbing young lives and a devoted educator of their future and inflicting immeasurable grief on their loved ones—echoes the despicable act that has devastated Buffalo. As a nation, we have hard and urgent questions to answer. How much more can we take of such random violence and callous disregard for human life? When and how will we end the scourge of gun violence in our communities—our grocery stores and schools? Our hearts ache for the loss that the community of Uvalde has suffered today, even as we continue to pray and strive for the comfort and healing of our own.”

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas

“Weep with those who weep. The deadly shooting in Uvalde puts us on our knees. May the God of all comfort be near to the broken-hearted.”

Bishop Robert Schnase of the United Methodist Church’s Rio Texas and New Mexico Annual Conferences

“Our hearts are broken for the people of Uvalde, Texas. We are devastated over the multiple lives lost during the tragic shooting at Robb Elementary School. We mourn those who died today and fervently pray for the families of the victims and surround the larger community of Uvalde in prayer. . . . More details will come forth, and we know more will need to be done, but for now the grief is indescribable and deeply painful. Lord have mercy; hear our prayers.”

US Conference of Catholic Bishops

“There have been too many school shootings, too much killing of the innocent. Our Catholic faith calls us to pray for those who have died and to bind the wounds of others, and we join our prayers along with the community in Uvalde and Archbishop

Gustavo García-Siller. As we do so, each of us also needs to search our souls for ways that we can do more to understand this epidemic of evil and violence and implore our elected officials to help us take action.”

Rabbi Jonah Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

“There are no words left to describe the pain and horror of yet another school shooting. 15 lives cut short. The rage and heartbreak of living in a society that repeatedly permits the destruction of life. God forgive this country for loving guns more than children.”

Bishop David Reed, Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

“Ignore the cynics, and pray with all your heart. Let your cries reach to the heavens. Let your anger and despair be your prayer. And listen to God answering in return. Look for God’s tears revealed and listen for his perfect and righteous anger. Give yourself over to opportunities to join in the Spirit’s work of binding up and healing. Love with all you’ve got, and never, ever surrender to the darkness.”

Helen Prejean, CSJ

“As a nun, I’m expected to offer thoughts and prayers, and indeed I do. But that’s not enough. We must rise up and take action together to stop this violence. This can’t keep happening.”

Bruce Reyes-Chow, First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto

“In the face of gun violence and mass shootings, offering “thoughts and prayers” is not bad, but at this point in this national health crisis, absent of supporting legislative action and working for cultural change, those “thoughts and prayers” are meaningless.”

United Methodist Women

“O Lord in your mercy, hear our cries for the families crushed with sorrow by the loss of their children and loved ones in yesterday’s school shooting in Texas. Lord have mercy on our nation that continues to deem this recurring murder of our school children an acceptable price of ‘freedom.’ Lord heal our collective mind and help our politicians muster the integrity and courage to act so that we can stop this carnage and pain.”

Rabbinical Assembly, the international association for Conservative/Masorti rabbis

“It is high time that United States politicians, currently obsessed with reelection campaigns, put aside partisanship in order literally to save lives. They must firmly and immediately enact meaningful gun reform legislation. The same with mental health reform.”

“As we have said all too often—and too recently—we offer our deepest condolences and support to all those impacted by this despicable attack and reiterate our vehement condemnation of gun violence.”

Randolph Marshall Hollerith, dean of Washington National Cathedral, and the Leonard L. Hamlin Sr., canon missionary at the cathedral

“There is too much despair, too many guns, too few mental health resources. For too many, when they have nowhere else to turn, they turn to violence.”

“We need to repent of our apathy and our paralysis. We have talked and talked and talked. But now is the time to act.”

“We have become numb to the violence all around us. We are failing our children and each other. May God have mercy on the families of Uvalde—and may God have mercy on us all.”—Religion News Service