



March 5, 2018

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

On Friday, March 3, 2018, we, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, reaffirmed our commitment to the gospel stance of peace and non-violence by approving a Corporate Statement calling for:

- ***a ban on civilian ownership of high-capacity, military-grade assault weapons and bump stocks***
- ***comprehensive background checks on all persons purchasing guns***
- ***legislation to make gun trafficking a federal crime.***

The rise in deaths and injuries, especially to children, teenagers and innocent people is not acceptable. We call for change in our United States gun laws. We support the young people who have so eloquently stepped forward in speaking out and advocating for this change. We also support them in organizing the March 24th demonstration, March for Our Lives.

Congress and all our elected leaders must act. We need to let our legislators know that their inaction and lack of support is unacceptable. Please join us in our stance by sending this message to everyone you can and by contacting your Congressional leaders and the President of the United States.

We also ask you to join with us in prayer for an end to gun violence and that our leaders will listen and respond to the cries of our children and young people.

Peace and all good,

Margaret Magee, OSF
Associate Minister

Odette Hadadd, OSF
Councilor

Margaret Mary Kimmins, OSF
Congregational Minister

Goianira Silva, OSF
Councilor

Pat Klemm, OSF
Councilor

Congregational Leadership

Enc.: Franciscan Sisters of Allegany Corporate Statement, March 3, 2018



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY

www.alleganyfranciscans.org

**Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
Corporate Statement
March 3, 2018**

In light of the terrible tragedy which occurred this month at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, in light of the school shootings that have occurred in Columbine High School in Columbine, CO and Newtown, CT and the mass shootings at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, FL, the concert in Las Vegas, NV, and the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, TX, we recommit ourselves to a gospel stance of non-violence and state:

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany support and call for:

- ***a ban on civilian ownership of high-capacity, military-grade assault weapons and bump stocks***
- ***comprehensive background checks on all persons purchasing guns***
- ***legislation to make gun trafficking a federal crime.***
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Because the purpose of high-capacity assault weapons is to kill large numbers of people:

All are deeply affected by the killings of innocent people. We believe in a consistent ethic of life and that we are sisters and brothers to one another.

“Life is the first gift given to us by God. Franciscans have a profound respect for life. As followers of Francis and Clare we have an understanding of the fragility of life and a desire to support the vulnerable in society. The Franciscan family seeks to embrace active non-violence and promotes a theology and ethics centered in love. This perspective calls us always to respect ourselves and others.” - Thomas Nairn, OFM

Because we are called as Franciscans to be instruments of peace and non-violence:

We choose to follow the example of Jesus who came to bring peace and reconciliation. We join with others who actively promote peace, adding our voice to the chorus of individuals, groups and organizations asking for a change in our gun laws and access to appropriate mental health care, when needed.

In 2012, after the Newtown, CT killing of 20 children and 6 adults, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) issued a statement calling on its members to speak out for the sacredness of life and encourage congressional leaders to “support a federal ban on the sale, transfer, importation, and possession of assault weapons and the munitions that go with them.” On February 23, 2018 the LCWR issued another statement: A Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence.

In 2016, the Franciscan friars in the United States called for gun control after the Orlando mass shooting that took the lives of 49 people and injured many others, asking for a ban on assault-style weapons in our country. They also called that “sensible measures” be taken on the issue of background checks when buying a weapon.

Because all are “created with an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness:

The common good requires that steps be taken to ensure the well-being of all. It is our responsibility to take a stand when the lives of others are at risk.

After the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, NV where 58 people died and 851 were injured, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a statement recommending the engagement of our leaders in a “real debate about needed measures to save lives and make our communities safer.” The USCCB continued to call for a total ban on assault weapons, which they supported when the ban passed in 1994. Congress failed to renew this ban in 2004.

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The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany seek to live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by witnessing to God’s love in the Franciscan tradition and by living as sisters to all creation and by joyfully serving others, especially those who are poor or marginalized. Sisters serve in Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, and the United States in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.

Resources:

Mourning is Not Enough: LCWR Calls for Action to Prevent Gun Violence – LCWR, February 23, 2018
<https://lcwr.org/media/news/mourning-not-enough-lcwr-calls-action-prevent-gun-violence>

Highlights: Students Call for Action Across Nation; Florida Lawmakers Fail to Take Up Assault Rifle Bill – New York Times, February 20, 2018
<https://nyti.ms/2C9iw4x>

America’s gun culture in 10 charts – BBC News, February 15, 2018
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>

Domestic Justice Chairman Urges True Debate on Gun Violence – USCCB, November 7, 2017
<http://www.usccb.org/news/2017/17-210.cfm>

US Franciscans Call for Gun Reform - Jim McIntosh, June 17, 2016
<https://usfranciscans.org/2016/06/17/us-franciscans-call-gun-reform/>

LCWR calls for assault weapons ban – National Catholic Reporter, December 20, 2012

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/lcwr-calls-assault-weapons-ban>

Gun Control is a Pro-Life Issue – James Martin SJ, December 17, 2012

<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2012/12/17/gun-control-pro-life-issue>