



Session 2: Gun Violence & Embracing the Pain

Video Presentation by the Rt. Rev. Kimberly (Kym) Lucas
(See webpage for biography)

Opening Prayer

God of hope, we hold before you all who have lost their lives and all whose lives have been forever changed as a result of gun violence. We remember those who have ended their own lives with a gun, those who have died as a result of accidental shootings, and those whose lives have been cut short by a gun in the hands of a person with intent to kill. Remembering that we are all made in your image, we acknowledge the role the sin of racism and other forms of systemic hatred play in our American gun violence epidemic. We ask that you receive all who have died into the arms of your mercy, bless those who mourn with the hope of eternal life, and strengthen our hearts to work to bring an end to gun violence. All this we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

~ From [A Service of Lament, Hope, and Resolve with Bishop's United](#)

Bible Verse Referenced in Bishop Kym's Video

Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

There may be more questions than you have time for, so select those you feel most meaningful for your group at this time.

1. How have you experienced gun violence personally and/or from afar?
2. Bishop Kym says that our culture encourages us to deny our pain and when it becomes too much to numb it. Why is this a dangerous practice?
3. What does embracing pain mean to you?
4. Bishop Kym says when we acknowledge our pain and give it to the Living God, God can take that pain and redeem it. What does it mean that God can redeem our pain? (You may want to give participants 3-5 minutes to journal or draw before discussing.)

5. What would transformed pain look like around gun violence?
6. Optional "homework": Psalms of lament give voice to pain and loss while also naming trust in God's grace and presence. The practice of writing psalms of lament allows you to explore and express the challenging emotions stemming from conflict, grief, crisis, or trauma. Practicing lament can free us to move to a place of experiencing God's grace and renewed hope for the future. In the week ahead write your own psalm of lament to cry out your experience and emotions around gun violence. Follow the steps in [Writing Our Own Psalm of Lament](#) from [Jenna Perrine's The Practice](#). Allow 25-30 minutes.

Sending Prayer

God, our hearts are broken with pain at the senseless deaths caused by gun violence. Families mourn, children live in fear, and some in our nation respond by arming themselves with more guns with greater capacity to end life. Our disconnection and alienation has caused some to turn to guns for protection and safety. We ask that you touch our hearts with your love, heal our brokenness, and turn us away from violence toward peace. Help us to transform our own hearts and to seek peaceful ways of resolving our differences. Let our hands reach out and connect with those who feel alone, those who live in fear, and those suffering from mental illness. Let our voices be raised asking our legislators to enact gun laws to protect all in our society, especially those most vulnerable. Let our pens write messages demanding change while also scripting words of hope and transformation. We ask this in the name of the God who desires that we live together in peace. *Amen*

~ Sisters of Mercy of the Americas