

## SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

*“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled,  
because they were no more.”*

*~ Matthew 2:18, NRSV*

Matthew’s Gospel quotes the prophecy of Jeremiah in reporting that King Herod killed all the male children in the region of Bethlehem who were two years old or under in his misguided, rage-induced and evil attempt to eliminate Jesus.

Last Friday, our nation endured yet another slaughter of the innocents when 20 first grade children and six teachers and school administrators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut were shot to death by a deeply disturbed young man. And, a voice was heard – all through the land – of wailing and loud lamentation.

Like you, and citizens all across our country, I was shocked and shaken by the reports of this horrific act. My heart aches for all the victims and their families, including the gunman’s family. Like Rachel, our entire country has been weeping for the children, because they are no more. We seek, but find little consolation. We question, but receive few answers. We want to respond, but our actions seem so inadequate.

We may never fully know the reasons young Adam Lanza armed himself and targeted innocent elementary school children. But, we do know the repeated, senseless violence that guns down innocent children every day in our country must stop. It is time for no more wailing and loud lamentation. It is time to lay aside the politics of mental health care and gun control and come together to protect our children and youth. It is time to cease the slaughter of the innocents.

I encourage you to continue praying for the victims of Friday’s shooting. Every first responder, surviving teacher and student, family member, and citizen of the Newton community is a victim. As you pray for those whose lives have been forever altered, pray also for an end to violence in our schools, streets, across our nation and around the world.

May the truth and power of Christ’s coming give us hope in this tragic hour.

*“The prophetic Word was confirmed to us.  
You’ll do well to keep focusing on it.  
It’s the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak  
and the rising Morning Star in your hearts.”*

*~ II Peter 1:19, The Message*

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