

July 2, 2017

ISSUE: International Violence

Wars, disputes, gang violence and social violence obviously cause death and destruction. They are also one of the main causes of poverty and keeping people in poverty.

According to the **United Nations and World Bank**, violent crime costs countries billions of dollars and reductions in their Gross National Product by 5 to 10 %.

Annually deaths due to homicides worldwide outnumber those due to armed conflict by a factor of roughly 3 to 1. Countries with hybrid political orders experience higher rates of social violence than those with strong autocratic or strong democratic regimes. Weakly institutionalized democracies are particularly violent. *Journal of Peace Research*, May 2012, Vol. 49, Issue 5.

TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

Catholic bishops apply Catholic teaching to many important issues affecting human life and dignity. One issue is "Wars, terror, and violence which raise serious moral questions on the use of force and its human and moral costs in a dangerous world, particularly the absence of justice, security, and peace in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East."

Romans 12:19: Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Support Catholic Relief Services

MORE INFORMATION:

Journal of Peace Research, May 2012, Vol. 49, Issue 5.

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/violence/confronting-a-culture-of-violence-a-catholic-framework-for-action.cfm>

July 9, 2017

ISSUE: International Violence

Social and political violence across the world share some common underlying causes. This violence not only hurts people but it reduces countries' abilities to function efficiently. As an example, the inability to have free press is exacerbated by threats toward and killing of journalists. For millions of people around the world, violence, or the fear of violence, is a daily reality. Much of this violence concentrates in urban centers in the developing world. These cities are home to half of the world's population and are expected to absorb almost all new population growth over the next 15 - 25 years. In many cases, the scale of urban violence can eclipse that of open warfare. Some of the world's highest homicide rates occur in countries that have not undergone wars but have violence epidemics in their urban areas. Concern over these experiences has made urban violence a central preoccupation of policymakers, planners, and development practitioners. Some cities, especially in Latin America and Africa, are struggling with high levels of violence that undermine the very foundations of the economic and social development of the entire population. In some cases, areas of the city have deteriorated into "no-go zones" that undermine the overall governance of the area and trap the poorest population in a dangerous cycle of poverty and violence.

TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

Pope Paul VI, "If you want peace, work for justice." We oppose lawlessness of every kind. Society cannot tolerate an ethic which uses violence to make a point, settle grievances or get what we want. But the path to a more peaceful future is found in a rediscovery of personal responsibility, respect for human life and human dignity, and a recommitment to social justice. The best antidote to violence is hope. People with a stake in society do not destroy communities. Both individuals *and* institutions should be held accountable for how they attack or enhance the common good. It is not only the "down and out" who must be held accountable, but also the "rich and famous." Our society needs both more personal responsibility and broader social responsibility to overcome the plague of violence in our land and the lack of peace in our hearts.

Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Support Catholic Relief Services.

MORE INFORMATION: journalistsresource.org/studies/international/development/crime-violence-developing-world-research-roundup

July 16, 2017

ISSUE: Violence in United States.

The crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants committed in the United States from 1980 to 2014, including violent crime, property crime, rape, and robbery has dramatically gone down. However, currently the United States is consistently higher in every category of violent crimes than other countries such as Austria, United Kingdom, Germany, and Scotland. The United Kingdom was only higher in the category of robbery.

The FBI notes that various factors might influence a particular area's crime rate, including its population density and economic conditions. Larger cities have a dramatically higher rate of violence as indicated by the top most violent cities in the United States. Hostility, hatred, despair and indifference are at the heart of a growing culture of violence.

TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

We believe the Catholic community brings strong convictions and vital experience which can enrich the national dialogue on how best to overcome the violence that is tearing our nation apart. We know these reflections are not enough. Words cannot stop weapons; statements will not contain hatred. Yet commitment and conversion can change us and together we can change our culture and communities. Person by person, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood, we must take our communities back from the evil and fear that come with so much violence. We believe our faith in Jesus Christ gives us the values, vision and hope that can bring an important measure of peace to our hearts, our homes, and our streets. USCCB

Isaiah 16:18: Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.

ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Our community is called to reorganize our priorities and recommit our resources to confront the violence in our midst. This challenge will have many dimensions including:

- the call to *pray* for peace in our hearts and our world;
- the ability to *listen* -- to hear the pain, anger and frustration that comes with and from violence;
- the duty to *examine* our own attitudes and actions for how they contribute to or diminish violence in our society;
- the call to help people *confront* the violence in our hearts and lives;
- the capacity to *build on existing efforts* and the strengths of our community: the work of parishes, schools, Catholic Charities and Campaign for Human Development, etc.;
- efforts to *hold major institutions accountable*, including government, the media and the criminal justice system;

- an *advocacy* strategy which moves beyond the often empty rhetoric of national debate, including:
 - confronting the violence of *abortion*;
 - curbing the easy availability of *deadly weapons*;
 - supporting community approaches to *crime prevention and law enforcement*, including community policing, neighborhood partnerships with police and greater citizen involvement;
 - pursuing swift and effective *justice* without vengeance;
 - supporting efforts to attack *root causes* of crime and violence -- including poverty, substance abuse, lack of opportunity, racism, and family disintegration;
 - promoting more *personal responsibility* and broader social responsibility in our policies and programs;
 - *building bridges* and promoting solidarity across racial and economic lines;
 - pursuing *economic justice*, especially employment;
 - working for legislation that *empowers parents* to choose and afford schools that reflect their values;
 - overcoming the tragedy of *family violence* and confronting all forms of violence against women;
 - promoting education, research, and training in *nonviolence*;
 - responding to *victims* of violence, hearing their anguish and defending their dignity;
 - *strengthening families* by putting the needs of children and families first in our national priorities.

USCCB

MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/violence/confronting-a-culture-of-violence-a-catholic-framework-for-action.cfm>

July 23, 2017

ISSUE: Domestic Violence in Indiana

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIANA In a single day in 2014, Indiana domestic violence programs served 1,807 victims/survivors. On that same day, there were 182 requests for services that went unmet due to a lack of resources. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, 67 Indiana citizens died in domestic violence homicides. Over half of domestic violence homicides in Indiana are committed with a gun. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines receive approximately 21,000 calls, an average of close to 15 calls every minute. Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. The presence of a gun in the home during a domestic violence incident increases the risk of homicide by at least 500%. 72% of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner; 94% of the victims of these crimes are female.

TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

We must realize that peace is most fundamentally a gift from God. It is futile to suggest that we can end all violence and bring about full peace merely by our own efforts. This is why we urge the Catholic community to join all our anti-violence efforts with constant and heartfelt prayer to Almighty God through Jesus, the Prince of Peace. USCCB

Genesis 9:5-6: And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Support agencies that try to prevent domestic violence and assist individuals experiencing domestic violence. Coburn Place Safe Haven Indianapolis, Domestic Violence Network Indianapolis, Families First Indianapolis, Julian Center Indianapolis, Salvation Army Women, and Children's Center Indianapolis

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.domesticshelters.org/in/indiana-domestic-violence-help-statistics>

<https://www.ncadv.org>

July 30, 2017

ISSUE: Violence in Indianapolis

Indianapolis in 2014 made its first appearance on the list of the top 10 most dangerous cities with population over 200,000 in the United States, with 136 murders, 573 rapes, 3,808 robberies, and 6,251 aggravated assaults. All statistics were based on 2014 data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report.

Then in 2015 Indianapolis had a record-setting 144 murders, and in 2016 Indianapolis unfortunately exceeded that record.

Behind these numbers are individual human tragedies, lives lost, families destroyed, children without real hope.

TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

Our assets in this challenge to confront the culture of violence with a commitment to life, a vision of hope and a call to action include:

- the example and teaching of Jesus Christ;
- the *biblical values* of respect for life, peace, justice, and community;
- *our teaching* on human life and human dignity, on right and wrong, on family and work, on justice and peace, on rights and responsibilities;
- *our tradition* of prayer, sacraments, and contemplation which can lead to a disarmament of the heart;
- *a commitment to marriage and family life*, to support responsible parenthood and to help parents in providing their children the values to live full lives;
- *a presence* in most neighborhoods -- our parishes and schools, hospitals and social services are sources of life and hope in places of violence and fear;
- an *ethical framework* which calls us to practice and promote virtue, responsibility, forgiveness, generosity, concern for others, social justice and economic fairness;
- *a capacity for advocacy* that cuts across the false choices in national debate -- jails or jobs, personal or social responsibility, better values or better policies;
- *a consistent ethic of life* which remains the surest foundation for our life together. **USCCB**

Proverbs 3:31 Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways,

ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Participate in organized prayer vigils and peace walks in dramatically affected areas of the city;
Pray the rosary

MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/violence/confronting-a-culture-of-violence-a-catholic-framework-for-action.cfm>