

*God is the answer to evil. Jesus Christ came to change men's hearts if they would accept Him as Lord. It is every clergyman's job to proclaim God and His law. It is every Christian clergyman's job to draw every soul into a deep relationship with Jesus as the Lord of his life and the savior of the world.*

*Some men, including clergy, are trying to make a utopia on earth by imposing their ideas and will on people. Their combined efforts create totalitarianism and a dwindling of their congregations.*

*For Catholics Gaudium et Spes, chapters 9 and 10 quoted below state that,*

*"Many think that they can find peace in the different philosophies that are proposed. Some look for complete and genuine liberation for man from man's efforts alone. They are convinced that the coming kingdom of man on earth will satisfy all the desires of his heart."*

*"...The Church believes that Christ died and rose for all, and can give man light and strength through his Spirit to fulfill his highest calling; his is the only name under heaven in which men can be saved."*

*So too the Church believes that the centre and goal of all human history is found in her Lord and Master.*

*The Church also affirms that underlying all changes there are many things that do not change; they have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever.*

*Sometimes from leadership conferences on local and national and international levels we Catholics hear all politics all the time as the solution to every situation as clergy leaders jump on the bandwagon of politicians, political parties, Non Governmental Organizations, and so forth. Some clergy seem to be led by the world's solutions to real and imagined problems. , and get lost in those solutions. JESUS IS THE ANSWER!*

*Christian clergy need to announce the person and gospel of Jesus Christ first and foremost, and move back from their favored political rhetoric. If politics and government intervention are what we clergy preach, clergy will drive people out of the pews, out of the church to the government to political parties, to ideas and philosophies for protection and salvation.*

*Clergy can nurture the consciences of our politicians with the faith in Christ, calling them personally to a deeper faith to answer the evils in the world; yet above all we need to preach Jesus' salvation from the pulpit and every other forum we have each and every day. Hearts drawn to Christ will be cleansed of evil, although not immediately and on our time line. He is the Lord of all, and we need to preach Jesus Christ yesterday, today, and forever, in Whom we live, move, and have our being, the only Name in heaven and on earth by which man can be saved.*

*— Fr. Richard Perozich*

# Why Do Clergy Advocate More Gun Control Instead of More Religion?

*2/25/2018 12:01:00 AM - Bruce Bialosky  
TOWNHALL.COM*

In the aftermath of another school campus mass murder by a deranged individual, there were a myriad of reactions as people tried to come to grips with why this continues to happen. Many of the reactions are expected -- especially those speaking of the need for greater controls over the acquisition of guns. One reaction I don't understand is why clergy are not calling for more religion instead of more gun control.

By now you know that (to their credit) the FBI stated they did not act on a tip received on the Parkland, Fla., murderer that could have potentially prevented the killing of 17 innocents -- mostly children. Plainly said, they screwed up.

But I applaud them for admitting their failure which rarely happens with government authorities.

There is a feeling that we must do something. Many who do not understand the first thing about guns or gun ownership think the only way to resolve this is to limit the ownership of long guns, which they like to characterize as “assault weapons.” This is despite the fact that long guns are a small percentage of guns used in murders. I have delineated all this in prior columns. (Please do not assume I am minimizing this loss of life in any way or form.)

I presume that is because it is easier to look at the tool of murder instead of the cause of the action by the individual. Some of you are sick of hearing how things were not like this when those of us of an older generation were growing up. A recent study by the University of Chicago showed that there was actually a greater percentage of households owning guns in the good ol’ days (their study started in 1972). It is thus not an issue of people owning guns; it is the people.

If you argue that guns were different then, soak in this fact; gun ownership in America went

up 50% from 1993 through 2013. Homicides went down 50% during that time. Half of that time there was a so-called “assault weapon” ban and half not. A study by the government determined there was no benefit from the banning of certain long guns.

One thing we *know* was much more prevalent in the past was religious worship. Those who pooh-pooh religion because they have found enlightenment somewhere else will almost never admit that the lack of religious observance is a large part of the problem. The people who you would expect to make claims that religion is the answer are those who have chosen to devote their lives to bringing people to their faith and clergy, whatever faith that may be.

I have not done a complete study, but we have gotten to know these mass murderers pretty well. Almost none, if any, attend religious services regularly. In the aftermath of the Las Vegas mass murder, there was a prayer vigil at the National Cathedral. Rabbi Jack Moline stated, “It is not mental health, age, wealth, educational opportunity or employment; it is guns.” There is no mention there of the fact the

Rabbi thought this might have been avoided if the killer was sitting in a synagogue every Friday night.

A Rabbi from my own synagogue wrote to our congregation in the aftermath of the mass murder in Parkland. He stated “And I think about how we have failed, miserably, as a society to regulate firearms sensibly. In time, most of us will move on with our lives. Most of us will sleep through the night instead of being kept up, agitated by the soul-crushing fact that our nation is a horrifying outlier in the developed world in terms of gun violence.” Not once in his piece to our congregation did he advocate for greater religious observance. Not once did he express the need for greater commitment to religion as a guiding light for moral conduct.

But why pick on the Jews? Just about every religious denomination is guilty. There was a myriad of religious leaders after Las Vegas and Parkland calling for gun control and never mentioned the lack of religion in the killer’s life.

Never beckoning them or anyone to their calling. Then the clergy wonder why there are dwindling numbers in their pews. Could it be

they should focus more on saving souls than espousing their public policy remedies? Could it be if they did more soul saving we would not need those public policy remedies?

If the clergy cannot use these times to advocate for greater observance, then when would they and who would? For example, the Episcopal church has lost 30% of its membership in the U.S. since 1980. Though not a huge denomination it has been a mainstay of America from our early years. In just 35 years its membership has crumbled. The reason may be that the leaders of the church spend far too much time advocating for social issues instead of saving souls. They think if they give too much religion to their congregants they will not be perceived as in touch with the modern churchgoer. But this could be said about almost any denomination in America.

There are many factors that have caused this decay in our moral structure. The disintegration of the family structure, community involvement, and schools that don't teach children right from wrong.

Religious leaders unwilling to advocate for their own cause instead focusing on social issues certainly tops the list. In honor of our greatest American religious leader, Billy Graham, we can bet he would be focused on saving people not public policy debate.



- The Catholic Thing - <https://www.thecatholicthing.org> -  
**On the Morality of Gun Control**

*Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky*  
Saturday, February 24, 2018

After delivering a homily indicting Catholic Senators (Democrat and Republican) who voted against legislation that would render illegal the killing of unborn babies with a developed nervous system, I received a response in a letter:

I look forward to hearing your next political homily, similar to the one on abortion a few weeks ago. Please state the Catholic position on mass murder, and, in that context, list the Catholic Republicans in Congress who block any reasonable assault-weapons ban. You might need to extend church hours since the list will, undoubtedly, be extensive. Thank you.

It needs to be said right off, of course, that a homily on the evil of abortion is about as political as a homily condemning the Holocaust. Regardless, if my correspondent would identify any politician who was in favor of placing weapons - including daggers and box cutters - into the hands of criminals and psychotics for purposes of mass murder, I would happily identify them by name. And I would invite the same boos and hisses I invite for any politician who doesn't lift a finger to protect the lives of unborn babies.

But on such matters, here is my answer in a nutshell:

- 1 Abortion is intrinsically evil and thus opposing it is not political.
- 2 Guns are not intrinsically evil. On the contrary, the Catechism teaches not just the right but the duty to use lethal force, if necessary, to defend oneself and those towards whom we have a responsibility. The same right to life that condemns mass murder requires the use of a gun to wound or kill if necessary to save life. Keeping guns away from mass murderers is obviously a moral duty, but guns in themselves are not intrinsically evil, unlike abortion.



3Every firearm can be used in an assault, so the label “assault rifle” is a political, rather than a moral, one.

Priests and prelates have no pertinent expertise in crafting gun control legislation or, for that matter, in preventing the arming of rogue states. Those killed by a butter knife, an AK-47, or a neutron bomb are equally and indifferently dead. In each case, the resort to arms will be judged just or unjust by the same moral criterion.

The Church must always uphold the integrity of justice, and justice not

only permits but requires defense of the innocent against unjust aggressors, i.e., those who inflict harm without due cause.

But is a “reasonable assault-weapons ban” a moral imperative in our day in view of the increasingly frequent school shootings (not to mention violence in the cities)?

Here there arise some truly political questions that need thoughtful consideration and rigorous analysis – by the laity. The ones I am about to list certainly are not exhaustive. (I do not presume to exercise priestly authority here, but I am, after all, a citizen, too.)

What is a “weapon”? Obviously, handguns and rifles are weapons. But so are box cutters on airplanes. Nearly 3,000 people were murdered with assaults that began with box cutters in the hands of terrorists.

\*

The difficulty of defining a “weapon,” however, doesn’t disappear when restricting the conversation to fire sticks. What is an “assault weapon”? A tank? A machine gun? A repeating Winchester rifle? An M-16?

The real question is: how might legislation keep these weapons out of the hands of criminals and the mentally disturbed?

The question of crafting criminal laws threatening to inflict just punishment, it seems to me, is far easier to evaluate with moral criterion than regulatory laws. Front-end regulatory laws such as a “reasonable assault weapons ban,” in contrast, are far more complicated because not only do the laws need to envision an ever-expanding universe of definitions, there are serious questions of effectiveness and the morality of infringing on the right to self-defense. And it should be recognized that in the aftermath of violence, hysteria and emotionalism easily disrupt clear thinking.

With respect to the question of effectiveness: What kind of gun control is “reasonable”? How do outlaws obtain guns? Is it true – or just a clever phrase – that if guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns? What is the experience in cities with strict “gun control” laws? What is the experience of political entities with “conceal and carry” regulations? What are the facts?

All of these questions are clearly beyond the competence of the clergy.

Questions of gun violence causality need a continuing dispassionate investigation by the laity and the experts among them. (My educated guess is that pornography plays a large part in causality. When the porn fails to satisfy, a twisted mind seeks other methods of excitement. And of course at root is the breakdown of the family including legalized abortion. Disrespect of unborn human life begets disrespect of all human life.)

Who among us would not like to see a world without violence, where guns were only used for hunting and sport? But the effects of Original Sin remain and we have a natural right to self-defense. (Alas, whenever I try to “Visualize World Peace,” I end up visualizing a police state.)

These are difficult times, with a broken culture contributing to a breakdown on a wide scale of our civilization, leading to countless acts of violence. So pronouncing on the morality of banning guns should not be made by a cleric in the exercise of his prophetic office. There are too many moving parts, questions of fact and causality, and good faith prudential judgments where believing Catholics can disagree in good conscience. But underlying moral principles remain and need proper application.

At times, a clean gun in good working order can be the solution – as in just war, just police action, and acts of personal self-defense. But

legislation regulating the procurement and possession of guns, to preserve the liberty and order and security essential to a free society, is the business of the laity.

**\*Image:** *The Fruits of Arbitrary Power, or the Bloody Massacre*, printed in 1770 by Paul Revere after a design by Henry Pelham [Library of Congress]

*Father Jerry J. Pokorsky is a priest of the Diocese of Arlington. He is pastor of St. Catherine of Siena parish in Great Falls, Virginia.*

Article printed from The Catholic Thing: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org>

URL to article: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2018/02/24/on-the-morality-of-gun-control/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://amzn.to/2CkDQQS>

[Click here to print.](#)

Copyright © 2017 The Catholic Thing. All rights reserved.

From the Office of Readings First Friday of Lent

From the pastoral constitution on the Church in the  
modern world of the Second Vatican Council

(Gaudium et spes, No. 9-10)

*Man's deeper questionings*

The world of today reveals itself as at once powerful and weak, capable of achieving the best or the worst. There lies open before it the way to freedom or slavery, progress or regression, brotherhood or hatred. In addition, man is becoming aware that it is for himself to give the right direction to forces that he himself has awakened, forces that can be his master or his servant. He therefore puts questions to himself.

The tensions disturbing the world of today are in fact related to a more fundamental tension rooted in the human heart. In man himself many elements are in conflict with each other. On one side, he has experience of his many limitations as a creature. On the other, he knows that there is no limit to his aspirations, and that he is called to a higher kind of life.

Many things compete for his attention, but he is always compelled to make a choice among them. and to renounce some. What is more, in his weakness and sinfulness he often does what he does not want to do, and fails to do what he would like to do. In consequence, he suffers from a conflict within himself, and this in turn gives rise to so many great tensions in society.

Very many people, infected as they are with a materialistic way of life, cannot see this dramatic state of affairs in all its clarity, or at least are prevented from giving thought to it because of the unhappiness that they themselves experience.

Many think that they can find peace in the different philosophies that are proposed. Some look for complete and

genuine liberation for man from man's efforts alone. They are convinced that the coming kingdom of man on earth will satisfy all the desires of his heart.

There are those who despair of finding any meaning in life: they commend the boldness of those who deny all significance to human existence in itself, and seek to impose a total meaning on it only from within themselves.

But in the face of the way the world is developing today, there is an ever increasing number of people who are asking the most fundamental questions or are seeing them with a keener awareness: What is man? What is the meaning of pain, of evil, of death, which still persist in spite of such great progress? What is the use of those successes, achieved at such a cost? What can man contribute to society, what can he expect from society? What will come after this life on earth?

The Church believes that Christ died and rose for all, and can give man light and strength through his Spirit to fulfill his highest calling; his is the only name under heaven in which men can be saved.

So too the Church believes that the centre and goal of all human history is found in her Lord and Master.

The Church also affirms that underlying all changes there are many things that do not change; they have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever.