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Open letter on the tragic shooting in Connecticut by Fr. Mariusz Koch, CFR, Community Servant

On behalf of our community, I would like to express our sincerest and heartfelt condolences to all the victims of the tragedy that took place last week. So many beautiful, irreplaceable lives were wasted by such an utterly disturbing act. We have offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and many prayers for all the deceased as well as all those who mourn. We promise to continue our prayers and spiritual support.

Our hearts are broken over this terrible loss of life and innocence. Our only consolation in the face of such blatant senselessness is the truth of Jesus Christ and His promise of eternal life. We know that none of us is made to live in this world forever. But to have so many innocent lives taken so soon and in such a terrible manner is baffling, almost entirely incomprehensible. Our confidence, in fact our only hope, is that the mercy of Jesus Christ welcomes these children as well as the adult victims into the arms of His tender, everlasting love – where neither violence nor hatred have any part but only enduring joy and peace. May these precious little ones prepare the way for us. May we honor their memory by living with hope, faith and love until we see them again.

We have already heard talk that some want to honor their memory by enacting stricter gun control laws. It certainly is a reasonable and necessary step to ensure that firearms do not get into the hands of criminals, the deranged, or the psychologically unbalanced. If however, we blame this tragedy on gun control, we will miss the forest because of the trees.

The real problem, the root of this tragedy is, as Blessed Pope John Paul II used to say, the “culture of death” – a fascination with death and destruction that stems from a denigration of the value of each human life. Every culture produces men and women who represent the spirit of the age. During the “Era of Discovery,” the culture produced notable explorers. During the Renaissance, the culture produced great artists. Unfortunately, in our culture, we are producing many who have no regard for human life, even the most innocent.

Let us all pray that this tragedy will provoke us as a nation, not to anger or despair nor to rash judgments or overly simplistic responses, but to a genuine and sincere questioning of the direction of our great country. Let us pray that this wonderful nation will return to the Gospel values upon which it was founded: that each and every human life is endowed by its Creator with the unalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness because each human life has inestimable value and has an eternal destiny. May the souls of all the victims, especially these precious children, rest in the loving arms of the Eternal Father and may the consolation of Jesus Christ be with all those who mourn. Our prayers and our love are with you. May God bless you all.