

Praying For Orlando: What Will We Do, Church?

MIND members went to bed Saturday night celebrating progress in our church – out queer clergy ordained by a bishop wearing a MIND armband – and awoke Sunday morning to the horrifying news that 49 queer people were massacred overnight, another 53 injured, many gravely. Through tears of grief and anger we send our prayers to the families, born and chosen, of the victims; the people of Orlando; and LGBTQI people everywhere who today know that there is a target on our backs. That is what hate crimes are intended to do.

The Pulse Nightclub where the shooting happened was celebrating a Latin Night, and we expect, as the identities of the victims become known, to find out that it is once again mostly queer people of color whose blood is on the hands of a homophobic and transphobic nation.

As we continue to grieve the Internet is mix of love and hate. Many have expressed their sorrow and solidarity with the LGBTQI community. Many others have expressed their hate of the Muslim communities by immediately scapegoating Muslims for this crime. We must refuse to let dead queer bodies prop up anti-Muslim bigotry and we must all speak out.

And even now, in the wake of the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, Christian anti-queer bigotry continues unabated. Just hours after the shooting, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick tweeted a photo with the words of Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

Our own denomination contributes to the anti-queer air we all breathe in America. Fifty bodies deemed "incompatible with Christian teaching" are dead.

[Bishop Minerva Carcano responded](#) to the attack in Orlando saying, "As I have prayed for the victims of this latest shooting, for the shooter and his family, for the people of Orlando, and for us, I have been struck by a concern that has penetrated my heart.

Is it possible that we United Methodists with such a negative attitude and position against LGBTQI persons contribute to such a crime? When we say that those who are of a homosexual gender identity are living lives that are incompatible with Christian teaching, that they are not to be included in our ordained leadership, and that they are not important enough for us to invest resources of the Church in advocating for their well-being, in essence when we say that our LGBTQI brothers and sisters are not worthy of the fullness of life that Christ offers us all, are we not contributing to the kind of thinking that promotes doing harm to these our brothers and sisters, our children, the sacred children of God?"



(Photo: Steve Nesi/Reuters)

Bishop Carcano continued with these important words, "I want you to think and pray with me about this. We cannot just stand-by and allow what happened in Orlando, Florida to go without our deep and prayerful reflection and our repentance and conversion wherever that is necessary in the life of our Church. Standing with the people of Orlando in their shock, their despair and grief as many have called us to do starting with President Obama, is not enough. As disciples of Jesus Christ we must stand for abundant life for all God's children including our LBTQI brothers and sisters."

What will we do, church?

Prayer Vigils TONIGHT: A Community In Holy Response

Monday night at 6pm join MIND as we gather to respond to this evil, to feel grief and rage and to do it together at The Church of The Village. Following the service of liturgy and song, we will process to the historic Stonewall Inn for the 7pm vigil.

Join MIND at these two vigils as we come together in prayer and hold one another together.

