



Reflection from Fr. Garry Richmeier

I was listening to a radio interview with a gun rights advocate, and he was describing what we should do to prevent more mass shootings. His main idea was to create federal incentives for states to enact "Red Flag Laws," which allow specified people (police, mental health workers, etc.) to temporarily take away the firearms of a person who is deemed to be an immediate threat to themselves or others. After discussing the merits of this idea for a while, the interviewer asked him about banning military-type assault rifles, since their only purpose is to kill people rapidly. He said we must allow people to effectively protect themselves from whatever threats are out there. And since there are thousands of assault rifles already out there (threats), people must be able to have equal fire power to protect themselves. He went on to say he has an AR-15 rifle in his home because of that very reason. Apparently the incongruity of needing to protect oneself because of society's proliferation of bigger and bigger guns by promoting the proliferation of bigger and bigger guns was lost on him.

We seem to be in an arms race, similar to the nuclear arms race in which countries participate. But whereas countries have not opted to use their stores of nuclear weapons (yet), there are people in this country who have no problem using assault rifles to kill others. There are scientists hard at work creating bigger and more destructive weapons than we have now. When they become readily available, will we simply flood the market with them like we've done with assault rifles?

We need to find other ways to protect each other rather than each individual/family locking themselves behind walls with their stockpile of weapons. There are no easy answers, but one necessity is to work to reach across the boundaries/walls that separate us as a society and really get to know each other. Especially to get to know and understand what each other fears. Only then will we be able to assure each other that we have each other's back. We can then together figure out ways that will make us all safer. We are much stronger (and safer) if we stand together.

Peace,
Fr. Garry