

## A Prayer for Peace After Gun Violence

*"Thus says YHWH: a voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and bitter weeping. Rachel, weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted, for her children are no more." Jeremiah 31:15*

God, comforter of the broken and disheartened,  
We come to you plagued with an agonized grief  
After yet one more outbreak of senseless gun violence.

We come to you,  
From the East to the West, from the North to the South,  
People of all ages, ethnicities, and walks of life.

We represent one voice,  
The voice of bitter weeping  
Echoing throughout our cities  
And resounding in communities throughout the world.

As violence abounds,  
We sit in the darkness,  
Sitting alongside the suffering on the mourner's bench.

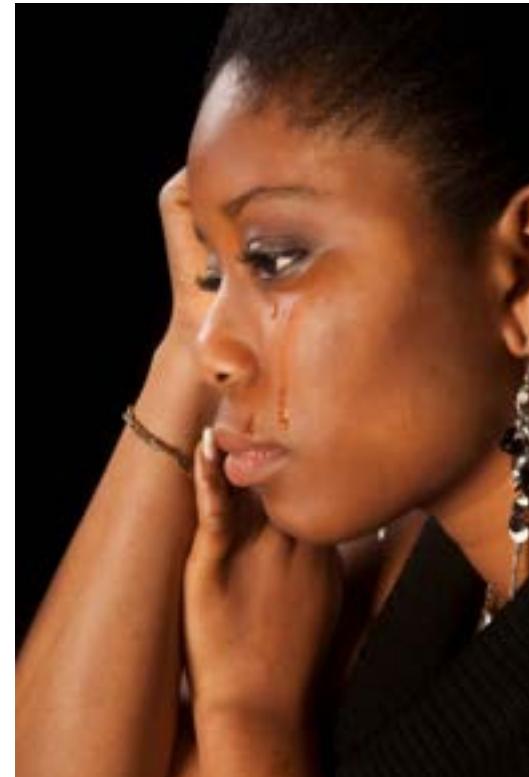
We are Rachel,  
Mourning with wordless sobs,  
The lives of those sacrificed on the altar of violence.

We are Rachel,  
Weeping for the wounded,  
For those whose minds and bodies  
Are etched with painful memories of men's unjustifiable rage.

We are Rachel,  
Lamenting with the families who have lost loved ones  
Whose cries of despair join with those  
From tragedies of gun violence.

We are Rachel,  
Perplexed with troubled souls, and searching for answers,  
Seeking to understand what would cause  
humans to inflict pain on their fellow sisters and brothers.

We are Rachel,  
Exasperated, grasping—crying out,  
"How long, O God?  
How long will this wave of violence consume your people?



How long, O God, must we succumb to this perverse violence  
That crushes the breath and life of countless innocent people?

How long, O God, will it take for us to beat our swords into plowshares,  
And spears into pruning hooks?"

Compassionate God, we turn to you in our grief.  
Provide comfort to the broken-hearted,  
All those who are frightened, despairing, and who are hoping for peace.

Help us to become deeply aware of the shared humanity  
That comes when a sister or brother falls victim to violence.

Guide us on a path of understanding and peaceful dialogue.  
Show us rightful ways to rid our homes, our neighborhoods, our workplaces,  
our cities and our world  
Of weapons that destroy lives.

Grant us the courage to stand together,  
To join with Rachel in her strident protest of lament  
Calling for an end to gun violence.

Empower us to be people of light and hope  
Amid a world painted with darkness and violence. Amen

~ By Dianna Ortiz, OSU