

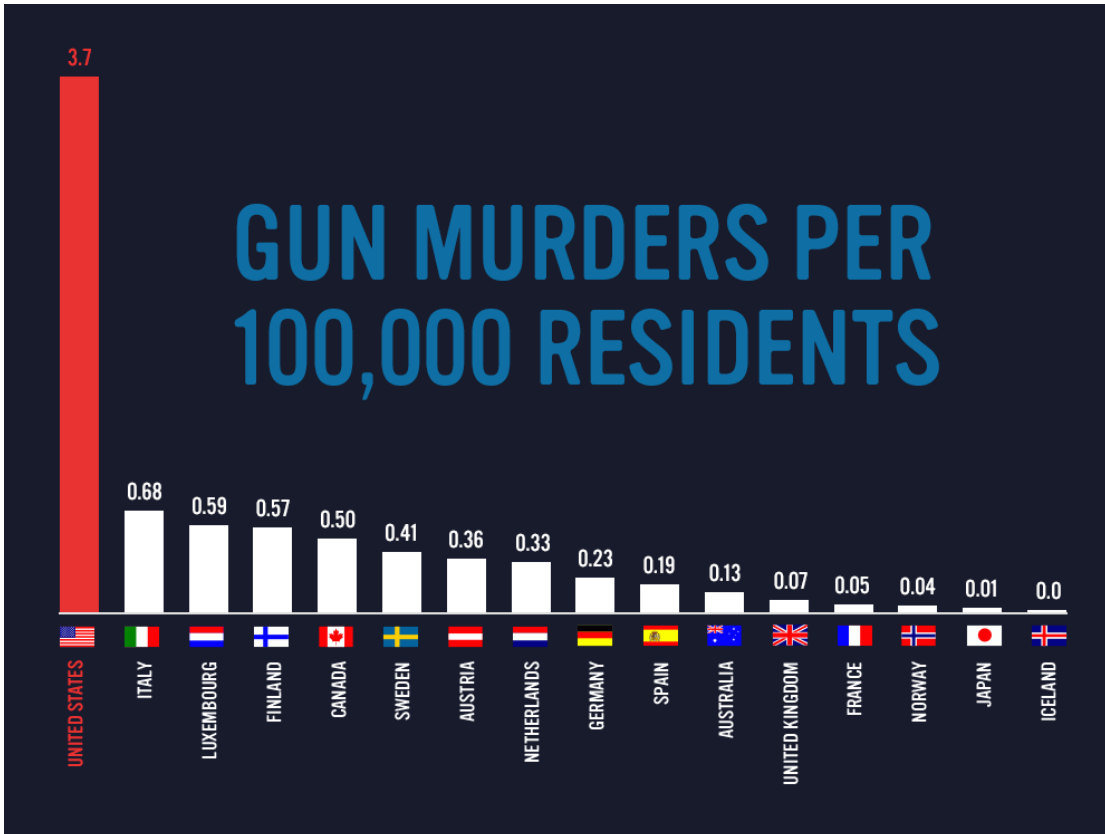
Justice, Peace and Life

June 2016

“As bishops, we support measures that control the sale and use of firearms and make them safer (especially efforts that prevent their unsupervised use by children or anyone other than the owner), and we reiterate our call for sensible regulation of handguns...”

However, we believe that in the long run and with few exceptions (i.e., police officers, military use), handguns should be eliminated from our society.”

-Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 15, 2000



“Our gun laws are an invitation to kill. They would be ludicrous if the situation were not so tragic. ‘By their fruits you know them,’ and the fruits of our gun control laws are bitter indeed – no, they are fatal.”

-Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas Texas

Graphic from

<https://everytownresearch.org/>

“Yet another lament about the prevalence of guns throughout our society seems a pale response to the horror of the crimes in Orlando. With each repeated occurrence of mass shootings in schools, theatres, churches and social settings it appears increasingly clear that any hope for thwarting these tragedies must begin with more effective legislation and enforcement of who has access to guns and under what conditions. However, legislation alone will not be sufficient as there are wider and deeper forces at work in these attacks.”

- Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston

Backgrounder on a Mercy and Peacebuilding Approach to Gun Violence **by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 2016**

The USCCB will remain engaged in the public debate on gun violence prevention. We call on Catholics and all people of good will to urge their Senators and Representative to support policy and legislative measures that:

- promote mercy and peacebuilding in our communities by implementing reasonable regulations on firearms such as: **Require universal background checks for all gun purchases; Limit civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines; Make gun trafficking a federal crime, and; Improve access to mental health care for those who may be prone to violence,****
- promote restorative justice by passing legislation to support important reentry programs that help people avoid re-offending,**
- improve access to health care and treatment for those with addiction and mental health needs.**

Now and At the Hour of Our Death...

Our Diocesan Public Policy Committee has chosen *Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS)* as one of our focus issues. In the coming months, *Justice, Peace & Life* will continue to raise awareness on the many reasons to oppose legislation to legalize PAS in New York. The excerpt below comes from an editorial by the Catholic News Agency Staff entitled "How to Put Lipstick on Assisted Suicide." Read the entire article [here](#).

By now, everyone's probably seen the ads on YouTube touting the "romantic comedy of the year." A young, shape-ly woman in a red dress, and a handsome man – in a wheelchair?

The short clips are brilliant, and the intrigue is palpable. Could it be? A mainstream, box-office hit that portrays a person with disabilities as a desirable partner?

The answer is both a yes, and a horrifying no.

While everyone can handle death as a tragic but compelling end of a good romance, it's a bit different when a character – despite being happy in love – chooses to kill himself.

But this is the premise of "Me before You," originally a best-selling book in the U.K. before it was made into a film with breakout stars Emelia Clarke and Sam Claflin.

When a cautious small town girl takes a caretaker job for a moody business mogul paralyzed in a recent accident, their unlikely relationship becomes a friendship that eventually blossoms into love. He teaches her to broaden her horizons and abandon the timid outlook that has been holding her back in life, while she helps him find happiness despite disability.

In the end, he admits that his six months with her have been the best months of his life, and acknowledges that he could have "a very good life" going forward. But it is not the life he wants – and so he kills himself, ultimately with her support....

[This film attempts] to normalize assisted suicide by taking the "ick" factor out. A glittering romantic blockbuster...[says] "look at these beautiful people doing this – you can too."

How else is anything advertised to us?

But when emergency hotlines exist for those on the same edge, how do we differentiate between rescuing someone from the depths and "respecting their decision"?

Take the real story of Luke, a fresh-faced, 19-year-old man with a full life ahead of him. Luke was depressed for four years and tried to kill himself by crashing his car at 60 miles an hour. He survived. He wants to live now. And what he said about the assisted suicide movement was stark: if someone was on a bridge and wanted to jump, we'd try to save them, right?

Right?

Perhaps it's the violence that makes us shudder. Putting a gun to your head, throwing yourself off a building, slitting your wrists – what if Claflin's character... chose one of these methods? What would the narrative be then?

But no, taking a lethal dose of barbiturates and passing "in peace" as your vital organs shut down one-by-one makes all the difference. And yet, there is no difference. All we've done is put lipstick on something which, despite our glamorizing attempts, is the same awful, isolated despair.



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