

# the role of the church in the modern world

## **STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON A MERCY AND PEACEBUILDING APPROACH TO GUN VIOLENCE MARCH 2018**

For many years, the USCCB has supported a number of reasonable measures to address the problem of gun violence. These include:

- A total ban on assault weapons, which the USCCB supported when the ban passed in 1994 and when Congress failed to renew it in 2004;
- Measures that control the sale and use of firearms, such as universal background checks for all gun purchases;
- Limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines;
- A federal law to criminalize gun trafficking;
- Improved access to and increased resources for mental health care and earlier interventions;
- Regulations and limitations on the purchasing of handguns;
- Measures that make guns safer, such as locks that prevent children and anyone other than the owner from using the gun without permission and supervision; and
- An honest assessment of the toll of violent images and experiences which inundate people, particularly our youth.
- A more appropriate minimum age for gun ownership;
- A ban on "bump stocks."

In addition, the USCCB supports the promotion of mercy and peacebuilding in our communities through restorative justice policies and practices, ongoing encounters, and discussions at the parish level regarding violence in communities.

*Catholics and all people of good will are urged to contact their Senators and Representative to support policy and legislative measures that uphold the safety and wellbeing of all persons in our communities.*