

# So scared, but we can't stand still

I'm so scared! I'm so scared when I look at the news and see the faces of those broken down in grief caused by the hand of violence. That was someone's child, someone's spouse, someone's loved one, gunned down - senseless suffering. I'm so scared when the news reports more deaths today than there were yesterday. Someone abducted that young girl, someone drove herself and her children into the river, someone killed that nursing student over a computer game, someone didn't get paid his or her drug money, so murder, stabbing, shooting and bullying takes the place of concern, compassion and guidance.

I'm so scared of the cruel and vicious fighting that exists among the young and not so young. There are no boundaries to the violence as it pops up everywhere and among all people. I'm so scared because of this violence and the violence that comes from poverty, which is running zigzag in our families and communities. Oftentimes the violence of poverty presses down on people and here comes an abortion, here comes the robbing of elders and the upset of safety within our community. Those gunned down or aborted could possibly be the ones who could have changed history, built a blueprint for peace, invented life-changing inventions, cured illnesses and improved the quality of life by leading families and ultimately nations. I'm so scared but I can't stand still and I can't stand still alone!

We can't remain so scared. We can't stand by idle, numb and still. We must look up to God for guidance, then get up and help those who need help the most and keep moving towards peace. We must invest ourselves for transformation and a better way of life.

We must delete the excuses we sometimes fashion when we are weary. *We didn't know that child was in danger. We didn't see that he or she was that depressed. We didn't know his life was in such turmoil. We didn't know that she had no one to trust about the news of the pregnancy and therefore had an abortion. We did not know he or she was that angry. We did not hear them crying in the night, or see them searching for a safe place coming home from school.*

We've got to tighten up as a family and get involved with the lives of our people.

Mind someone else's business with a Jesus' love and a Jesus' level of compassion. We've got to reach out *now*, like never before. We must work unceasingly to remedy the unhealthy symptoms that surround people today. An African proverb says, "If we stop reaching out then we will surely die." Scripture says in the book of Amos, "Poor are they who shun their own kin." Once you shun your own people, then a "shut down, death and demise" will surely follow.

For the past 14 years the National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life has designated June as a time for Black Catholics to actively raise consciousness regarding abortion and acts of violence within our community. This June and throughout the summer, let's heat up our efforts by adding to all of our youth gatherings and parish and family activities these suggestions:

- Calling forth a council of elders within the community to evaluate and/or shape efforts of outreach and mentoring of our young folks;
- Gathering our young to discuss strategies and avenues of peace-building, self-esteem building and anti-gang involvement;
- Sharing our faith and rebuilding moral expectations and traditions that respect life;
- Organizing family strategies of "a helping hand up" during family reunions and summer outings. This may result in establishing a family emergency fund, scholarships and a special prayer and counseling circle;
- Going down on our knees in prayer, because prayer changes things and people too.

Let's shift from being so scared to being so active. Let's get up and keep moving for peace and the protection of life now, because so much depends on it as we walk into our future.

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