



Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Prayer and Action Network

FAITHFUL BUDGET: Millions of Americans face devastating choices each day: Which bill will get paid? Will there be enough food for every family member? What if there is a medical emergency? As our elected officials conference on the federal budget, they also face difficult choices, choices with the power to ease burdens of struggling families across the country or make them even more difficult. And if our elected officials do not reach a decision, we will face yet another devastating year of sequester cuts in 2014.

We must take action and insist that Congress reach a budget compromise that reflects the values of a Faithful Budget by the December 13 deadline. Congress must protect programs that provide for the 100%, with special care for programs that ease the strain of life's difficult choices facing those on the economic margins.

Per the USCCB, "A balanced, bipartisan, and just agreement will require shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly. We again offer moral criteria to help guide . . . difficult budgetary decisions:

1. Every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity.
2. A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects "the least of these" (Mt 25). The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or in poverty should come first.
3. Government and other institutions have a shared responsibility to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.

Sources: USCCB and Network

What can you do? Support two vulnerable groups: skip lunch one day this week in solidarity with those fasting on the mall in Washington, D.C. for comprehensive immigration reform and use the time you would have spent on lunch to call your congressmen and ask them to adopt a budget plan that includes reasonable revenue for the responsible programs that keep struggling families resilient, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and others.

NEWTOWN ANNIVERSARY: The Sandy Hook tragedy caused great anguish for parents and others who attempt to safeguard our children. In addition to the outpouring of prayers and support from around the

nation, the tragedy gave rise to discussions about national policies and steps that can be taken to foster a culture that protects the innocent and those most vulnerable among us. It is time for our nation to renew a culture of life in our society.

Sacred Scripture reminds us time and again to "be not afraid." Indeed, we must find within ourselves the faith-filled courage to address the challenges our nation faces, both in our homes and in our national policies. In 2000, the Catholic Bishops issued a call for action related to crime and criminal justice. The Bishops reiterated that call after Newtown, asking all Americans, especially legislators to:

- 1.Support measures that control the sale and use of firearms
- 2.Support measures that make guns safer (especially efforts that prevent their unsupervised use by children and anyone other than the owner)
- 3.Call for sensible regulations of handguns
- 4.Support legislative efforts that seek to protect society from the violence associated with easy access to deadly weapons including assault weapons
- 5.Make a serious commitment to confront the pervasive role of addiction and mental illness in crime.

Source: USCCB

What can you do? On Friday, December 13, join Faiths Calling to Prevent Gun Violence activists from coast to coast and urge your Senators to pass laws to prevent gun violence.

When you call, tell your Senators:

- 11,000 more Americans have been murdered with guns since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary.
- The majority of Americans support gun violence prevention measures and wish the Senate would have passed the background check bill this year.
- Support the bipartisan Manchin-Toomey background check compromise.

Contact Sen. Hatch at 801-524-4380 or 202-224-5251

Contact Sen. Lee at 801-524-5933 or 202-224-5444

Join GunSense Friday, December 13th at 6:00 pm for a vigil in remembrance of the children and teachers of Newtown, and the more than 30,000 lives that have been claimed by gun violence since that event. The vigil will be a peaceful moment of remembrance, and a call to action. It will take place on the sidewalk between the North Entrance to City Creek Center and the South Entrance of Temple Square at 55 W South Temple.

Attend a non-denominational memorial service for the Newtown victims on Saturday, Dec. 14 at First Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City (569 South 1300 East) at 10:00 a.m. Speakers will include:

Rev. Tom Goldsmith of First Unitarian Church

Rev. Scott Dalgarno of Wasatch Presbyterian Church

Rev. Pablo Ramos of San Esteban Church

Chief Chris Burbank of the Salt Lake City Police Department

Sven Haynes, Director of Gunsense - Action for Gun Violence Prevention

Summer Smith, Parent/Teacher/Activist

Musicians include David Owens on the Piano, Karl Johanson on the Viola, Steve Kocherhans and members of the International Children's Choir.

- **GREEN TIP OF THE WEEK:** Give green gifts: **House plants** with particular air-purifying qualities, like pathos, philodendron and spider plants.
- **Miniature azaleas, rose bushes, hibiscus, Christmas cactus or holly.**

- **A set of seed packets** for the vegetable or flower garden.
- **A gift certificate** for plants or seeds from a gardening supply catalog or shop.
- **Landscape plants** native to your region of the country.
- **A basketful of tulip, daffodil and crocus bulbs**

PRAYER: Loving God,

I sense that all is your creation

and everything, and all of us, are being drawn back toward your loving heart.

Help me to be a person of peace,

to speak about it in an uneasy world, and to live it among the people you have put into my life every day.

Light in me a desire to prepare for your coming

to stand in the darkness, waiting, eager and filled with joy.

Source: Creighton University Advent Prayers