

**Homily for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**rewritten in light of Sandy Hook Massacre**

20 children and 6 adults....you can't run away from this horrible, cruel and shocking event.

How do you respond to this kind of event? What do you say? What does our faith and this season of Advent say about this?

Our faith centers on the struggle between good and evil. But evil often seems distant...almost philosophical. However, this shooting at an elementary school at a place that is only a few hours away is hardly distant and certainly not philosophical. Evil has become real, tangible and frightening beyond words.

It is because of evil in our world that God sent his Son to save us. The evil struggled to overcome the light who is Christ. But evil failed. The cross of defeat became the doorway for Christ's victory over evil and over death. This is why we look for Christ in this Advent Season...because the light of Christ calls us to live as children of God, as brothers and sisters, as fellow pilgrims who will not tolerate the evil in our world.

But what can we do? That's what people were asking John the Baptist . That's the question we're asking ourselves. There are many things that we can do.

Pray...pray for all the victims and the families in this little New England town that is suffering unparalleled pain and a total loss of joy and life.

Pray...pray for our own children that they never have to endure such horror in their own lives.

Cling to our children...wrap them in love and help them understand how important and how loved they are. But that isn't enough. I would beg you to be vigilant in continually working for the elimination of violence in our lives and the lives of our children.

- Couples who spend their lives arguing need to change their behaviors
- Abusive behaviors in any form can not be tolerated.
- Television programming and films that glorify violence cannot be tolerated.
- Games and books and magazines that wrap our children in a world of destruction and hatred cannot be tolerated

And parents...do not surrender your responsibility for your children

And grandparents...do not surrender your responsibility for your grandchildren.

And siblings...do not surrender your responsibility for your younger brother and sisters.

And parishioners...do not surrender what is all our responsibility to insure that the evil of violence and hatred, the evil of prejudice and destructive behaviors are simply not tolerated, accepted, or supported or in any way.

Three days after Christmas we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Innocents. We recall the horror of evil that visited Bethlehem when innocent children were slaughtered to appease the greed and jealousy of Herod. This past Friday another group of Holy Innocents once again became the victims of evil. Their blood rips through our hearts as once again we confront the evil in our world. But we cannot allow this evil to destroy us. For Christ is our light, our Emmanuel...for God is with us. Christ is our guide. And the Gospel of Christ teaches us that we can only overcome evil when we learn to live in the light of God's unending power and love.