

A Mothers' Day Litany In Memory of
Trayvon Benjamín Martín
And the Victims of Gun Violence in America
By Bishop Adam J. Richardson

Leader: Today is Mothers' Day and the excruciating pain of tragic loss has been relentless since the night I received the news no mother should ever have to hear. My soul screamed – before my brain could comprehend the full meaning of the message, before my mouth could articulate the words my mind was trying to formulate about the chronic ache that had already engulfed me, and the loneliness I was already feeling. I am one among thousands, there is so much grief across the land; we cannot stand alone.

People: We are *standing* with you.

Leader: Today is Mothers' Day and, like most mothers, I always had high hopes for my son; perhaps greatness would be in his future. But I never thought that "Trayvon" would become a household name -- not like this. I empathize with the biblical Rachel of Ramah, "weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because the children are no more." (Jeremiah 31:15)

People: We are *weeping* with you.

Leader: Today is Mothers' Day; the ache is sharper than on most other days, though all the days are still filled with memories of horror, when I couldn't pronounce the words my soul was screaming. I understand more deeply the Apostle Paul relying on the "Spirit in weakness, not knowing what to pray for as we ought, with groans which cannot be uttered, so deep that only the Spirit can interpret before God." (Romans 8:26)

People: We are *praying* with you.

Leader: Today is Mothers' Day, and we remember President Obama kindly saying: "If I had a son, he would look like Trayvon." The truth is, Trayvon is mine, but I confess that he now belongs to us all. He lived in our village, the village called America where citizens are expected to embrace the *Audacity of Hope*; dream the big dream for ourselves and our families; to become all that we can become; stretching for the unreachable star. That great American ambition never includes mourning for our children because of the obsession some Americans have with guns and calling it a Constitutional right - perhaps a Constitutional duty. In the presence of legislators, we cannot remain silent.

People: We are *speaking out* with you.

Leader: Today is Mothers' Day, and our sisterhood is growing, a sorority none of us willingly pledged to join; mothers grieving for our children after gun violence: Mothers of Columbine, Blacksburg, Aurora, Los Angeles, Jacksonville, Baltimore, Oakland, Chicago, New York, Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, Detroit, Washington, Pensacola, New Town, Boston, and Sanford – and a thousand other communities with as many violent deaths.

People: Today is Mothers' Day and we are standing, weeping, praying, and speaking up with you because we know that we are not exempt!