



**For Immediate Release**

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**NETWORK Stands with the LGBTQ and Muslim Communities in the Wake of Orlando Massacre**

The prayers of the entire NETWORK community are with the victims, families, and friends of the Pulse nightclub massacre. In the face of this tragedy, we are overwhelmed with sadness and mourn with the LGBTQ community as we all grapple with this attack. NETWORK stands with our sisters and brothers and denounces violence and discrimination in any and every form. All people are made in God's image and likeness and are deserving of unconditional love and respect.

Pope Francis has said time and again that we must say no to an economy of exclusion, because "such an economy kills." We have witnessed our nation mourn too many innocent lives lost because of the availability of guns, whose defenders in Congress quite literally value profit over people. This is unjust and undemocratic: there is no world in which campaign contributions from the NRA should be considered more valuable than human life. NETWORK's community of justice-seekers continues to call on Congress to take action and pass meaningful gun violence prevention legislation. As Pope Francis said last fall when he addressed Congress: "Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood."

NETWORK also extends its support to the Muslim community, who yet again face broad generalizations and Islamophobia during this time. We urge all Catholics, people of faith, and global citizens to refrain from blaming Islam for this tragedy. At their core, all religions preach love and community. Those who would categorize an entire religion and its believers as violent, dangerous, and "other" fail to live up to Jesus's message to "love your neighbor."

Our Catholic faith calls us to universal love. Hatred and violence against any community has no place in our nation. We call on all elected officials to pass legislation that honors the dignity of all lives, chooses hope over fear, and mends the gaps in our nation.

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*NETWORK, advocates for justice inspired by Catholic sisters, educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation. They have a more than 40-year track record of lobbying for critical federal programs that support those at the margins and prioritize the common good.*