

## OVERVIEW



### **Focus Text: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4**

O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?

### **Pastoral Reflection by Rev. Rachel R. Smith, Chaplain, Vigils Against Violence, Raleigh; Board of Directors, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence**

The school year of 2006 began rather quietly as most school years do. But on August 30th, a boy with a gun walked into a high school in Hillsborough, NC, and the new school year was marked by violence.

Little did we know that this August 30th shooting at a North Carolina high school would be a harbinger of a national spate of school shootings. The young shooter in Hillsborough had a deadly plan and a number of guns; after killing his father he shot and wounded a student at a nearby high school.

### **Personal Vignette by the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham**

My name is Joslin Sims. My son Rayburn Sims was murdered at the corner of Leon St. and Broad St. on May 21, 2005. He was thirty years old. When I got the call, I didn't know what to expect – my son, Billy, said, "Momma, he's gonna be alright." Once I got to the hospital and it took them a while to come and get me, I realized then that it was worse than what I thought. And once they took me back there and told me that he was dead, I didn't accept it. I couldn't accept it. I said, "He's not my son. He's not dead." I started screaming. And then I kept thinking, why would somebody kill him?

### **Key Fact**

Guns kill more than 1,000 North Carolinians every year. In 2005 (the latest figures available), approximately every six days a North Carolina child seventeen or younger was killed by a gun in a homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting. Total deaths for the year 2005 were 1,126 adults and children.

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