



# Heeding God's Call A Gathering on Peace

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
January 12, 2009

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### **DEL VAL FAITH LEADERS CALL ON PENNSYLVANIA GUN DEALER TO HOLD ADOPT 'CODE OF CONDUCT' TO REDUCE STRAW BUYING AND ILLEGAL HANDGUN TRAFFICKING**

#### **Faith Leaders Start New Faith-Based Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence at Press Conference in Front of Well-Known Philadelphia Gun Dealer**

**Philadelphia:** A distinguished delegation of Delaware Valley faith leaders stood in front of Colosimo's Gun Center at 9<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden Streets in Philadelphia this afternoon and called on all gun dealers throughout the Commonwealth to adopt a 'code of conduct' identical to the Responsible Firearms Partnership Agreement between Wal-Mart, America's #1 gun seller and the Mayors Against Illegal Guns coalition (see <http://www.mayorsagainstilllegalguns.org/html/partnership/partnership.shtml>).

The Rt. Rev. Allen L. Bartlett, Jr., Assisting Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania said: "We believe adoption of the code by all PA gun dealers will severely reduce the current flood of guns from legal sale at PA gun stores to illegal street sale, diminish the supply of illegal street guns, and gun crime and violence."

Mrgr. Michael J. Carroll, of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia said: "Human life is sacred, God's gift. It is a gift to be cherished and nourished. When the gift is threatened or destroyed, we are required, in faith, to reach out to the injured and to do what we reasonably can to prevent any further injury or destruction of life, unjustly inflicted. We have joined with our brothers and sisters of differing faith communities to do just that, to prevent in this case, gun violence."

Philadelphia and the Del Val are beset by gun violence that devastates families, neighborhoods and cities. Gun crime and violence are fueled by the illegal trade that moves handguns from legal sale at PA gun stores to illegal street sale. Straw buying is the linchpin of this illegal trade, whereby stand-ins make bulk handgun purchases for gun traffickers.

It has proven exasperatingly difficult to get the Pennsylvania Legislature to enact legislation to ameliorate the problem. So, faith leaders and their followers have come together to seek the adoption by PA gun stores of a non-legislative, non-burdensome 'code of conduct,' identical to the Responsible Firearms Partnership Agreement between Wal-Mart, America's #1 gun seller and the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition.

"We provided Mr. James Colosimo with the code a month ago," continued Bishop Bartlett, "and have met with him twicet. We begin our campaign to get all PA gun shops to adopt the code with Colosimo's, but the starting place is not as important as the eventual goal of reducing gun violence by diminishing the illegal trade in guns."

Rabbi Linda Holtzman of Mishkan Shalom Synagogue said: "Judaism is a life affirming tradition. As a Jew, I am obligated to stand in the way of murder before it happens. If we are all created in the image of God, none of us has the right to wantonly take another's life. Our request of Mr. Colosimo is simply a request that he also affirm life by doing everything that he can do to prevent future needless murders, and limit the ways that dangerous weapons reach the hands of those who will use them to kill innocent people."

"We remain hopeful that Mr. Colosimo's refusal to adopt the non-burdensome code represents only a temporary dislocation in our effort to gain adoption by him and all gun dealers in the Commonwealth of the code," said Thomas Swain, Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends."

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