

A blue-tinted photograph of a statue of a man, likely Jesus, with his hands clasped in prayer and his head tilted upwards. The statue is set against a background of a cloudy sky. The image is framed by a dark blue border.

# ***Prayer For Victims And For An End To Gun Violence***

**Through the Stations of the Cross**



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF ST. LOUIS

TASK FORCE ON GUN  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Thank you for joining us today for an Archdiocesan-wide day of prayer and reflection. Last year, 280 people in the St. Louis area were killed by gun violence. In times of trouble and suffering, prayer is a refuge. As we walk with Christ today, we'll remember victims close to our community.

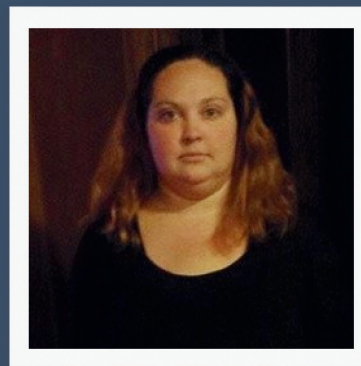
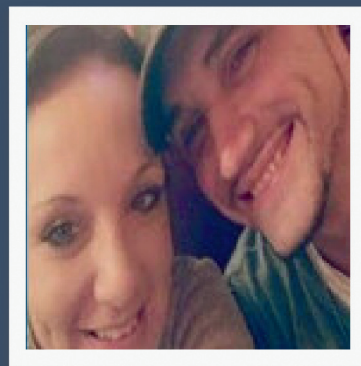
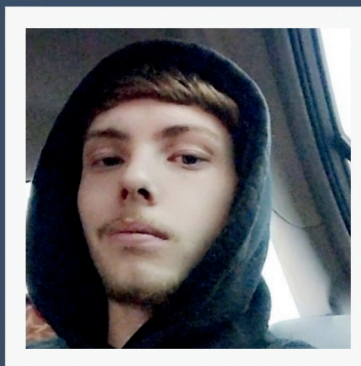
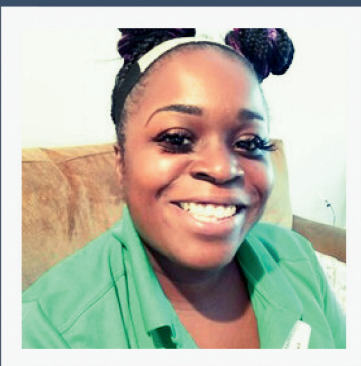
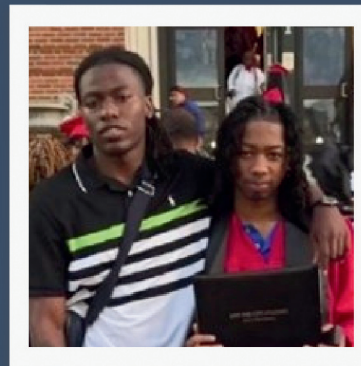
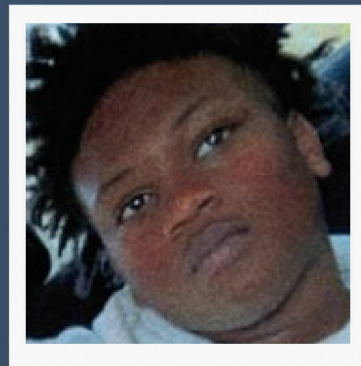
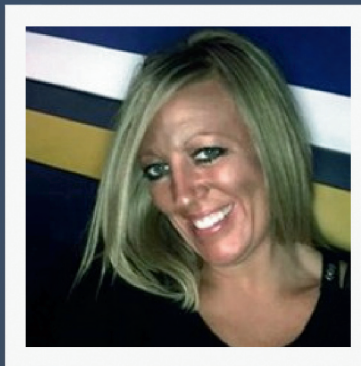
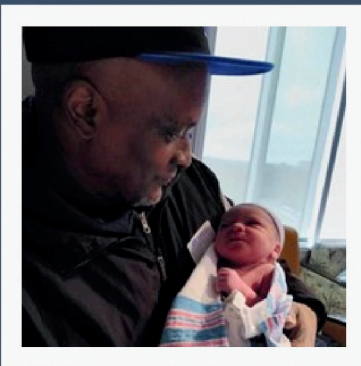
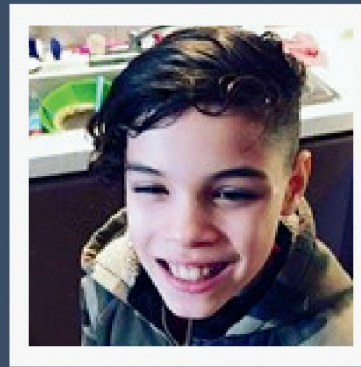
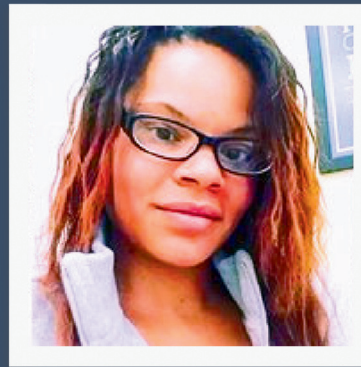
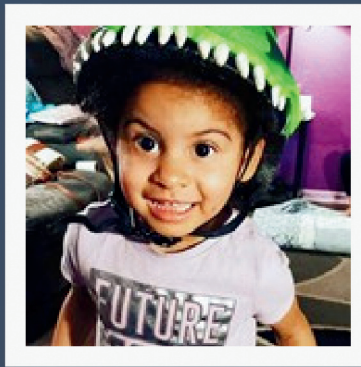
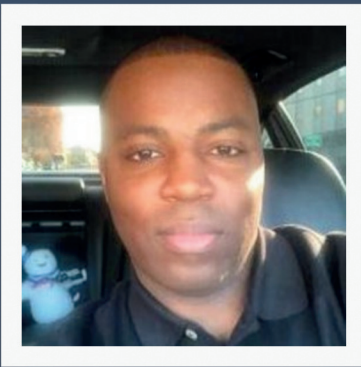
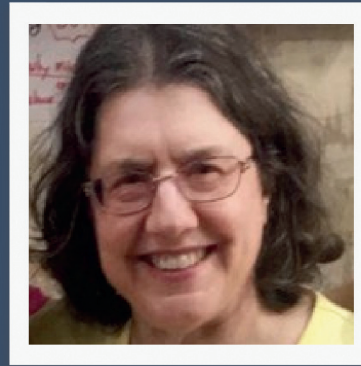
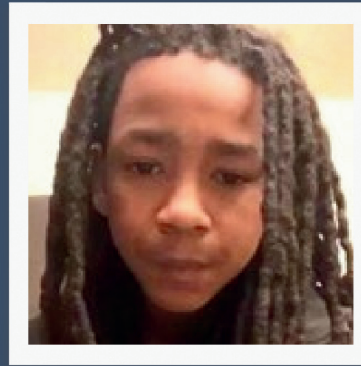
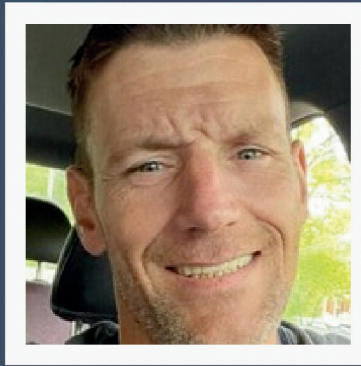
### OPENING PRAYER

*Loving God, Source of Love, Comforter of the Afflicted,  
be with us tonight as we journey in the footsteps of Jesus  
as he goes to his suffering and death.  
As we reflect on the suffering of Jesus,  
help us to feel the pain and humiliation that he felt,  
so that we may be moved by the great sacrifice he made  
for all humanity.  
Send us your Spirit to enter our hearts  
so that with compassion  
we may listen and respond to the plight of others  
who carry burdens, crosses, despair, and loss of dignity.  
Send your Spirit to be with us as we travel this journey together.  
Awaken our hearts  
that we may accept your challenge to create the world anew.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
as one God, forever and ever.*

*Amen*



# MOURNING & REMEMBERING LIVES LOST



References:

National Gun Violence Memorial <https://gunmemorial.org/>

St. Louis Post-Dispatch <https://graphics.stltoday.com/apps/homicide-tracker/2023/>



FIRST STATION:  
**JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They answered, “Barabbas! ... Let [Jesus] be crucified!”  
(Matthew 27:21–22)

*Troy, 33, was a victim of a workplace shooting in Maryland Heights when a former employee attempted to rob the business in a deadly encounter. His family remembered him as quick witted, endlessly creative, and an incredibly talented artist. He was studying drafting in college with a goal of pursuing a career in architecture.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, though innocent, you were unjustly condemned to death. Today, throughout our cities, other innocents are unjustly put to death, with callous or careless disregard for human life. We pray for the innocent who lose their lives due to anger, hatred, and prejudice.





**SECOND STATION:  
JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: And carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull. (John 19:17)

*Christopher, 43, was shot in the abdomen just after 7 p.m. at a gas station in South St. Louis. He was found on the ground next to the driver's door of his car. Christopher died at a hospital. Police said they have no suspects in the killing.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, you were made to carry the cross, a heavy burden, but also a cruel weapon. We pray now for those whose lives are deliberately and violently ended while they go about their day-to-day activities.



**THIRD STATION:  
JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: I am troubled now. Yet what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour?" But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. (John 12:27–28)

*Makao, 17, was killed while attending a party. The youngest of 15 children, Makao was a junior in high school. His family said his goal was to finish school and make a living as a professional gamer. Makao's aunt said, "I don't think the shooters actually know what the families go through. These kids with guns, I don't know if it's a lack of love or a lack of attention."*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, you fell as you carried your cross ever closer to your death. Did you wonder how you might have the strength to get up and continue? We pray for our teens who unknowingly fall, never to get up again, whose deaths should never have happened at such a young age.



**FOURTH STATION:  
JESUS ENCOUNTERS HIS MOTHER**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary ... “You yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke 2:34–35)

*Mary, 64, of Manchester, was one of three victims in a murder-suicide. Police said officers responded to a West St. Louis County home for a welfare check. When officers arrived, they found two women and a man dead with gunshot wounds. Police said an investigation led officers to believe the husband shot his wife and daughter before shooting himself in a probable double murder-suicide.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, on your way you were met by your mother Mary, a presence of brave, enduring love. We pray for all women today – wives, partners, mothers - whose lives are ended all too soon by violence. We are confident that in their final moments of fear and pain, you, Jesus, are with them. Comfort them; receive them into your arms. We pray also for the families left with unending grief and loss.



**FIFTH STATION:  
SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country ... to carry his cross. (Mark 15:21)

*Joshua, 41, was shot to death at his Clayton apartment. A neighbor said that she heard five or six gunshots outside her bedroom window, then a car sped off. Neighbors said Joshua had a wife and child and had recently moved to the neighborhood.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, Simon was pulled from the crowd to help you carry your cross. We pray that when called upon, as Simon once was, we will not turn our face. Help us find the courage to assist another in desperate need of help, even as you were along that holy walk to your death.





**SIXTH STATION:  
VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**LEADER:** He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace.”  
(Luke 8:48)

*Police in St. Ann say that a man shot his wife and three stepchildren before turning the gun on himself. The wife, Seychelle, 30, and two children - son Kyrien, 14, and daughter Ushara, 5, were killed.*

(Light Candle)

**ALL:** Christ Jesus, another woman - perhaps even a stranger – bravely stepped from the crowd and boldly wiped the sweat and tears from your face. We pray that we might be the Veronicas among our friends and acquaintances, and in our neighborhoods; that we might recognize the signs of domestic abuse and act to protect those in need of safety.



**SEVENTH STATION:  
JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.  
(John 8:7)

*Tommy, 60, and his 3-year old daughter were killed in their home in south St. Louis. They appear to have been killed during the course of a robbery; a watch, money and other items from their home were later found in a neighbor's apartment.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, you fell again; you took upon yourself the fullness of our humanity, even pain, doubt, exhaustion, and fear. We pray for the elderly and the youngest among us whose lives are taken in acts of senseless violence.



**EIGHTH STATION:  
JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children ...” (Luke 23:28)

*Jacquelyn, 39, of St. Charles, was last seen leaving a restaurant alone after work. Her body was found a week later inside a Maryland Heights apartment. One person has been taken into custody and charged with her death.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, you warned the women you encountered not to weep for you but to be concerned with repentance and judgement. We pray for the prosecutors, judges and juries who must hear the stories of those whose lives have been taken; may they judge honestly and fairly.





**NINTH STATION:  
JESUS FALLS FOR A THIRD TIME**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

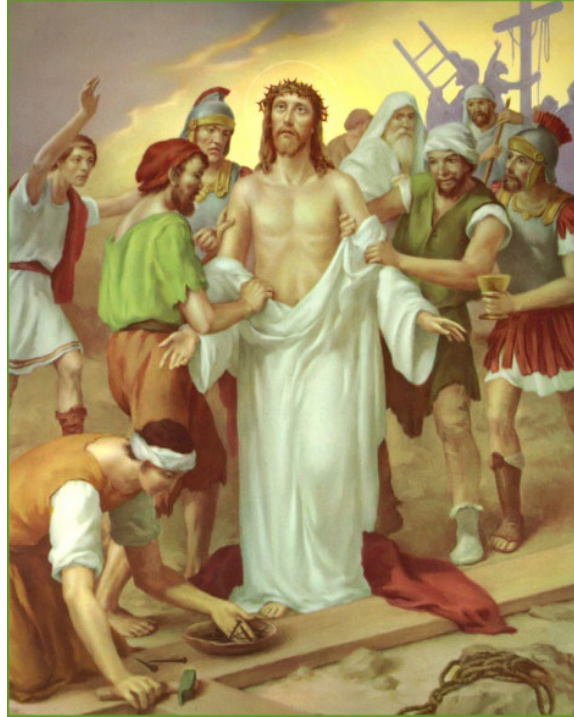
ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: But his father ordered his servants, “Quickly, bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.” (Luke 15:22)

*A 15-year old boy was shot dead in a north St. Louis neighborhood. Police said that Demetrius was shot multiple times. Responding officers found him in the street and he was pronounced dead at the scene.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, you fell a third time, despite the help of Simon and the support of the women. Though faltering, you continued the long journey of your Passion. We pray for police, fire-fighters, and emergency personnel who day after day are called to scenes of violence, so often too late to prevent them. We pray that you remain with them, keep them safe, and give them the hope that allows them to continue compassionately in their roles as first responders.



TENTH STATION:  
**JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: For creation awaits with eager expectation ... in hope that [it] would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:19–21)

*Latrell, 19, was found dead in South St. Louis. Officers heard gunfire and found the young man dead. He lived about a mile northeast of where he was killed in the Dutchtown neighborhood. Police have no suspects in his killing.*

(Light Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, after the torture of carrying your own weapon of death, you suffered the further degradation of being stripped of your clothing. We pray for those whose deaths by violence remain unsolved. Like you, Jesus, they are left naked. We pray also for those whose actions contribute to another's death or injury; may they come to repent their actions.



**ELEVENTH STATION:  
JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

*Trina, 44, was found shot and killed in a St. Louis neighborhood. The suspect in her murder was later found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and police called the incident a domestic situation.*

(Lights Candle)

ALL: Christ Jesus, when nails pierced your hands and feet, they were struck with the force of the sins of humankind. Did the onlookers understand the part they played as each nail was struck? Do we, even today, accept our personal connection to the nails that were struck? We pray for all who suffer from domestic abuse. In the home - where they should be most loved - they are most abused. We pray for the awareness to be shocked and outraged by domestic violence and the courage to step in to protect those who are abused.





**TWELFTH STATION:  
JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

(All kneel together for a reflective pause, and then rise.)

*Scott, 22, died after the accidental firing of a gun. Four people were in a car waiting for food in a drive-thru. Police say a passenger in the back seat had a 9mm handgun out and was handling it when it discharged, striking the driver. Scott was taken to Parkland Health Center North in Bonne Terre, where he was pronounced dead about an hour later.*

ALL: Christ Jesus, after hours of agony, you gave up your spirit. We pray for trauma doctors and nurses everywhere, who daily care for victims of violence and who, after every effort has been made, must pronounce children, women and men dead.



**THIRTEENTH STATION:  
JESUS' BODY IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**LEADER:** Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." (Luke 22:19)

*Deputies were called to a home in Franklin County where they found Ronald, 39, shot dead and Leslie, 34, shot but still alive. She was taken to a hospital by ambulance and was later pronounced dead. Investigators said a witness heard a car drive away from the area after the shooting. Both victims are from Pacific, Missouri.*

**ALL:** Christ Jesus, after an agonizing death, your body was taken down from the cross and released into the arms of your mother and your closest friends. They mourned your loss, struggling against despair. We pray for families who are called to identify a son, a daughter, a brother, sister, mother, or father whose life has been ended by senseless violence. We pray that they will recognize your face, Christ Jesus, in the desperate yet sacred moments of their grief and that they will know hope.



**FOURTEENTH STATION:  
JESUS' BODY IS PLACED IN A TOMB**

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory? (Luke 24:26)

*Lauren, 38, was shot to death by her husband, who had no violent criminal history, in the town of Foley. He killed his wife and father-in-law with a handgun inside their trailer home, police said. He then fatally shot himself. All four of the couple's children escaped the home while the chaos unfolded. The second-oldest child, a girl about 13, scooped up her two younger siblings and ran out the front door, authorities said.*

ALL: Christ Jesus, you were gently laid in your burial place by those who loved you. They experienced profound loss, anguish, and overwhelming sorrow. We pray for every family member and friend who attends the burial of one lost to gun violence. We pray especially for the survivors of gun violence, whose lives are changed physically and emotionally by trauma.



## CLOSING PRAYER

### LEADER:

*Dear God, source of all light,  
we are surrounded by the darkness  
of the injustices experienced by your people,  
the victims of senseless gun violence,  
the families and friends of those needlessly taken,  
the first responders, medical personnel, and social workers who deal with  
tragedy daily,  
the teachers who prepare for the unspeakable, the children who live in fear,  
the people of faith seeking answers to ceaseless trauma,  
and those who seek help in their hopelessness.*

*Surround us and fill us with your Spirit, who is Light.  
May our reflections on the mystery of Jesus's death help us to see God's desire:  
violence is not answered with violence;  
death is not answered with the language of death.  
In the silence of the cross,  
the uproar of weapons ceases and  
the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue and peace is spoken.*

*We desire to be your presence to the least among us  
and to know your presence in them as we live in the hope of the Resurrection,  
to bring justice and peace to the world.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

ALL: *Amen.*

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### **St. Martha's Hall** (<https://saintmarthas.org/>)

- Since 1983, Saint Martha's has worked to end the cycle of domestic violence. We empower women to take control of their lives and secure a better future for themselves and their children.

### **Mercy Neighborhood Ministry Resources** (<https://www.mercy.net/practice/mercy-neighborhood-ministry/mercy-neighborhood-ministry-resources/>)

- Mercy Neighborhood offers an abundance of resource throughout the St. Louis area.

### **Cardinal Glennon Hospital** (<https://www.ssmhealth.com/cardinal-glennon>)

- Serves children in need of health care throughout St. Louis.

### **Children's Services Coalition of St. Louis** (<https://www.csc-stl.org/>)

- CSC members work together to promote the delivery of high-quality social and behavioral healthcare services for Missouri's children and their families through advocacy, collaboration, and communication.

### **The BRIC (Bullet Related Injury Clinic)** (<https://www.thebric.org/>)

- Community-based clinic in St. Louis specializing in helping people heal after they have been injured by a bullet. "We provide holistic care for anyone dealing with the impact of a bullet to support your mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Whether you have been shot, someone you love has been injured, or there has been a shooting in your community, we are here for you."

### **Behavioral Health Response** (<https://bhrstl.com/>)

- Crisis support, mental health counseling, suicide intervention/prevention, resource referral, 24-hour hotline
- Justice and Crisis Response Unit: street triage co-responder model where a trained J-CRU clinician partners with a St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department officer. Our clinician travels on calls related to behavioral health such as mental health, substance use, trauma, quality of life events, self-sufficiency incidents, and more.
- 911 Diversion program helps the community obtain crisis phone services if an emergency response is not needed.

### **Crime Victim Advocacy Center** (<https://www.supportvictims.org/>)

- Victim advocacy, trauma-informed counseling, support groups, legal assistance, fundraising for crime victims fund (support for victims of all types of crime, including violence).

### **Be SMART for Kids** (<https://besmartforkids.org/>)

- The Be SMART campaign was launched in 2015 to promote responsible gun ownership in order to reduce child gun deaths. Whether you're a gun owner, or you know someone who owns a gun, there is a role for everyone in the conversation around secure gun storage. Be SMART is a framework that parents, caretakers, and community leaders can follow to help keep their communities safe.



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