

Terrorism: A Different Perspective

By Jim Seghers

Like many Americans the cowardly suicide murders of thousands of innocent civilians has occasioned the bubbling up of many deep emotions. This morning after Sunday Mass a kind gentleman handed me a picture of an Eagle crying with the enflamed World Trade Center in the background. As our nation expressed its shock, anger, sadness, courage, patriotism, and resolve, it seems to me that every viewpoint has been probed and discussed except one - God's perspective.

As God looks down on this latest madness in our culture of death, he doesn't see innocent Americans pitted against satanic Islamic extremists. He sees, instead, his children killing each other. I can't imagine the grief Adam and Eve experienced when their son Cain killed his brother Abel. I know the pain I feel when my children are ugly to each other. However, I would be utterly disconsolate if one of my children murdered a sibling. The picture that comes to my imagination is that of the battered face of the crucified Jesus with his head ringed with spike-like thorns. Tears are flowing from his eyes, not because of his great physical suffering, but because the Father's children still have not learned the lesson of his passion, death and resurrection.

Hatred is a poison that eats away and destroys the image and likeness that God built into his favorite creature. It's a devastating fire that burns and destroys everything it touches in contrast to the consuming fire of love that affirms and vivifies. When one responds to hatred with hatred it's like attempting to put out a fire by throwing gasoline on the blaze. Our country is now marching to a mandate to rid ourselves and the world of those who have committed these heinous acts. However our greatest danger is not the additional loss of life that will inevitably result from an armed response, but the temptation to become consumed with hatred and revenge. Then we will become like the enemy we are trying to eradicate. Sadly, as I was driving home this evening I heard a news report that an innocent man was murdered in the U.S. simply because he was believed to be an Arab. This is trying to get even with an enemy by intentionally drinking his poison!

Whatever unfolds in the months and years ahead, a long-term political or military solution is impossible if these are the primary means upon which we are relying. A collective solution is only possible when the individual antidote is fully absorbed. That antidote is Jesus Christ who said: "This is my *commandment*, that you love one another as *I have loved you*" (Jn 15:12). So as I reflect on the terrible events of the past week, I have rediscovered that the real challenge is within each individual Christian. Each one of us is again tested to put God first of our lives - to make Jesus the Lord of *everything* - and to love those around us with the self-sacrificing love of Jesus. In the words of a popular hymn: "Let there be peace in the world, and let it begin with *me!*" It is only in this manner that we can hope to eradicate the terrible violence that could consume us all in its combustible hatred.

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