



FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

Surely all of us let out a similar groan of sadness when we learned of the terrorist attack on the Lower West Side of Manhattan on Tuesday afternoon. I used to live near that neighborhood and would often ride my bike or go for a run on the same bike path. The people who were killed began their day like any other, but they never arrived home, because a crazed zealot decided he would take into his hands what belongs only to God...the giving and taking of human life. What makes it worse is that he mistakenly proclaimed that he did so with God's blessing. He didn't. God weeps with us.

From some circles I have already heard the familiar and worn-out argument that religion is the problem. According to this rationale, if there were no religion we would have less war, terror, and fanaticism.

If all religious belief and practice were equal, this argument might be correct. We know, however, that our religious belief--and the belief of many other Christians and non-Christians--leads us to humbly recognize that God is the author of life, that all human beings are made in his image and likeness, and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. It is precisely our religious belief which fortifies our human reason, which, by itself, moves us away from all violence against innocent life.

Religious zealots, on the other hand, reject human reason and their fake religious motives encourage their irrational action. They allow themselves to be brainwashed by radical voices which tell them that God approves of this irrational behavior. We can all say that this radical ideology of hate is not true religion. It is fanaticism and it has no place in our world.

Here's a good litmus test: If you ever think God is telling you to do harm to another human being, that voice is not God's. Let us pray together for the victims and their families. Let us double our efforts to love our neighbors as ourselves and in this way, give evidence to the world of the power of good of true religious belief.

God Bless, Father Jonathan

FATHER JONATHAN MORRIS – 718-295-3770/ ILOVEOURPARISH@GMAIL.COM