

# Living the Beatitudes After September 11

## A time of sorrow & grief

In this time of profound sorrow and uncertainty, we mourn the tragic deaths of the thousands of innocent men and women who were the victims of terrorist violence in New York City, at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001.

We continue to offer our prayer and concern for the families, loved ones, friends, and co-workers of those who are lost. We can only imagine their pain, as their lives have been torn apart. We humbly stand with them.

We give thanks to God for all the men and women involved in the rescue and recovery efforts. Their courage and selflessness are a testimony to all that is most noble in the human heart.

We believe in a God of life, who, in the midst of overwhelming tragedy, shares the pain of all the sorrowing, and promises to bring life out of chaos.

## A time to work for peace with justice

We must pray deeply for our country during this time of national crisis, in order that our sense of outrage, which we all share, does not degenerate into a campaign of vengeance and retribution.

We denounce all acts of violence and prejudice directed against Muslims and persons of Arab descent. We affirm our solidarity with all who conscientiously live the faith of Islam.

We unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism, which have been motivated by hatred. Terrorism is a crime against humanity and can never be justified.

In our condemnation, however, we must also find the courage to ask ourselves, Why such hatred?

What are the historical and present injustices, which have festered to such a point?

We pray that our love for our country does not blind us to the suffering and aspirations of the rest of the world.

Let us reject the hysteria of war, which only inflames anger and hostility. From the depths of our national pain, we must resist national policies bringing death and destruction to greater numbers of innocent persons.

As military action is now being waged in Afghanistan, we are more convinced than ever that war is never the solution to legitimate grievances.

It is our personal and collective responsibility, as persons of faith, to call the leaders of the world to heed the voice of morality in the pursuit of justice.

Now, more than ever, we must dedicate our energies to pursuing nonviolent means — "the *moral equivalent* of war" — in responding to appalling evil. Only this dedicated action has the power to ensure a safer world for all.

We must be a voice for the people of Afghanistan. May our own nation's suffering deepen our compassion for them.

As the war continues, an even greater humanitarian tragedy is unfolding — in deaths, casualties, displacements, and the specter of starvation during the brutal winter.

The people of Afghanistan must not be considered the regrettable "collateral damage" of warfare, but must be spared at all costs.

The innocent people of Afghanistan are not expendable and their deaths can never be justified.

The bombing must be stopped.

The international community must unite in a concerted humanitarian response to the suffering of the Afghan people, and in a universal outlawing of *all* forms of terrorism as crimes against humanity.

Those responsible for the acts of terrorism must be apprehended, and brought to justice before an international tribunal overseen by the United Nations.

In the search for justice and safety, our nation must not perpetrate the very destructiveness we condemn.

A time for a new vision

Genuine peace is based on justice and a respect for human rights among persons and nations.

In a time of grief and anxiety, it is all the more necessary that we root ourselves in the ground of truth and respect, from which all our actions must flow.

This is a time for silence, reflection, and prayer — in order to embrace the profound moral questions facing us as a people. Now is the time to live our faith that *love and truth are stronger than violence and revenge*. During this difficult time, our community prayer reflects this call to silence, and the need to work for peace and justice in the light of the Gospel of Jesus.

*Please join us in this search for peace.*

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