

How to Pray for a Terrorist

To understand the force that ignites a need to destroy is difficult.

This morning I was watching coverage on the terrorism in France, and they posted a picture of a smiling, decent-looking, young man who allegedly was the “mastermind” of the coordinated bombings and shootings in France on Friday. The news anchor made the comment that in the face of this man’s belief he, and those who followed him, believe they are martyrs.

In another segment of the report one eye witness heard a shooter proclaim, “For God!”

Being a Christian, it is difficult for me to grasp this concept of terror in the name of my God. But if I am to look at it through the experience I’ve had with the “enemy” in my life (devil, Satan, Lucifer ... whatever you wish to call him), I can see his hand at work. Was the man who smiled at the camera and later led a bloody massacre across the French border once a little boy who was inherently good? Or was the evil at work within him from the moment of conception?

Ah, the age-old debate.

Well, I’m not here to debate. This is my personal forum, so I am going to say what I believe (or rather, what helps me sleep at night).

I saw that picture of the young man and immediately felt a pang of despair, the same despair a parent might have for a child who somehow along the way got lost and tangled in the thicket of the enemy’s deception. Because I have dealt with such evil in my life I can’t help but believe the greatest tool the enemy uses on any forum (terrorism, pedophilia, narcissism, addiction and so on) is to deplete the ability to

have compassion. By taking away compassion from one person, the enemy can use that person to do whatever form of harm he wills because there is no care for the effect.

That summation is quite obvious I'd imagine, but for some reason it helps me to *try* to understand *how* there is such evil in this world. For those of us who believe in God, who is love, then we acknowledge there is the existence of the counterpart, which is evil.

Matthew Kelly made a comment this weekend at a Passion & Purpose conference I attended with our church group that struck me. He quoted from the bible:

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

He then stated, "Why then, when we are in Mass are we not praying for (ISIS)?" (He used Osama Bin Laden as the example.)

It is difficult to imagine praying for such evil, however, it is not the work of the enemy you are praying for, it is the creation of God (in His likeness and in His image that was once "good") that deserves the prayer.

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27).

I will never fully understand why or how evil can take hold of someone and cause such havoc within another person's life, but I do know because what I have gone through in my past and having stared at the purest of evil face to face that I will make an extra effort to walk even closer to my Lord each and every day, putting on the armor of His Word and guarding my heart for the love of the Lord.

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Heavenly Father, I pray for those who lost loved ones in the face of evil in France. May they know your grace and mercy in this time of heartache and despair. Instill within them the fire of Your love to ignite their ability to persevere and carry on. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. {eoa}

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