

A New “Black Friday”

Minutes before starting to write this blog I made a new and sad connection with the term “Black Friday.” At just before 6 a.m. today (11/24/17) the [Washington Post reported](#) an attack on a mosque in Egypt (in northern Sinai). At that time at least 235 people had been killed. The report indicated that a suicide bomber had detonated his bomb inside a mosque. Others died from gunshot wounds.

The murders of Muslim worshipers are deplorable and needs to be condemned by everyone. Even as we pray for the survivors and the families of those who died, a “brutal response” is promised by Egypt. It is a test of anyone’s faith to have to endure such violence. Where was God in this carnage? Worship of God should be safe whether we are Muslim, Jewish, Christian or any faith group.

This is a tragedy in a long line of tragedies in the Middle East. The Washington Post also reported that over 1000 security force members have been killed since 2013 in northern Sinai. Every one of those victims, their families and those who were injured or otherwise traumatized needs spiritual care. The spiritual damage is impossible to fully appreciate especially for the families of those murdered in the Mosque. There are reports that at least some of the worshipers belong to the Sufi branch of Islam. Sufis are regarded as heretics by some hardliners in Islam.

How do we react to this latest act of terrorism and destruction? That is a question for each of us as well as for our federal government to answer. One way is to denounce the group that is found to be responsible. Another is to offer genuine compassion and whatever specific forms of support are appropriate. If you don’t know what will help a Muslim friend in U.S., ask your friend.

In the United States there are several million people who identify with Islam as their religion. Given the cultural diversity here in Silicon Valley it is more than possible that we will or do meet, shop with, work beside, marry or live next door to a Muslim. That person or family will appreciate your understanding if they are upset and even distraught over the massacre of their fellow Muslims.

They may or may not have gotten involved in the shopping binge we know as “Black Friday.” However, It occurs to me that Muslims may remember this day as A “Black Friday.” Let me clear that when I use the term “Black Friday” I began the day thinking that it was just a day for consumers buy everything on sale. I end this “Black Friday” with a deeper appreciation and sorrow for the suffering of people who embrace Islam as their faith group wherever they live but especially those who are persecuted here or in the Middle East.

The government of Egypt has declared a 3-day period of national mourning for those who were killed this morning. I encourage each of us to remember this “Black Friday” as a day of mourning for the victims of this violent attack. We who are Christian can also pray for God’s mercy and healing for everyone involved: those who died in the explosion and gunfire, those who were injured, the security forces, the ambulance drivers and other first responders as well as the medical, nursing and allied health staff who treated any of the victims.

As always, I welcome your [responses](#).

Rev. Larry LaPierre