



The Diocese of Rupert's Land

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“What happens in Vegas ... does not stay in Vegas.”

There is an old adage amongst people who go to Las Vegas to “let their hair down” which goes, “What happens in Vegas – stays in Vegas.” The shooting massacre that occurred last Sunday evening can't, and must never, stay in Vegas.

Before one goes to thoughts about why this happened, or how it can be prevented in the future, we have, first, to stop and let the profound sense of grief sink in. There are 59 lives – God-given lives full of meaning and potential - that are no more. There are families and communities of friends and colleagues around each one of those lives that will never be the same. And there are the same circles around each of the hundreds who were injured in the attack. It brings to mind the slaughter of infants by King Herod following Jesus' birth, which Matthew quotes in his Gospel (recalling the catastrophic loss to Israel in the 8th century BCE at the hands of the Assyrian invaders.):

A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more. (where Rachel represents the “mother” of Israel.) [Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18]

The people of the United States, of the North American way of life as we know it, and of the whole human society have been wounded by this vicious and violent act.

I ask that you hold all of those directly affected by this wound in your thoughts and prayers. But I also ask that each of us take time to acknowledge the way that America, North America, and, in fact, each one of us is bearing this wound. I suspect, and passionately hope, that attitudes toward “bearing arms” and the current gun laws in the United States will be the focus of deep reflection, conversation and action. While greatly restricted access to firearms would not have changed the motivation in this gunman's mind and heart, it would have greatly changed the horrific outcome of his actions.

Ultimately, the most important piece of remembering Las Vegas may be to remain conscious of the pain and wounds that so many of us carry and which, if left isolated, uncared for – unacknowledged by ourselves or others – can lead some to acts of violence against themselves or others, and the rest of us to emotionally-numbing withdrawal from true human community.

It is up to each of us, and all of us, to take the grief, the learning, and response in transforming love and action well beyond Vegas and into our hearts and lives – everyday.

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