

## HUMAN TRAGEDY....HUMAN KINDNESS

After last Sunday night's tragedy in Las Vegas, much has been said and written about the actions of both victims and first responders following that horrific attack; but I felt a need to add a reflection to what I've read and heard in the week that followed.

When we witness the terrible things that transpire in our world, especially when they occur relatively close to home here in the U.S., it seems to me that it's important to turn our attention to the goodness that emerges in the midst of those tragedies. That doesn't mean we ignore the violence or abandon efforts to find ways to prevent or mitigate – through sensible gun laws or increased funding for mental health care, for example – the carnage that ensues when an unstable or angry person plants a bomb or picks up an automatic rifle to slaughter innocent people. But when we find ourselves otherwise powerless to effect needed changes in society, it's good for our souls and for our collective national spirit to focus on that "milk of human kindness", self-sacrifice and generosity that good people demonstrate when their fellow human beings are in need.

All that goodness was so very evident in the painful scenes that played out in TV news footage following the Vegas shooting rampage. There was a particularly poignant story of a woman shot in the stomach and saved by a young man who loaded her onto a truck, stayed with her in the hospital until she was taken to surgery, then disappeared into the night, not waiting for any recognition of his selflessness. She never learned his name. But when she was interviewed in her hospital bed a day or two later, she told her story and expressed the wish to meet her rescuer and thank him. He saw the interview, showed up at her bedside the next day and held her hand as she acknowledged his courage and kindness. He had come to the concert to celebrate his birthday! And then there was the young husband who threw himself down on top of his wife to shield her and lost his own life saving hers. "Greater love has no man" – or woman.

So much horror and tragedy – not erased, but in some way balanced, I hope, by goodness, courage and kindness. And another horror hopefully balanced by human kindness was the appalling comment of a CBS News VP and attorney the day after the attack. She tweeted that she felt little sympathy for the victims because, being country music fans, they were probably Republicans and members of the NRA. Fortunately, she was fired the next day. It struck me that, while we hear volumes in the news about President Trump's offensive or simply wacky tweets, that story was quietly buried by most news outlets. But again, human goodness, compassion, courage and kindness should have the last word – and I believe they always will.

Fr. Bob