

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [~~dick@chez-nous.net~~] *no longer used*
Sent: Monday, September 10, 2001 7:03 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: two weeks

Sunday morning I was tooling down the freeway between Minneapolis and St. Paul, and a motorcycle passed me...towing a rowboat at freeway speeds! I did a doubletake. Then, that afternoon, on my walking route, two kids came down the sidewalk rolling a canoe, inside of which was a small kayak (the canoe was on a platform of sorts, on wheels. Memo to you wilderness types : civilized idea for portaging. Actually, the use of the wheels was probably logical - the kids had probably been in the lake, whose dock was a few blocks away on the other side , and lived some blocks away and were going home.

Fall is coming here - I can tell this by the first timid geese which are heading south. By next month they'll be going through here in droves. The ducks that occupied a small neighborhood pond all last winter will probably return to take up that same insane winter home in a short while - they have been gone all summer. Even in the animal kingdom there are personal quirks and foibles among the animals - they aren't all alike! Speaking of animals: I was listening to a Canadian broadcast piece on Thursday night, about an 800 pound black bear who ran into a car someplace in Manitoba recently. Normal very large black bears are about half that size I guess.

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to keep for your own collections.

Today began a two week Habitat for Humanity project in Minneapolis. I'm scheduled for nine of the ten days, but will probably only have to work about six of those. We will be working on a house in south Minneapolis, to be occupied by a Somali family. John Hagebock joined our Basilica work group today and will be there again in the morning - we and two others worked together on a porch today. He does very good work. Cathy will join the group next week Tuesday.

Affordable housing, which Habitat is about, continues to be a crisis here, as are the other elements that go into homelessness, especially for children and their families, most of whom are working, I believe, but for too low wages. I would really recommend that everyone on this network read an editorial on homelessness in Sunday Sept 9 Minneapolis StarTribune. go to www.startribune.com, click on Opinions, then editorials and the editorial "Homelessness/No meals, no meds, no mattresses" should come up. Homelessness is a very major social justice issue, not at all abstract to tens of thousands of people in this state, including the working poor who simply cannot afford housing. We are no better or worse than anywhere else. All the stories of those who are homeless, are not at all as simple and clearcut to judge as it might first appear. Sure, some make unwise decisions, and some's pathway to the street is full of foolishness - but who are we to judge? They could be any one of us - which is hard to imagine in these prosperous days. The only difference is that we haven't (yet, and hopefully won't) gone over the cliff; they have.

For those readers who are Christian, Jesus' entire message - it seems to me - spoke constantly to the needs and the very real value of those in his society who were on the lower rung, and even made stupid personal decisions, and he did so without judgement. His judgement was more to be seen cast on the ones who judged ("let the person who is without sin cast the first stone", and many similar.) It was the prosperous and the powerful who were his foils. I think Hebrew scriptures have a similar thread as well - God never gave up on the "ninnies" who couldn't figure it out!.

Which reminds me of a letter from a friend who works in a large Parish in another state: a recent issue, there, was what to do about a homeless guy who was living in his car, and using the bathroom facilities in the church. I don't know what the final resolution was - the guy probably went somewhere else before the issue became a crisis - but it is one of those dilemmas of putting the gospels into practice.

More than enough for now. Do hope you all have a great week.

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2001 6:07 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: September11, 2001

I hit the send button on the usual family letter about 7 a.m. this morning. An hour later, in my car, just off downtown Minneapolis, came the first announcement of the World Trade Center disaster. Off and on throughout the day we listened to the radio at our Habitat work site. I didn't see the images - nor did I really grasp the fact that the World Trade Centers had in fact collapsed - until arriving home and watching the news at 5 this afternoon.

This joins the list of tragedies of the past that are burned into our memories - we all can generate our own list. First on my list was the assassination of President Kennedy in November, 1963. You have your own.

Tom and Joni, I remember the one and only time we saw, in person, the World Trade Centers in NYC. It was in late June, 1972. I looked through the slides of that trip this afternoon, and I have three excellent photos of those then-brand new buildings, two taken from the Statue of Liberty. (One tower was completed in 1972, the other in 1973. They were both complete exteriors when we saw them, but apparently only one was fully occupied.)

Last night, at this time, our country was a safe and generally caring place, full of good people.
Tonight, it is no different.

Let us not let the horrific events that happened about 12 hours ago change our attitudes about our own society, and about others. The small band of terrorists want to encourage fear, and reprisals. We must not play into their evil hands.

Those touched directly by this tragedy need our help and our prayers. And we need to continue to seek peace and good will.

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2001 5:11 AM
To: Mary Maher
Subject: RE: September11, 2001

You cannot sleep either. I am following your request, and sending your most important comments to a very large network of people I know here and around the country. Peace and prayers, Mary. Working together we will recover.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Maher [mailto:mmaher42@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2001 3:44 AM
To: dick@chez-nous.net
Subject: Re: September11, 2001

Hi Dick

It is an enormous tragedy! Please zap these thoughts to persons on your list - it continues to be important that we all see ourselves as together in the aftermath of this senseless terrorism.

I, as a New Yorker, feel a special sense of fear and immediacy. Having just left an area of the world where tension is a fact of life I fully recognize how insulated and protected we have been able to feel on our continent. That has changed - we now feel the tension - we are now terribly exposed.

All of us have connections that have been affected...Sean, safe in Houston, recently left Manhattan and has many colleagues who work for Morgan Stanley, one of the largest tenants of the trade center that is no more. A friend works for Sun Microsystems and from the vantage point of CNN in Frankfurt watched the workplace and undoubtably many colleagues and friends disappear forever. And, for me, so many more!!

I just left Manhattan four days ago. Spent a memory filled Labor Day weekend enjoying the beauty of a city at peace. Drank Latte at the Starbucks in the WorldTradeCenter - commented on the way NYC manages itself and its millions of persons - rode a clean and efficient subway - and had tears in my ears at the all american skyline - and the energy of a city literally at the hub of world trade.....world travel...world peace.

New York City is so immensely diverse that all nations in the world have someone who is connected to someone who calls it home.

I have faith in the resiliency of this city, and this state, and this country because I have faith in the resiliency of the american people.

We, in Rochester, New York (seven auto hours away,) are affected in that our hospital beds have received some of the air evac injured. I am on a volunteer list to go to NYC to relieve tired health care workers as the city struggles to recover.

There will be plenty for everyone and prayers for prudent direction are a very important first step. My fear is that this is the tip of an iceberg. It is large enough to put any and all of our self interests into smaller perspective. We have only yet to see the impact of this enormity.

To enjoy freedom, we must work for freedom...we must pray for peace.

Love
Mary

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Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2001 12:34 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: FW: moving eye witness account....

The eyewitness account below is forwarded from friends. The account is by a man, whose name I chose to edit out of this transmission.

I would also highly recommend your reading the article "Gandhi knew not to fight violence with violence" in today's Minneapolis StarTribune <http://www.startribune.com> Search Gandhi. It will probably be the second article listed. It is by Jesse Buikema, a student at the University of Minnesota.

A very brief editorial:

The Third Reich succeeded in branding the Jews as enemies, and we know the results.

A really very tiny band of terrorists, their networks and their zealous sympathizers in the United States and around the world are working very hard at branding Americans as mortal enemies, and we are beginning to know the results.

Some Americans would now like to brand those who have the terrorists nationality, religion, ethnic origin...as enemies, and go collectively after them through insult, revenge or retribution, including going after those who live among us who look or dress funny, or go to mosques, or....

There do not exist sufficient Armies nor ammunition nor intelligence to destroy the terrorists here or world-wide. Terrorists will always exist. Attempting to fight their evil with equal or greater evil will make their continued success even more assured.

I urge us all to work and pray very, very hard for Peace and understanding among all peoples on this small Planet on which we all live, together. We are part of the World community, which is much, much larger than our own self-interest.

Dick Bernard

Hearing an eyewitness account should help you pray harder.

The following is my eyewitness account of the events of September 11, 2001 from the 73rd floor of 2 WTC, better known as the South Tower.

I arrived in my office at 8:35 AM and turned on my workstation. Within 10 minutes, at about 8:45 AM the lights flickered and we thought..."what was that"? Looking out the window, from where I stood in the middle of the floor, I was facing North and I could see smoke, debris and falling papers.

One of my colleagues yelled from across the room, "Go,Go,Get Out, Go!" and many of us got up and walked toward the fire exits. The stairs seemed like the only escape. I never did check the elevators. Many people made their way down.

We grabbed nothing, no computers, no palm pilots, nothing. All personal items were left behind but there was no turning back. We walked down about 15

... floors to about floor 58 when a fire marshall came over the intercom and said the problem is in 1 WTC, the North Tower, that an airplane has run into its side, but that our tower was "completely secure". Don't worry was what he said, almost sounding like he was suggesting that we should go back upstairs and resume work.

Elevators were operating again, it's about 8:55 AM now, and I continued to make my way down a few more flights to the 53rd floor. I moved away from the stairs and down a corridor as people were reassured by the recent fire marshalls' comments as to our safe tower. Some people made their way into elevators, some people turned around and went back upstairs, but I made a conscious decision not to go into any elevator.

My curiosity did get the better of me as I moved toward one of the North windows. I looked up at the burning North Tower seeing the fire, the smoke, the debris, the papers flying, and I actually saw a woman falling or jumping out of one of the higher floors. "Oh My G-d, Oh My G-d" is what I heard around me as people fell out of windows.

There were several phones in the office I was standing in, and people started to call loved ones. I picked one up and dialed my wife. As the answering machine picked up I said, "There is a problem in the 1 WTC, I'm sure you'll hear, I'm in 2 WTC and am perfectly fine. I'm making my way down." I then proceeded to make two more calls to me father and mother and gave them similar accounts and hung up.

My father thought I was still on the 73rd floor and within 10 seconds of my call watched the second plane hit the South tower. He believed it was all over at that instant. What actually happened for me was I felt the impact of the explosion that I believed was at my feet. I heard the crashing glass around me as the building rocked. My hands began to shake and my knees buckled. I knew I could not stay where I was and I had to go lower. I made my way to the stairs, passing people along the way. I saw the horror and the fear in several faces as I went by them. I still believed the impact was at my feet and as I descended past floor 50 and floor 40 I was sure to see disaster.

By the time I made it down 53 more floors I was both sweaty and in shock. I came face-to-face with several firefighters and policemen who I believe were unable to make there was back through the wreckage. There was plenty of debris scattered across the concourse and the security guards were attempting to keep people away from any windows. What would happen to all these building employees ran through my mind.

We were then guided through the concourse and asked to keep moving

quickly.

Down several escalators and up one more by foot we ended up on Church Street.

"Keep moving" is what was shouted, I made my way up to Broadway passing bloodied shoes and fallen glass. As I turned and looked up I saw both burning towers. I was horrified and looked on in disbelief. I hung around awhile longer, perhaps 15 minutes, hoping to see any friends and colleagues.

I saw nobody I knew.

I saw several video cameras, people crying, asking questions with few answers at this point. I wanted to tell anyone about my experience. I finally found a video cameraman to talk to. It's about 9:50am now, and in less than an hour I was down from the 73rd floor of the building. Fifteen minutes later, as I moved north toward City Hall I watched in disbelief as the South Tower tumbled to the ground. This was the same building I heard a fire marshall say was completely secure less than an hour ago. As the tower came tumbling down, the debris and smoke came billowing down the street and I found myself charging up Centre Street.

I slowed down my pace as I knew the smoke was well behind me. I spoke to two women about my story over the next twenty blocks, stopping only to call my wife at a payphone with seven people in front of me. When it finally came my turn all I got was a busy signal. By the time I reached Houston Street the North Tower was collapsing. This was inevitable after watching the first one crumble.

By the time I reached 14th street I stopped to hear a news report over the radio. It was the first news I had heard. As I listened for less than two minutes my eyes began to swell as I slowly began to realise how my life had been spared. I kept my walk going north bound as I live on the upper west side. I stopped several people on the street with cell phones to make my phone call home, but no calls would go through. One gentleman asked me my name and said he would continue to hit redial until he got through to my home.

It wasn't until I reached 28th street that I found a pay phone line short enough to wait on and call home again. This time my wife, Debra shrieked as she heard my voice, "Oh my G-d, Jack I can't believe you're alive, we all thought you were dead, don't stop again for anything, don't talk to anybody, just keep walking home!"

Survivor of the Twin Towers Terrorist Attack

(Sep 18, 2001)

Fr. Kevin McDonough

St Peter Claver, St. Paul Church Bulletin.

WE HELD A PRAYER SERVICE WITH OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN on Wednesday morning. Things had been "normal" at Saint Peter Claver School throughout the day on Tuesday: since the school day had already started before word spread about the events in New York and Washington, we did not inform our young students. Teachers and staff, of course, were caught between the self-absorbed universe of the classrooms, on the one hand, and the horror unfolding in the rest of the world. By Wednesday morning, nevertheless, the bubble around these children had burst. Several were in tears. All were at least vaguely aware that the world had changed enormously in the last day. So, we gathered for prayer.

BEFORE THE PRAYING BEGAN, I ASKED THE YOUNG PEOPLE to say what they knew about the previous day's tragedies. They were vague on many details – for example, we have some significant geography work to do! The broad outlines of the day quickly emerged, however. Even clearer to the kids were the questions generated by that tragic Tuesday: Will it happen here? Are the bad guys winning? And the most difficult of all: Why?

WE WERE ABLE TO OFFER HONEST REASSURANCES to the first question: any local recurrence seems most unlikely. They relaxed visibly. We then talked about whether the bad guys would win or could win. I asked them about what they knew about bullies. They quickly realized that bullies are strong on the outside but weak on the inside. That bullying reflects the sadness and bitterness of the bully. And that bullies only win when they make other people like themselves. The bad guys will only win, they understood, if the good guys become like them.

TO THE "WHY" QUESTION there were no simple answers. There still are not. I talked with the young people about believing that God is with them, and that those who died are with God. We prayed for the families of the missing. We prayed for the bad guys, too, in obedience to Jesus' command that we pray for our enemies. When the answers are slow in coming – as the answers in this tragedy are sure to be – then prayer is the best place to await them.

THE CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS ARE THE QUESTIONS that all of us share in one degree or another. Like them, we have to let go of paralyzing fear and be about the work and the play of our lives. We have to see that the bad guys do not win, and most especially we have to avoid letting the evil spirit dwelling in them make its home also in us. And, until the why's are clearly revealed, we wait in prayer. We pray for the dead and the injured. We pray particularly for the families – those who mourn and those, perhaps more horribly, who still wait in anxiety. And we pray for our enemies. Peace, peace, peace for all.

(2)

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2001 6:36 AM
To: dick bernard
Subject: an awful week

Dear Family members:

I am no different than anyone: I cannot imagine a person without feelings in the aftermath of Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

You know some of my opinions already. These opinions are not necessarily always reflected in things I forward - I forward some information I receive, but not all of it - there was just too much - and some of the information I forward I don't even agree with.

1. I did not forward an extremely powerful power point photo essay of Tuesday, entitled "Attack on America" solely because the last photo, the effective "period on the sentence", was of the Palestinians cheering the bombing. In my view, still today, this is an example of trying to make two wrongs make a right: an enemy identified. How can we condemn hatred of Americans as Americans - what led to the terrorist attacks in the first place - when far too many, in effect, condone hatred of Palestinians as Palestinians, etc., or dismiss the rights of others to have and express opinions, even if (in our view) they are wrong. And our own "American" urban terrorists - and that is exactly what they are - are doing their deed to make sure that those who look, talk, dress like "Arabs" are harassed, threatened and in some cases beaten or worse. We have only seen the beginning of these atrocities, mostly emotional, but some physical. (For some perspective: yesterday's paper www.startribune.com had a guest column by Paul August Jasmer, monk at St. John's University, entitled "If life in our Upper Midwest was more like the Middle East". It is worth a read. Enter the monk's name to search. The article should be on line.)

Today I return to the Habitat for Humanity House we are building for a nine member Somali family. We met the husband (a security guard) last Monday as our Basilica crew had a time of prayer before beginning our two weeks on his families new home. The site supervisor remarked last Monday that members of the family came to the site every day, had worked far more than the minimum hours required, and were the best and nicest family she had ever worked with. Monday was the only day last week that anyone from the family came, and if they don't come today, the site supervisor said she will check in with them. Interpret as you wish. This two story house has been under construction for two or three months already - it is nearing completion.

2. I worry a great deal about what the ubiquitous and frequent use of the "War" word now, and what that means, or what meaning it is intended by "spinners" to project to the public. It is being used a lot, by people with lots of power. We spent 13 years at "War" in Vietnam, getting mired further and further in the quagmire of having to win that war. That war ended ignominiously (for us) in June, 1973, before some of you were born. It spanned over 58,000 deaths, and three presidents. I was in the Army at the beginning of that war - one of the very luck Vietnam-era veterans. My brothers saw heavy action there during the worst parts.

(An ironic twist: I have received in the last few days many copies of Canadian Gordon Sinclair's commentary, "A Tribute to America". It is excellent and moving and glorifies what is good about America. I doubt that any of the sender's knew that Sinclair gave the commentary on June 5, 1973, in response to, and at the time of, the ending of our great national humiliation - our Nation losing Vietnam. This is a time in our history from which we have not yet recovered. If you haven't seen this piece, let me know and I will send it on to you.)

Today, we are at the very beginning of what could be a much, much worse and longer term scenario that will be played out on our shores for the first time since the Civil War. My opinion: We will never completely destroy terrorism; but the nature of our response will make it more or less likely terrorists will receive regional or world support (a la the cheering Palestinians last Tuesday). We as individuals need to work on our own attitudes and to not sit passively by and let the future happen because we don't think we have power, because, because..... If you have an opinion it needs to be spoken particularly to political leaders - your legislators, congresspeople, governor and president.... Have the courage to stop hate in its tracks in your families and neighborhoods and workplaces as well. We all play a part.

We can work for war, or we can work for peace. Whatever the choice, we are in for a long, long campaign.

I am picking peace.

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2001 9:53 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: FW: two weeks

I will be honest: the internal debate in me is whether to say something, or to say nothing on this issue which we all feel so intensely...and in different ways. Following is the pertinent part of a letter I sent to my family members today. I urge all of us to discuss, learn and take a stand on these most critical issues facing our country and our world. I am a single imperfect opinion. Now more than ever before, B'shalom; Peace.

-----Original Message-----

From: Dick Bernard [mailto:dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2001 12:05 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: two weeks

Friday I saw the first ducks on the pond on my walking route. Somehow the pond looks and feels differently than it did before September 11. I suspect that is true for most of us, about gentle places of our own daily lives.

I looked back at the family letter I sent two weeks ago, prepared September 10.... As the song lyric goes "What a difference a day makes. 24 little hours...." More on that at the end of this letter.

The rest of this letter reflects my opinion on the last 14 days...and our nation and its people in general. I hope you will read on. If you stop at this point, my main points remain the same: we will not stop violence with violence, nor will we stop terrorism by a war on terrorism. We need to take a long, hard look at why it is so easy to drum up hatred against us.

Today is day 14 after the horrible events of September 11. I am noticing more reflective talk in the newspaper, especially, and that is good. We all feel as we feel. Today's newspaper headlines at least suggest a more reasoned approach to retribution by those who "hold the trigger". I am a little encouraged.

I am a military veteran, who has never been an anti- or pro-war activist, but for as long as I can remember I have been an advocate for Peace, and Justice for all. I absolutely support bringing to Justice those perpetrators and accomplices who are still alive. I think we are, as a nation, making a huge mistake in pretending that a war on terrorism will root out terrorism: it will only make its intensification on our shores and against Americans generally more certain. We have to speak out to those who we elected to represent us at all levels. We have to be willing to engage in civil conversation, and to truly listen to points of view of those who disagree with us, and to dialogue. This is something we seem unable to do well in our society - rather we too often associate and talk with and listen to only those with whom we agree, and our conversation loses something. Or, even worse, we detach completely from any responsibility for what goes on in our society. Even our political leaders, in recent years especially, have taught through example that their opponents are not worthy of a point of view: until this crisis forced them together, they rarely talked to each other, and about each other, for public consumption, they talked in basically revulsive and contemptuous terms. Expressing anger, sarcasm and ridicule has become the language of contemporary politics. They have taught us many negative lessons..

About the conversation since September 11: I reviewed Friday night all of the e-mail received and sent since that fateful morning. I scanned and considered it all again. What an intense couple of weeks. Somebody who is a kindred spirit of mine on peace wrote that I was really "gung-ho". I guess I have been, and I will continue to be, though not using up your cyberspace as much. But the issue of Peace and Justice for ALL will never be off my screen. We are talking about not only our future, but of everyone who lives on this planet, including the poorest and most oppressed Afghani family who is sometimes looked on as simply potential "collateral damage" to get at Osama bin Laden.

If past is prelude, we will collectively, now, begin to either avoid the Topic entirely, or talk about it only with people who we think totally support our own position. I hope that doesn't turn out to be the case. This is a topic that represents a very major "fork" in our national "road". We have to keep reading and talking and listening and respecting all points of view. I would suggest a reflective visit to a single website before "moving on":
<http://www.whooahoo.net/worldturns/>. And if you can access it, listen to the song "From a Distance", sung by Bet Midler in

her greatest hits album.

I would urge you to visit, and bookmark for future visits, <http://www.gandhiinstitute.org>. Gandhi's grandson, Arun Gandhi, has a short essay on Terrorism and Non-Violence that is worth reading, in my opinion.

Thursday night I was among about 60 people at a long scheduled Catholic Archdiocese Social Justice meeting. The pre-established agenda for the meeting was basically set aside, of course. The lady presiding began her remarks with a paraphrase of a quote from one of the books of Anthony DeMello, as follows:

"All human beings have three basic things in common:

1. We find it difficult to love those who hate us;
2. We find it difficult to include the excluded;
3. We find it very difficult to admit it when we are wrong."

The meeting went on with table discussion of how September 11 has impacted us; and an abbreviated look at our long term concerns of social justice: welfare and housing issues - issues that lay essentially unaddressed by all government entities last legislature and congress in their stampede to give tax rebates. The issues for the least among us will undoubtedly become even more critical concerns in the coming months, as the most economically fragile are laid off, and have to fend for themselves in this new War economy.

Perhaps the most powerful messages I have received since September 11 are copies of two different letters written by 33 5th graders in a long-time teacher friend's class in suburban Minneapolis. Her class and school is a true "rainbow" place - very diverse in all ways. The first letter was written on September 12, a "how I feel letter"; the other, a few days later to fellow students in New York City. Writing about feelings is a very common cathartic device used by teachers with students - an opportunity for even the shyest to talk about the untalkable. (It's a good device for we adults, too). It is the future that these and other kids will inherit. The letters say to me these kids are up to the challenge. I continue to say that churches and schools, especially the public schools since they have the huge majority of students, and shelter everyone regardless of financial or family circumstances, are collectively what will bring us through the current state of crisis.

I am thankful, really, that a national conversation is now beginning to urge us to really look at - and deal with - why others can hate us - to the extent that they cheer our tragedy.

In this regard, I think of one of our societies many "blind spots" - something we don't know we don't know about ourselves - which I have not really seen addressed in any forum since September 11: Five years ago, an angry anti-government young white guy, with some white guy accomplices, bombed the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. Cathy and I have been there. It's a monument now to several hundred innocents killed. But I mostly reflect on it today because, if you remember, there was near hysteria in this country over who did the deed...until an ordinary anti-government American white guy, Timothy McVeigh, was arrested on probable cause. After his arrest, life for most of us went back to normal. We didn't look with suspicion on angry white guys generally; Congress didn't allocate billions for a war on the tens of thousands of angry white guys who spew their venom freely in this country, and probably privately cheered the destruction of a symbol of the government they hate. All of you who are reading this were around when the Murrah Building was bombed. Think about it in context with today's interational War on terror. What if that same building had been bombed by "some Arab"? How would we have reacted then?

Last week I mentioned to some of you the fact that, like the Palestinians cheering our tragedy, many Americans had in effect cheered the death of 71,000 Japanese civilians by the first use of the Atomic Bomb, over Hiroshima, August 6, 1945 (tens of thousands more died later of bomb-related illness and injury in the five years after). And this doesn't count Nagasaki, later. (I know people whose parents were interned (imprisoned) in America for the crime of being Japanese nationality in WWII). Some readers protested to me: "but that was different". I challenge anyone to prove to me that it makes any difference who cheers which brutality. For an apparently very substantial element of the Arab World, we are now viewed by them, as we viewed the Japanese so many years ago, with disrespect and revulsion. To this day, we have the opinion that we, the only ones ever to have used the Bomb, should be the only ones with rights to it. In my opinion, we need to back off from our national arrogance and take a very hard look at ourselves as part of the world community, and how we are viewed by that community.

We have a lot to learn, 225 years into our Democracy, especially about how we relate with, and depend on, the rest of the world. Early Thursday I had a "coffee and conversation" with a friend I've known for many years, but who I've too seldom seen. We are both retired. We talked a lot, of course, about the present...and the past...and the future. September 11 - and a chance meeting a couple of days earlier - is what brought us together for a great and long overdue visit. At the end of our conversation he pulled up his sleeve and pointed to a wrist band with the initials WWJD on it ("What Would Jesus Do?") I had always perceived Joe to be a spiritual, though not especially religious person, in the conventional sense. His gesture was very powerful. What would Jesus do? Or Muhammad for that matter, or any of the

great Prophets of the Hebrew tradition...when faced with this, is a very relevant question we should all ask ourselves.

The Sunday after September 11 our Priest was faced with the universal dilemma of his colleagues of every denomination, everywhere: what should I talk about? In the end, he briefly and very powerfully focused on the Gospel reading for the day, (Luke 15: 11-32) on the Prodigal Son, his father, and his responsible...and very angry brother.... He chose to focus on the angry brother, and on the absolute need to replace anger with forgiveness. (If you are a reader not from the Christian tradition, and need a little more information about that passage, **see the end of this letter for a summary.**) At the aforementioned Social Justice meeting, one lady commented on the aftermaths of a conciliation message preached by her pastor: three families quit the parish. And so it goes...goes...and goes.... But we forget too quickly. We cannot forget.

Thank you for reading this. I am grateful to the many who commented in any way about the messages I sent on in these first two weeks of our future.. Thank you.

Pray and work very hard for Peace, and have a great two weeks.

The essence of the story of the Prodigal Son: A rich man had two sons. At some point, one of the sons asked for his inheritance, and left for a distant land, squandering everything he had. The other son remained with his father and was the essence of a responsible person. The Prodigal son returned to his father, asking forgiveness, and expecting nothing in return. The father rejoiced in the return of his errant son, and had a big party to celebrate his return. The responsible son was very angry at this, for he had done everything right, and his brother had done everything wrong. The father said to the responsible son "Son, thou art always with me, and all that is mine is thine; but we were bound to make merry and rejoice, for this thy brother, was dead, and has come to life; he was lost, and is found."