

A Message from Rev. Rick Luciotti, *Facilitator of Care to Clergy and Clergy Families*

As I write, I have been traveling and am somewhat behind in the news.  Initially after reading Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith's [pastoral letter](http://conta.cc/2ymIvU2) on the Las Vegas attack, I was at a loss for words or thoughts.  Reading, pondering, meditating and praying over the phrases from the prayer of St. Francis she mentioned yielded a calm and clarity.

Even today as I am horrified by these senseless actions, I find more reasons for hope than despair.  Beyond the acts of humanity in aiding and caring for the many victims is a strong sense that we have the capacity to direct a more positive and hopeful narrative.

Within our spirits resides the Spirit of God in Christ's Grace.  I suggest we invest more energy to meditating on and praying for our own spiritual growth rather than preaching to others how they should respond to such tragedies.

In moments of crisis, many find the unifying capacity for caring.  Often wonderful acts of catharsis follow.  But all too soon we move on to other pursuits.  And all too easily we are tempted to become embroiled in partisan disputes.  I believe that as we devote more effort in meditating on the meaning of passages, such as the prayer of St. Francis, our capacity to share comfort and peace gracefully, even with our enemies, will mature.

Growing in spirit and in devotion are practices which can assist in resisting the inclination to accept as 'a new normal' disunity and tragedy.  These are also behaviors capable of guiding us in fulfilling the thought of Founding Father Thomas Paine: "he that would make his own Liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from opposition; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach himself."

Let us truly learn to love our neighbor, as we say we love the Lord.

*Comfort and peace,*

Rick Luciotti