

## A week of sorrow

Last week was not a good one for our country. I wish I could say that the violent events of last week were a shock to me. I can't. In fact, little shocks me anymore. Hatred and violence have become so commonplace in the news in this country that all I can do is shake my head and ask God to look kindly upon us.

When innocent people are victimized—children slain at a school, people mowed down in a marketplace or slain in a synagogue—we shake our heads and wonder how this could happen and continue to happen, as though we simply cannot learn the lessons of love. I cannot explain what makes a seemingly ordinary man turn into a monster. Perhaps there is no explanation except that jumble of anger and fear in the monster's head. Yet, we have to accept that, at some point, he was not a monster, but someone's brother, son, husband or friend. Was he always unhinged or did it happen in the not-too-distant past? Did someone do something to him to drive him to gather his weapons and shoot innocent people at worship? These good people died:

Joyce Fienberg  
Richard Gottfried  
Rose Mallinger  
Jerry Rabinowitz  
Cecil Rosenthal  
David Rosenthal  
Bernice Simon  
Sylvan Simon  
Daniel Stein  
Melvin Wax  
Irving Younger

Another monster created a different kind of havoc. He didn't kill anyone, but could easily have been the cause of deaths. He only mailed pipe bombs to perceived "enemies" of his political views. Really? Is this how far we have fallen in our tribalism? Is anyone who disagrees with me the "enemy"?

And, yet another one, this time in Kentucky. He tried to pull open the locked doors of an African American church. Then, not able to get inside, he went next door to Krogers and shot and killed two elderly black people. Maurice Stallard and Vickie Jones were the victims.

Things like this will not stop in our deeply divided nation until we can look at and resolve the anger, bias, and racism that continue to simmer right below the surface of a privileged America. I know, I know, there are those who see what they want to see, and hear what they want to hear, never considering that the world is eroding at their feet, like the Louisiana coastline. Little by little, we all lose unless something is done. And yet, God continues to love us, good and bad. Remarkable.