

We live in a digital age.

Orlando –formerly for me the reminder of a place of fun, happiness and fond memories, where I have gone with my family (Disney World) more than 20 times.

Orlando -- now the nearly constant center of my prayer life, for my heart is filled from digital world input – like those images of text messages sent a mother by her son, who is about to be shot.

The pain for me is almost too much to bear. And I know (by your presence here) that you share that pain.

The truth, however, is that after you and I have moved on with the news cycle – to the next crisis, to the next subject whose pain is almost too much for us to bear –these parents whose children were in Orlando at the Pulse on the night of June 12 will still be dealing with it. Even though we have moved on.

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Few of us here today have been able to escape the news coverage AND the wide, wide, wide array of responses. This crisis has been the perfect storm for people who want to assess blame: gay rights, anti-gay, terrorism, fear, gun control, immigration, and on-and-on. The list of subjects for blame is all over the board. And I have been amazed, and deeply saddened by the commentary that takes away from the reality of the pain, in its [“solving the problem”](#) and in [“assessing the blame.”](#)

And I doubt that a single FaceBook commentary on any side of any issue associated with this has caused a single person to change their mind on that issue.

I did read one FaceBook posting that did move me. It was written by one of the doctors who treated patients who had been in the Pulse Club. He wrote:

"These are my work shoes from Saturday night. ... On these shoes, soaked between its fibers, is the blood of 54 innocent human beings. I don't know which were straight, which were gay, which were black, or which were hispanic. What I do know is that they came to us in wave upon wave of suffering, screaming, and death. And somehow, in that chaos, doctors, nurses, technicians, police, paramedics, and others, performed super human feats of compassion and care....

There is still an enormous amount of work to be done. Some of that work will never end. And while I work I will continue to wear these shoes. And when the last patient leaves our hospital, I will take them off, and I will keep them in my office. I want to see them in front of me every time I go to work. For on June 12, after the worst of humanity reared its evil head, I saw the best of humanity come fighting right back. I never want to forget that night."

Dr. Joshua Corsa M.D, EMT-P
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When Fred Rogers was a boy and would see scary things on the news, his mother would say to him, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

Dr. Joshua Corsa was a helper. **I want to be a helper, too.**

I've seen some people who have made FaceBook posts that say the answer is LOVE.

And, indeed, Jesus' great commandment was this:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. John 13:34 This commandment of love – by the one whose birth caused all the infant children in and around Bethlehem to be slaughtered.

The problem that I see is that far too many people who:

- **Love their ideas more than they love people.**
- **Love their religion more than they love people.**
- **Love their political party more than they love people.**
- **Love their group's affiliation more than they love people.**
- **Love their answers more than they love people.**

And they don't love people **as Jesus loves them.**

We live in a digital age. And the digital age is based on a simple **binary system**. The whole computer existence is based upon a selection of 1 or 0; yes or no. A choice of only two things.

And that appears to have shaped how we live. We live in a constant state of judgment. Can you think of anything you have done between when you awoke this morning and when you have arrived here that has not been done in a binary way. **I like this; I don't like that. This is good; this is bad.**

The Biblical story tells us that in a garden a long time ago, First Man and First Woman ate from a prohibited tree of **the knowledge of good and evil**. And we have been judging, judging, judging ever since.

A parishioner asked me yesterday, “**Monty, what’s your answer to the Orlando situation?**” I replied, “**That’s above my pay grade. I can’t answer that.**”

I can’t tell you the answer to the problem we saw this week in Orlando. But I hope I can be a helper. I hope that maybe (within the sphere of my limited influence) I can encourage someone to approach their living with a prayerful, prayerful intention of seeing the beauty in the people, animals and creation around them without judging them to be good or bad.

I hope that maybe (within the sphere of my limited influence) I can encourage someone to approach their living with a prayerful, prayerful intention of loving people the way Jesus did – unconditionally and without judgment.

We are so deeply entrenched in the blame game, in the judgment game, it is no wonder that the whole country is fraught by acts of violence every day. And our assessment of blame and judgment have not seemed to help the situation at all.

I hope that maybe (within the sphere of my limited influence) I can be a bit of **leaven**, a bit of **salt**, a bit of **light** that might encourage others to pray enough, to be intentional enough, that at least some of us

- **may see beauty instead of blame,**
- **may love instead of judge, and**
- **may allow some force bigger than us to have some fertile soil in which to plant seeds of peace.**

I hope that maybe some of you will join me – **loving people more than ideas**; **seeing beauty instead of blame**. I hope. Yes. And I believe. **Selah.**