

In trying to “come to terms” with the horror of the Boston Marathon bombings over just a couple of days, again, we have become acutely aware that nobody escapes being wounded. We are all wounded people – broken open physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main concern then is not how we can hide or get “beyond” our woundedness so as to “get on with life.” Rather, what we are learning is how we can put our woundedness and vulnerability in the service of others through heart-to-heart connections. This tragic event so close to home has wounded us all and has thrown us back on the infinite resources of God, having us recognize our dependence on God, and our interdependence with one another and the wider human race. When our woundedness and vulnerability cease to be a source of shame or embarrassment or anger, and become a source of healing, compassion and forgiveness, enabling us to share one another’s burdens, we then become “wounded healers” and seeds of hope for others.

And we have not only experienced or witnessed this horror as individuals and families and religious communities locally, but also as a wider state and nation, and beyond that, again we realize that all over the world there are large groups of people who are made victims of such horrendous violence on a daily basis. We’ve shared again in one catastrophic moment some of the everyday experiences and insecurity and vulnerability of those living in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and so many other places.

A stanza in the Leonard Cohen song, *Anthem*, reads, “Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” - and that’s how the light gets out, when our hearts have been cracked open. God’s gift of hope is present even when our worst fears have been realized - when our hearts are broken open. Our worst fears were realized on that otherwise beautiful afternoon near the finish line of the Boston Marathon – as they were in Newtown, CT just a few months ago. And yet God is hoping in us, and that hope will not disappoint. It’s that hope that Jim Wallis speaks of when he says, “The principal vocation of religious communities in the public square is not to bring their dogma, but to bring the one thing you must have if you’re going to change your neighborhood, your city, your nation, or your world. That’s the dynamic and power and promise of hope.” The only way I know of trying to make sense out of a senseless world is by making it relational - seeking a hopeful way forward seeking to build bonds of our common humanity.

God is nearer even than our breath and closer than our hands and feet, calling on us to cling to God and one another even as we sigh - or scream – at the senselessness of such violence. And yet there are these seeds of hope sown by God in each of our hearts - compassion, hope, connection, and vulnerability - discovered in the midst of our worst fears being realized, and cracked open in the fires of tragedy, and now growing; or as Elie Wiesel stated, “We must look for hope - as a Great Hasidic master said, ‘If you look for the spark, you will find it in the ashes.’” With God’s hope and purpose and power guiding us, may God bless us all.

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