

# COLUMNISTS

## Response to terrorism must address its causes

I'll try a question-and-answer format aimed at clarifying some of the difficulties before us this week. I'm coming from the basic viewpoint of mainstream Roman Catholic moral theology. I am not assuming a pacifist stand at this point.

### What is terrorism?

Terrorism refers to acts of destruction directed at motivating particular behaviors in others. The motivating force sought is fear, or terror, instilled by the direct killing or injuring of people and the destruction of things of value.

### Is it moral, as other forms of warfare can be?

Terrorism uses direct killing, injuring and destroying to achieve its desired result of instilling fear in others. It is immoral for this reason. Direct acts of killing and destruction become the way to achieve the results sought. This is immoral. Other forms of warfare aim at a goal whose achievement might result in the taking of human life, but that is never the direct intention. Thus in World War II lives were lost, but the taking of life was not the direct intention of the war.

### Are there moral means that can be used to combat terrorism?

National governments have the duty to protect their citizens. Therefore, even deadly force may be morally justified in the defense of a people or nation. This refers to the circumstances surrounding terrorism as well as to other acts of aggression or warfare.

### What are the moral dangers that we may face as we confront terrorism?



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life

BY PATRICIA SCHOELLES, SSJ

I see three. The first is that we may use force to avenge past acts or we may ourselves use terrorist tactics to prevent terrorism against us. This can be the case even in targeting military installations and personnel. The second is that we ourselves may directly target innocent people and civilians, just as the terrorists did to us. Third, we might use excessive force, thus provoking greater hatred and anger that will come to haunt us in the years ahead.

### What obstacles to success does resistance to terrorism typically encounter?

Terrorism is often carried out by a small group that is basically part of a much larger, very widespread movement. Thus, killing radical members of the smaller group is often unsuccessful in the long run. Communities and nations undergoing terroristic attacks are often so overtaken by anger and hatred that they embrace the illusion that very violent responses are likely to succeed. As can be seen in countless instances, however, morally unjustifiable responses to terrorism are likely to increase violence rather

than stop it.

### Is the use of force an adequate response to terrorism?

It never has been, which we can all see in countless examples from our history. Nations may need to defeat cells of terrorism for the protection of their citizens, but to stop there will not solve the problem.

### What else is required?

For terrorism to be eliminated, some foundation for relationship between terrorist forces and the rest of us must be established. Economic and political action must be undertaken that will mitigate the suffering and loss of purpose that give rise to terrorism in the first place. The cost that nations like ours may have to pay in order to address the root causes of violence may indeed come in terms of soldiers dying and of military action on air, land and sea. But we will also need wise policy that will address the economic and political causes that inspire such wanton cruelty. Otherwise, the horrendous price we will pay will not be worth it.

### Specifically, what will we need to address?

People willing to end their own lives in airplane strikes see little to give them hope for the future. People willing to forego comfort and wealth and a stable lifestyle find that working through the systems is to no avail for them. In my opinion, the central reason for hope in any of us is the prospect of handing on to our children and those who come after us opportunities that will make their lives meaningful

and productive. Parents make enormous sacrifices for their children. They do that because they have reason to believe that their children will have the opportunity to live fruitful lives.

The problem right now is that the earth is full of nations and entire peoples whose perception is that they have nothing to hand on to their children. The United States and our allies, whose citizens enjoy such wonderful sense of purpose and meaning and, in comparison with the rest of the world, such incredible wealth, will also have to search for political and economic solutions that will ultimately make terrorism unnecessary. If we simply strike out militarily and ignore the other causes that contribute to terrorism, we will ultimately fail. It is not an accident that in these days we hear much about the role of Afghanistan in the terrorism rampant around our planet. The average per capita income in Afghanistan is \$250. Life expectancy there is 45 years. The infant mortality rate is over 30%. In my opinion, the people of Afghanistan have little to live for.

We must now act in order to render justice upon those who destroyed the innocent people who died last week and to prevent anything like this from happening again. But that is not enough. The United States has the best track record for helping others of any people who have ever lived on earth. We will not have the luxury of abandoning that road now.

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Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's Institute.

## Just-war theory needs revision

What happened on Sept. 11 in New York and Washington was not a tragedy in the tradition of Greek drama, in which tragedy is an inevitability, an unavoidable fate. What happened at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were acts of war against the United States, every bit as much as the events of Dec. 7, 1941. Here the analogy to Pearl Harbor really does work.

For many years, U.S. policy has treated international terrorism as a species of crime. Terrible crime, yes. Tragic for its victims, to be sure. But essentially crime, committed by criminals, who are to be dealt with like robbers and murderers — by the criminal justice system.

The vocabulary of "tragedy" has reinforced the notion that what's happening here is crime writ large. It is not. The terrorists who hijacked and then drove fuel-laden jetliners into the World Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon were not "tragic" actors. They were combatants; those who trained, paid for, equipped, and provided them with lo-



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difference

BY GEORGE WEIGEL

gistical support are combatants. And what we are engaged in is a war.

Which means that the appropriate moral categories in which to think through our post-Sept. 11 policy are the categories of the just-war tradition.

This will require a serious intellectual effort by scholars and military and public leaders. Just-war theory, like every other way of thinking about international affairs for the past three centuries, has long assumed that the state is the only significant "unit" in world politics.

The smoldering ruins in lower Man-

hattan have made unmistakably clear that non-state "actors" — like terrorist organizations — are crucial units-of-count in the world. States are not all there is.

The just-war tradition needs to be "stretched," or developed, to deal with this new reality. In confronting terrorism, "just cause" cannot be limited to repelling an "aggression already under way" — as some current Catholic thinking has it. When facing terrorist organizations, pre-emptive military action is not only morally justifiable but morally imperative. How to articulate the moral case for pre-emption without turning the world into a free-fire zone is something much in need of discussion.

Given the nature of terrorism, the contemporary tendency to think that the U.N. or some other transnational agency is the "legitimate authority" for sanctioning the use of armed force must also be revisited. If someone is making war on us, as the terror network surely is, we do not require the permission of others to defend ourselves or to take the war to

the enemy. Allies in that enterprise are welcome. Their approbation, while desirable, is not morally necessary. Here, too, is an important subject for debate.

Just-war thinkers are also going to have to reconsider what we mean by "last resort." Terrorists, by definition, do not play by the rules, diplomatic or otherwise. I can't see how it makes moral sense to argue that one must first attempt to negotiate with people who regard negotiation as weakness, for whom acts of mass murder are deemed religiously praiseworthy. Yet again, a thorough sorting-out is needed.

The Christian realism of the just-war tradition has tried to bring reason into the realm of the terribly irrational since the days of St. Augustine.

We have neglected it, intellectually, for too long. Its development will be crucial in the decades of struggle ahead.

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## KIDS' CHRONICLE ANSWERS

from page 20:

1. Old, 2. New, 3. Old, 4. Old,
5. New, 6. New, 7. Old, 8. New

## HEALING RETREAT

LED BY FATHER RICHARD MCALEAR, OMI  
Celebration of Eucharist & Prayers for Healing

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2001 AT 7:30 PM  
Celebration of Eucharist and Prayers for Healing

Church of the Transfiguration:  
50 West Bloomfield Rd., Pittsford

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2001

"New Millennium - New Journey

According to the Gospel of Christ"

9:30 - 10:30 am Holy Hour (in the church)

10:30-12:00 pm, Teaching and Sharing

12:30 pm Lunch, bring brown bag,

2:00 - 4:00 pm Teaching, Sharing and Prayer

4:30 pm Celebration of Eucharist

At Transfiguration, Parish Life Center Hall

REGISTRATION FEE: \$10.00 (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

PAYABLE TO: OBLATE HEALING MINISTRY

Church of the Transfiguration

50 West Bloomfield Road, Pittsford

interpreted for the hearing impaired upon request

Ann 381-8577; Carol 381-8227



### ADDITIONAL LITURGIES

Monday, Oct. 15, 7 pm

ST. JUDE'S CHURCH

4100 Lyell Rd., Rochester NY

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 7 pm

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH,

46 Stanley St., Mt. Morris, NY

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 7pm

ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH

8 Mark St., Rochester, NY

Thursday, Oct. 18, 7pm

ST. MARK'S CHURCH

54 Kuhn Rd., Rochester, NY

