



Catholic Press Photo/CNS

A multi-colored banner bearing the Italian word for peace waves in front of St. Peter's Basilica March 5. On Ash Wednesday, Pope John Paul II led the world's Catholics in prayers for peace and urged world leaders to "avoid another dramatic conflict for humanity."

## Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* provides space for readers to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.

Letters must not exceed 300 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

# Evil, global modernization lead to terrorism

During a stroll down Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue, I suddenly realized I was zigzagging to avoid barriers that were erected because of the terrorism alerts. But what, ultimately, was causing my path to change?

A frieze at the U.S. Supreme Court gives us one answer. In the middle of the frieze are Justice and Truth, with the works of good on their right and on their left the works of evil: corruption, slander, deception and despotic power.

Ultimately, terrorism is the result of these works of evil.

One reason we are being terrorized is because we have a better life than people in most nations. Whenever anyone is No. 1, there is always someone plotting to take over the top spot. Some consider this normal in the world of competition. More often it should be at-

tributed to jealousy, one of the seven deadly sins.

When we look more closely at the billions of dollars the United States has sent to poor countries to help raise their standard of living, we also see the ugly head of corruption. Too often that aid never gets to the most deserving because of despotic power and government corruption.

One wonders how much less terrorism, and for that matter how many fewer AIDS cases, would exist had American aid been distributed equitably. When people have jobs, food, medical aid, just treatment and are building toward a bright future, terrorism loses its purpose. As goes the infrastructure of a country, so goes its rate of crime.

The United States is not exempt when it comes to corruption that helps terrorism. Recent scandals in major corporations have



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demonstrated that the fraud depicted on the Supreme Court frieze is in our own back yard. Not only were life savings lost, the economy weakened and unnecessary hardships created, but the scandals provided ammunition to terrorists who can point to our corruption

and argue that Americans are greedy, the kind who would want to take over the world.

Evil in its many forms is the ultimate reason we are fighting terrorism. I also believe a less perceivable evil is a factor: fallout from global modernization.

Countries that are spawning terror don't want to be forced into modernization. Like most of us who cling to old traditions, they want to hold onto their ways of life. With the revolution of the digital world and global trading, they aren't being given a choice. Economic and technological pressures literally are forcing them to change their way of life.

More irritating for them than this is that they feel they are being Westernized. The implication is that Eastern culture is inferior. This has caused serious misunderstandings and resentment, both of which are evils.

The next time anti-terrorist precautions force you to zigzag down a sidewalk or through a building, use it as an opportunity to reflect on the enormous powers of evil behind them and how new forces of global modernization factor into the situation.

Father Hemrick is a columnist for Catholic News Service.

Send us your views on the issues.  
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