

Statement of the Council of Bishops of the UOC of the USA: Prayers for the Victims in Las Vegas
Звернення Собору Єпископів УПЦ США: Молімося за невинні жертви трагедії в Лас Вегасі!

We find ourselves this day filled with compassion for the families of the victims who perished in the worst massacre of human life in the history of our nation. We find within ourselves this day an insatiable desire to pray for those victims, that our Lord will grant them a place of rest where the Light of His Countenance shines upon them as they await the great and final judgment. And oddly, we find ourselves this day in a state of shock that such a horrific attack can take place once again without any warning, without any obvious reason and without anyone who will really be capable of explaining. We will hear theory after conjecture, after just plain guesswork on the part of pundit after pundit after pundit. We will, however, probably never fully comprehend why such a horror as this Las Vegas attack can happen or how man can be so cruel to man.

We stated “oddly” above about finding ourselves in a state of shock. When we look closely at the history of the world of mankind, not only over the past few decades, but throughout human history, can we discover any extended period of time, beyond a few years perhaps, during which we were not confronted with man’s incredible ability to hurt, dominate, repress or annihilate fellow man? This would be an overwhelming state of affairs had we never been confronted by God Himself, the God of Love, the God Who was and still is ready to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of humanity.

We need this day, dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, to fall down on our knees before that God of Love. We must pray fervently that the Lord will “deliver us from all blindness, forgetfulness, despondency and all hardened insensitivity”... Lord, grant us humility, discernment and obedience. Lord, grant us patience, generosity and meekness. Lord, implant in our hearts the root of goodness and of Your fear... Lord, enable us to love you with all our souls and minds and establish Your will in all... Lord, You know Your creation and as it is Your desire, allow Your will to be done in us, sinners, for You are blessed to the ages. Amen.” (Evening Prayers)

It is by this common prayer on the part of each and every one of us – each and every day or even more than once a day – that the terrorism of this modern age can be crushed. Bigger and better weapons of mass destruction, huge numbers of them, have failed to crush it. The power of faith and trust, however, is beyond and above the power of those man-made weapons. The God of Love, a God Who will not allow us to completely destroy His Creation or ourselves, can and will respond to our prayers – prayers, which we must not consider to be strictly the domain of Orthodox Christians, but those of all mankind. Faith and trust in that God, dearly beloved brothers and sisters, will bring His intervention and healing to a suffering world.

In our Lord’s All-Encompassing Love,

+Antony, Metropolitan
+Daniel, Archbishop