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Dear Parishioners; I am sure that we were all shocked by the news of the Afzaals, a Muslim family that was murdered by a man driving a truck, as the family was out for a walk. There is no connection to the man and the family, and so this was simply a random act of terror. Our hearts go out to the other family members and especially Fayez, their nine year old son, the one person in the immediate family who survived the attack. That little fella lost his mommy and his daddy and his siblings, and only because they presented themselves to the world as being Muslim.

Something that has been bothering me for a while and that has really settled in, is when advertisers and the government try to tell us who we are as Canadians. They tell us that we are kind and polite and tolerant, and then we hear news like the Residential Schools and this senseless murder of a Muslim family; together, out for a walk, acting in just the way that the advertisers would like us to think of all Canadian families.

Well it turns out that we are far more complicated and complicit than Molsons or Tim Hortons would have think that we are. I am certainly glad to be a Canadian in the same way that I am glad to be Catholic, but that doesn't mean that I am always proud of being either one.

Life would be hard enough with just the pandemic, but recent events are weighing on both my Catholic and Canadian conscience. And we have to be careful to not turn away just because what we are hearing does not bring us peace.

As we are told, we belong in the one Body of Christ to the point that when one person has a reason to rejoice, then we all have a reason to rejoice; and when one person suffers, and especially for no fault of their own, then it is a suffering experienced by the whole Body of Christ. And so it does us no good to turn from the sufferings of others, and especially when it is difficult to make sense of it, or we are afraid of what it is saying about us or our church or our country.

There is a way forward and especially for people of faith. We need to create and to give so that we feel that we are making a contribution against the hate and racism that so many Canadians are reporting that they

experience as being routine to their daily living. And what we can create and what we can give away is compassion.

The Buddhists say that the antidote to anger and hatred is compassion. And Jesus tells us that prayer, sacrifice and generosity are a remedy for our sins. The point being is that there is a way for us to mark ourselves as different from those who find it easy to dominate and subordinate others, and that is by taking advantage of every opportunity that we have to make a positive difference.

The Holy Spirit knows our limitations and how short our reach can be, which is why Jesus also encourages us to believe that the Spirit can multiply our good works 30, 60 and even 100 fold. And as we choose to be grateful and thoughtful, the Holy Spirit will reward us with hope and the reminder that Jesus is with us until the end of age. Our job is to give God something to bless and to multiply, and then to be comforted and encouraged by the rewards of the Holy Spirit.

The following is a Muslim prayer for the nations in which they live and especially our own; *Oh Allah, our lord, unite our nation around the principles of justice, peace, love and faith. Put peace and love in our hearts for the diversity that makes our country so beautiful Oh Lord, most Strong, Give us the strength to protect and care for our neighbours. Oh Lord, we pray for our nation, to remain loving, compassionate, remove prejudice from our hearts, and enable us to love our brothers and sisters of all faiths and none. Make our hearts and minds aware of our heritage, fulfilling duties and responsibilities as a citizen of our country! Allah, Most Merciful, allow us to show kindness to those most vulnerable in society. Protect us from evil, inspire and guide us in defending those open to abuse. Lord, Most Generous allow us to give in charitable activity, and to help those most in need. Lord, give our Government vision and wisdom, as they take decisions affecting peace in our world. Allah, our Sustainer, allow us to care for our environment and sustain this world for future generations. Lord, Most merciful, Most Generous, please give us the patience to continue to learn from one another and work towards a more peaceful and kind world. Make true in our nation the ideas of freedom and justice and brotherhood for all those who live for them. Make our hearts generous so that we may treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Help us to share that which we have with others, for your sake. Strengthen us, love us and be kind to us all.*

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever. Pat Monette/Pastor