

The Rev. Deborah Cayer
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I've heard experts say that while it may feel as though the world has completely changed after trauma, we recover and discover that much of our lives are actually the same. It is we who are changed. I've been thinking of how I've changed....

Things I know now: that a jet loaded with fuel can be used as a bomb to incinerate a building and its inhabitants; that evil walks its ordinary dog in the neighborhood just like everyone else; that the beauty and meaning in my life will not protect me or anyone I love; that after a stunning violation of humanity and all that is sacred, the overwhelming majority of people turn toward each other and do the only thing there is to do...we begin the immediate repair of the world.

Things I will never take for granted again: the sound of my older daughter's voice; the lovely curve of my younger daughter's high cheekbone; the morning tea that my husband fixes for me with easy kindness and love; my granddaughter's tiny hands that can now wave bye-bye; the responsible heart of the man I hope will one day be my son-in-law; freedom; democracy.

And yet, these things I still believe: that violence, reactivity and retaliation will never secure justice; that the urge to patience, forbearance, truth, humility, love, balance and peace are the core teachings of all the world's religions for good reason; that at the center of every human being there is a spark of sacred goodness that contains all we need to know to survive, if we listen.

May we listen. May we listen. Compassionate heart of the universe, hold us as we hear and feel our grief, our outrage, our pain. Support us as we hear and understand our feelings as mighty messengers of the radiant holy spirit of the universe. May our prayerful listening help us find ways to turn from hatred and violence, and become instead co-creators of a just and peaceful world. Amen.