

A WVIP Commentary
By William O’Shaughnessy
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“Thoughts and prayers.” We tote out the phrase and cling to it with a fierceness as we apply it to the victims after every tragedy, every shooting, every bombing. It has become banal, hoary and hackneyed from overuse.

And so here we are again on a Monday, October 2, 2017 with another “thoughts and prayers” day which comes at us from a glitzy, hedonist town out in the Nevada desert called Las Vegas, the Baghdad of North America.

It is a place where dentists, deputy sheriffs, plumbers, electrical contractors, doctors, judges, matrimonial lawyers, John Deere dealers, politicians and even broadcasters and, a’hem, gun manufacturers, go each year to get away from their wives. They call this annual rite a “convention” where they meet in high council for a few hours each day before succumbing to all the earthly pleasures of this remarkable city that grew up around a big, broad, sprawling boulevard they call “The Strip.”

Slot machines line the concourse leading to and from jet planes parked on the tarmac. And a van advertising a shooting gallery for sawed-off, automatic, repeating guns is parked even now outside the vast Las Vegas Convention Center to greet visitors to this lovely city which once sent Harry Reid to run the entire Congress of the United States.

This time it was several of those automatic weapons that dispatched death and destruction from the 32nd floor windows of the Mandalay Bay Hotel spewing it among 22 thousand helpless people there assembled for a concert. The said individual behind the weapons with a scrambled egg mind didn’t let up on the trigger as he murdered 58 and wounded almost 550 with one of his beautiful repeating guns that pumped murder into the desert night air.

And on our televisions once again there is praise for the first responders, the police, the doctors and nurses and calls for an end to all this by banning instruments designed for killing.

They will blame this carnage on the faux and make-believe Violence that plays nightly across television screens and in movie theatres. They will also target the politicians and especially President Donald John Trump who is so hated by the Democrats and the Deep State Establishment for trying to do the right thing by the nation he inherited from a well-intended, but ineffective, adjunct college law professor and Chicago community organizer.

This time it was a shooter. But it could have been a bomber or a glassy-eyed, deranged driver behind the wheel of a huge careening truck mowing down innocents out for an evening stroll. Banning guns and weapons won't stop it. The guns are already out there ... under mattresses in house trailers and wrapped in towels in five-floor walk-ups in the Bronx, Harlem and Chicago. And, implausibly, in luxury 32nd floor hotel suites in Las Vegas. There will be rioting in the streets if we try to take them and damn near a civil war. These hidden guns are everywhere and await only a prompt and a caress from one of life's losers boiling with rage.

And those who want guns only in the hands of law enforcement officers forget it was a former NYPD cop who left his house trailer in New Jersey to murder Federal Judge Richard Daronco as he tended a rose bush in his backyard on Monterey Avenue in Pelham here in Westchester just a few years ago. Judge Daronco's name is on our courthouse in White Plains as a reminder.

Call for Gun Control all you will. But the halls of Congress have no wisdom on the awful dilemma which resides so close to our home as well as in foreign capitals abroad.

And how about the vengeance known as Capital Punishment, the Death Penalty, which has never saved one life or prevented one murder? As Hugh Leo Carey and Mario Matthew Cuomo warned us: it diminishes us a people and makes the State no better than the perpetrator, the killer.

“60 Minutes” had a stunning piece Sunday night about the cosmos and the intergalactic world trillions of miles out in space which made us feel small and insignificant, if not in awe of the Creator's magnificent handiwork, all this startling and breathtaking information coming to us

courtesy of the revived Hubbell Telescope.

But on this blood-drenched Monday you can just forget about those planets and stars which exist millions, nay trillions, of miles out in the solar system. For here in this very country, the great United States of America, we are shooting the Bejesus out of each other.

I wish we had a Mario Cuomo to explain this killing which comes so easily and so often to us and the rage behind it. The holy men from all walks and persuasions will try in the next several days. The Jesuits will advocate for Reason while the Franciscans will come at you with Love. And the rabbis will recommend that we Rebuild the Universe and remind us we are all brothers and sisters. They will use words from the ancient Hebrew like Tzedekah and Tikkun Olam.

But I’m not sure “thoughts and prayers” work on this stuff. It may help with the fury and force of a hurricane or a tsunami. But not in the roiling, scrambled egg mind of a madman bursting with loneliness, fury and hatred.

For once I have no answer ...

William O’Shaughnessy, a former president of the New York State Broadcasters Association, was chairman of Public Affairs for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington. He has been a point man and advocate for the broadcasters of America on First Amendment and Free Speech issues and is presently chairman of the Guardian Fund of the Broadcasters Foundation of America, the national charitable organization. He is also a longtime director and member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation. He has operated WVOX and WVIP, two of the last independent stations in the New York area, for over 60 years as president and editorial director.

He is the author of “AirWAVES” (1999) ... “It All Comes Back to Me Now” (2001) ... “More Riffs, Rants and Raves” (2004) ... and “VOX POPULI: The O’Shaughnessy Files,” released in January, 2011. He has also written “Mario Cuomo. Remembrances of a Remarkable Man,” a tribute to his late friend Governor Mario M. Cuomo. His newest book RADIOactive for Fordham University Press, another anthology with interviews, commentaries, speeches and tributes was

published in 2019. He is presently working on Townies, a paeon to those without wealth, influence or high estate in suburban Westchester County, the heart of the Eastern Establishment.