

God's grace leads to good

Father John Dietzen's response regarding conscience and suicide bombings (CR, March 29) is misleading and does not adequately represent the church's views. Although it is true that we can never know what is in a person's head, we also must have confidence in the meaning of the catechism when it says "with a sincere heart, and moved by grace ..."

It is absolutely a core belief of the church that we can have confidence that if we open our heart to God's grace it will lead us to an absolute good, which is the reflection of God in the physical and moral order of his creation. If this were not true then there is no meaning to the power of God's grace. Sin may cloud our vision, but God's grace will never lead us to something that is objectively evil.

It is totally unthinkable that God's grace will lead a sincere person to blow up himself and 100 innocent people in a marketplace. This is precisely the mistaken idea that Pope Benedict is trying to correct in his teachings against relativism. The only thing that will save one of these suicide bombers is if he is mentally ill or brainwashed to the point of being incapable of making a valid moral choice. I suspect Father Dietzen is emphasizing the point that we should not make a final judgment against others, but we cannot use that to water down the key point of the church's teaching. We can say with certainty that it is not God's grace leading a person to commit these acts; hence whatever was going on in the heads of these people, they were not moved by God's grace.

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