

Hallowed roads

David Stevenson was on a bus on the way to his hotel when the bombs went off in Boston.

An avid runner, Stevenson had completed the 26.2-mile trek in 3 hours and 14 minutes.

His feet had already pounded down the streets of Boston and across the finish line. The 37-year-old had already flashed a jubilant smile as he and a friend posed for a picture with a bottle of champagne.

The 1993 John Carroll graduate was looking forward to attending the post-race celebration with friends later that night.

That all changed when he heard the tragic news, and Stevenson instead spent the remainder of his day in his hotel room watching the news and attempting to reach out to friends and family.

Prior to the race, someone had posted a note of congratulations and good luck on Stevenson's Facebook page. It was addressed to a group who would be running the marathon and it said: "It's a gift to be running on those hallowed roads."

Those words struck me as particularly poignant. They are just roads – pavement after all. But thinking of all they have absorbed – the hopes, dreams and determination of hundreds of thousands of runners – and now the blood, tears and anguish of those involved in the tragedy – I feel they are hallowed roads indeed.

Runners such as Stevenson know the Boston Marathon is the world's oldest and most prestigious annual marathon.

"It is the ultimate focus of many a runner to achieve a BQ (Boston Qualifier) and truly earn the opportunity to run these streets on the third Monday in April," Stevenson said in a written message to The Catholic Review. "It is the only race where you absolutely must qualify. Individuals are often overcome with emotion just knowing that they have finally achieved this goal through tremendous hard work and sacrifice."

Stevenson was quick to point out that "Nothing will change that." He was also quick to say that the tragedy will not tear people apart.

"I feel for those who had their dream of running down Boylston Street to the finish line shattered," he said. "For many it was likely a once in a lifetime opportunity. I am heartbroken for those who had their lives altered, ruined, or taken away from them. The perpetrators of this disgusting act and others like it think they can bring us down and tear us apart. They have yet to realize that it only serves to bolster our unity."



*Adidas has announced it will donate all proceeds from the sale
of its new "Boston stands as one" T-shirt to The One Fund,
which was established to aid victims of the Boston Marathon bombing.*