



Address at the Memorial for Orlando Victims

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on June 13, 2016**



Office of the President
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

*This speech was presented on June 13, 2016 to the attendees
Memorial in honor of the victims of the mass shooting in Orlando, FL
on June 12, 2016.*

Orlando: A Requiem

Our condolences to the victims and their families. Our condolences to our friends in Orlando. How they have rallied and come out in support is exemplary.

We are sickened by the senseless violence that took 50 lives in Orlando this weekend, and shattered the lives of thousands more.

This attack, motivated by hate and meant to sow terror, happened in our backyard. These victims could have been our loved ones, neighbors or us.

As Panthers, we have a shared set of values at FIU, values that reflect positively on who we are as individuals and as an institution. These values include respect – for diversity and the dignity of the individual.

All of us must take personal responsibility for creating a healthy and safe environment at FIU – for ourselves and our peers.

In the aftermath of this weekend's tragedy, I want to reiterate our commitment to creating a healthy and safe environment for FIU's LGBTQA community. An attack on any member of the FIU family is an attack on the entire FIU family.

We want to remind all members of the FIU community that if you see something, say something. We have dedicated, hard-working police officers at FIU but they cannot be everywhere at all times. We need, and depend on you to always be aware of your surroundings. Do not let suspicious activity go unreported. If something doesn't feel right, it usually isn't.

Unfortunately, we live in a world of uncertainty. Places that in the past were considered safe and sacrosanct are no longer so. It is incumbent on all of us to make our communities safer. Hate crimes are heinous. They tear at the fabric of society and at the fabric of our souls.

At times like this, we must find the strength within ourselves and in solidarity with our community to rededicate ourselves to the norms that enhance and fortify our civility on campus, in our neighborhoods and in the community.

How do we do this? Is there too much hate? Is there too much bigotry? Can the forces of tolerance overcome those of rejection?

Invariably while we seek the comfort of others to be consoled and to console as we reject the depravity in Orlando. We must look within ourselves first to come to grips with the predations in Orlando and elsewhere that shock the conscience. We must confront what singer/songwriter Sam Smith calls the Lonely Hour. Smith speaks to his need for another in his lonely hour.....Thus we are together to comfort and calm ourselves.

The Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik contrasts human behavior in an essay titled the Lonely Man of Faith. From this essay, he tells us that there are two contrasting styles that must be mastered. The first, an outward style seeking success in the material world. The second, a more inward contemplative style that focuses on inner strength and values. The Orlando Tragedy immediately demands action in both domains but for me, the former can wait.

I call upon you to seek out that lonely hour for you and your inner self, to momentarily transcend your need for another to rebuild an even stronger inner core of values that can guide your post-Orlando thoughts and behaviors.

At FIU, when we talk about taking responsibility there is an assumption that this will be guided by a strong value system that speaks to the transcendence and high purpose of our educational institution and the inherent goodness of humankind.

For me and I hope for you, Orlando reinforces the sense of urgency to make the world a better place. In this lonely hour, that begins with you and the soul-searching that accompanies a tragedy such as this.

Thank you all for being here. May the comfort of our Momentary Solidarity be accompanied by the resolve that comes from a new mental and moral commitment within each of us to build a better world.