

Is There Hope for Harmony in the World?

By: Gabriel A. Hernandez

8th grade, Doral Academy

I don't like to write and when my language arts teacher said that we had to write an essay on Friday, I was not happy. When I got home, I was ready to relax. It was Friday and I could play video games. But I heard my mom telling my dad there had been an attack in Paris, and I remembered the topic of the essay I had to write. How could there be hope for harmony in the world if terrorist attacks happen all the time?

I haven't been to Paris. I'd like to, but my mom says it's too expensive. I visited Spain with my grandparents this summer and I went to Madrid and Barcelona. I imagine that Paris is pretty much like Madrid, but with people speaking French instead of Spanish. I thought about how scary it would be to be at a soccer match, cheering for your favorite team, when two terrorists blow themselves up right outside. I visited the Santiago Bernabeu and Camp Nou stadiums in Spain this summer. They are huge. I thought of being inside one of them, 80,000 fans, like the fans at the France v. Germany friendly Friday night. I thought about how scared they must have been when they realized what was happening around them. Maybe some thought a terrorist could get inside the stadium; apparently, that's what almost happened.

I watched the news with my parents. I felt terrible for the fans slaughtered at the concert and all the other people killed and injured during the Paris attacks. I have always heard my mom talking about 9/11. She says that she saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center while she was feeding me in the morning, watching TV. I don't remember. I was a month old. While watching the news on Friday night, I thought about how scared Americans must have been on 9/11 too. Just like the people of Paris were on Friday.

Kids of my generation have, unfortunately, grown up with terrorism. When I went to Madrid this summer, my grandparents took me to Atocha, the train station that terrorists bombed in 2004, killing almost 200 people going to work. These attacks were by Al-Qaeda. They are a different group, but they are also murderers.

How could there be harmony with so much radical, Islamic terrorism? How can people live in peace if we are always afraid that someone is going to blow himself up because they don't like us? When the thousands of people at Stade de France were finally allowed to go home on Friday night, they left the stadium signing the French national anthem. If, in the end, we are able to come together as one, like the soccer fans did in the Paris stadium, then we can live in peace and there is hope for harmony in the world.