The Seminary Offers its Prayers for Comfort

The April 16, 2007 massacre at Blacksburg reminds us all that the world is not a safe place. As a serene campus in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains has become an arena for random and mindless death, we are made all too aware of "the arrow that flies by day" and the "pestilence that stalks in darkness...the destruction that wastes at noonday" (Psalm 91). Luther once remarked that after the fall, the sound of a rustling leaf would have been enough to cut terror into the hearts of Adam and Eve. The creation which God created and declared good, is plunged into chaos. Life is unpredictable. Distrust of the Creator never remains static and so in fleeing Him "we lost our brother too; each singly sought and claimed his own; each man his brother slew" (LSB 569:2). How potent sin is we see in the carnage enacted on that Virginia campus. Creation is not safe.

Confronted with aimless violence and senseless slaughter, we are tempted to dwell on the questions of "Why?" or "How could this happen here?" Such questions go begging for explanations. We have none save that we live in a fallen world that bears the marks of Adam's sin. School and government officials will seek to find some reason for the actions of the man who destroyed 32 human lives before ending his own. Psychological explanations will never be enough. Instead those lethal scenes projected on TV and computer screens drive us back to the Lord Jesus who comes with nailed scared hands and pierced side into that room of fear-bound disciples. With His words and wounds, He proclaims to them His peace. With that peace, He sends them to deliver the fruits of His dying and rising: the forgiveness of sins. He alone has the words of eternal life. In a world that is unsafe and murderous, we have nowhere else to go. The community of Concordia Theological Seminary lifts up in prayer those who suffer and grieve in the wake of that bloody Monday in Blacksburg. And we dedicate ourselves with renewed urgency to the task of training pastors and deaconesses who will carry the words and compassion of our Brother and our Savior into this fractured world.

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