

**Item #78 (9/11 and Scripture)**

In John 15,18 Jesus says to His disciples: “If the world hates you know that it has hated me: before you”. In Luke 6,27 Jesus says: “. . . Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you”. On the twentieth anniversary of “9/11” there was much discussion of the victims of the attack by “terrorists” against innocent persons, for the large part citizens of the United States. What largely went unstated was that these “terrorists” were Muslims willing to die for their Muslim faith. Their actions, the carefully planned murder of thousands of persons guilty of not being Muslim, are relevant to the words of Jesus from Scripture at the beginning of this Item. His words indicate what the reaction of a follower of Christ should be. They should love the Muslims who proved themselves enemies. For what can such wholesale murder mean if not an attitude of hostility to Christ and all that He stands for? Further, the action of a group of Muslim men must be inserted into its proper place in history. For self-defense is not necessarily hatred. On September 11, 1683, the battle of Vienna, in which a Muslim army was threatening to conquer a large part of Europe, was won by the intervention of a Polish army led by the king of Poland. Over a century before, the Muslims tried to capture the island of Malta, and sailed away in defeat on September 11, 1563. On October 7, 1571, the Spaniards won a decisive victory over the Muslim fleet in the battle of Lepanto. Italians are reminded of this by the existence of a subway station in Rome called “Lepanto”. The challenge of Islam remains as strong as ever, but self-defense is not necessarily hatred. And, it may be added, loving one’s enemy would seem to be an invitation to understanding one’s enemy. **(James Swetnam, S.J., September 14, 2021)**