

May 06, 2011 | By **The Rev. Sarah Halverson**

Just hours before Sunday's announcement of the killing of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. forces, I gathered with hundreds of Muslims, Christians and Jews celebrating our faiths, our friendship, and the women in our lives, particularly mothers, at the **Interfaith Peace Ministry of Orange County's "Celebration of Mothers"** event.



What a joy it was for me to reflect upon women in **Christianity**, and hear similar reflections by my cousins in **Judaism** and **Islam**. I parted from them feeling an incredibly strong connection, so blessed to recognize again our commonalities as people of faith and as American families.

Driving home, I heard that the president was expected to make the announcement that Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the Al Qaeda network, had been killed. While this news brought joy to many around the world, I felt numb. It sharply contrasted the elation I had just felt leaving my cousins in faith. The juxtaposition was striking. I was suddenly somber.

In the hours to come I would see Facebook status updates touting the president and American victory, I would learn of the crowds that gathered at the former World Trade Center site, cheering, and could almost hear a collective sigh of relief across the world. And while I can understand the cheers and the sighs, I personally could not help but feel empty, perhaps even sadness, for retributive death just doesn't offer me any satisfaction.

Call me a pacifist (I've been called worse) but I could not help but wonder if there could have been a different way. I do not know. But I do know that I watched a beautiful little girl sing a song about Allah's mercy and love, just hours earlier, and my heart melted. I've struggled with my discomfort over Bin Laden's death all week, but my mind keeps returning to Sunday afternoon and the hope of children raised by mothers, whose faith teaches them to love, and to act with justice and kindness.