

Give the Devil Enough Rope

Give the devil enough rope and he'll hang himself. Give him enough power and he'll hang us first.

These might not seem very reassuring words as many of us find ourselves facing pre-election stress syndrome. So much seems to be riding on this particular election that it's easy to lose our peace of mind in angst-ridden concerns about the future of our nation and the world.

And yet it should be reassuring to know that the devil and those who are of the devil's party are always in the process of destroying themselves, even if they are often destroying other things and good things at the same time. The lessons of history teach us that pride does indeed precede a fall.

Look at the French Revolution. It ushered in a new age of *liberté, égalité et fraternité* – or so the “victorious” revolutionaries believed. In reality, it ushered in what has become known to history as the Reign of Terror, a brief period of dictatorial debauchery in which the “enemies of the revolution” were executed and in which a policy of genocide was conducted against the people of the Vendée. Soon, however, the revolutionaries turned upon each other so that the very architects of the Revolution fell victim to the very Terror they'd unleashed. The devils had hanged themselves, though not before hanging many innocent victims.

Look at the Bolshevik Revolution, a crass reincarnation of the “liberty, equality and fraternity” of the Revolution in France, which would prove even more bloody than its prototype. Beginning with the hanging of their anti-communist enemies, the Bolsheviks soon started hanging each other. In purge after bloody purge, members of the communist party were thrown into prison or were executed on the orders of the Party itself. Eventually, though it took 73 years, the communist edifice

collapsed under the weight of its own systemic corruption. Give the devil enough rope...

Look at the rise and fall of the Nazis. When Hitler's brand of "national" socialism seized power in Germany, the Führer boasted of the establishment of a Thousand Year Reich. During the Night of the Long Knives, he ordered the murder of his own Party members, those who had been his closest comrades during his rise to power. Given enough rope, he hanged his allies before finally committing suicide himself. As for his Thousand Year Reich, it crashed to ignominious ruin after only twelve blood-drenched years.

All these manifestations of the culture of death teach the time-proven truth that Pride always precedes a fall. This is as it has always been and as it always will be and always should be. The problem is not, however, that proud people are their own worst enemies; it's that they destroy the lives of the innocent on the egocentric altars that they erect to their ego-driven selves. Given enough rope, they hang their blameless victims before they hang themselves.

On a microcosmic level in our present meretricious culture, the pride that leads two people to fornicate all too often leads to an innocent child being put to death. On a macrocosmic level, this prideful spirit of fornication becomes systemic infanticide. Among other issues, this systemic slaughter of the innocents has become a rallying cry for the Proud in the current election campaign. There's no doubt about it – give this particular devil enough rope and he will kill millions of children before he ultimately hangs himself from the scaffold of the ultimately unsustainable death-culture.

So what can be done? Do we simply wait for the hangman to place the noose around our necks?

No. Of course not. We have a solemn duty to resist evil, though we must never resist it by becoming evil ourselves. We

cannot use evil means to a purportedly good end. We cannot fight fire with fire. We cannot seek an eye for an eye. We cannot fight hatred with hatred. If we use evil to defeat evil, the only victor is evil. And if evil is the victor, it is we who are the losers.

The only way of defeating the power of darkness is to rely on the Power beyond darkness. "Above all shadows rides the sun," says that greatest of diminutive prophets, Samwise Gamgee, thereby enunciating an overarching and overriding truth that should enlighten every thought and action in our lives. "Be not afraid," said St. John Paul II to the people of Poland during the years of communist oppression.

The only purpose of any person's life is the duty to answer the God-given call to get to Heaven. This is only possible with the supernatural assistance which theologians call grace. The end of the world is nigh. It ends on the last day of each of our individual lives. In this sense, the world could end tomorrow. It is this ultimate reality which should animate and motivate us. The devil might be able to hang us before he hangs himself, but he can't deprive us of the resurrection which will separate us from his clutches forever. He doesn't have the power to deprive any of us of this ultimate happy ending; only we have such power. We have the power to believe that the devil is all-powerful, which is believing the very lies that the devil tells us, and to forget God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. We have the power to ignore, forget, or reject the happy ending that gives our lives meaning, and we can wield this self-destructive power by worrying too much about the devil and those who serve him under the banner of Pride.

It's not about the power of the self-defeating devil and his self-defeating minions in this land of exile, it's about God and those who serve him in this vale (and veil) of tears with humble acceptance of the inevitable sufferings of life. The world is but a stage on which the metadrama of human history

is played in God's Presence. The whole of history is His Story. And, what is more, it is a story with a happy ending which has already happened in His Omnipresence. Our only purpose is to be part of that happy ending.

Give the devil enough rope and he always hangs himself. Give him enough power and, come rack or rope, he still remains powerless to keep us from the Love that moves the sun and the other stars; the Love which calls us to the Home beyond the devil's eternal homelessness.

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