

## Walking a Tightrope

“Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it (Rev. 12:7-9).” That war did not end. The devil suffered a terrible defeat but it was just the beginning of devastating spiritual warfare that is still ongoing. Though the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ dealt the evil one a fatal blow it has not yet surrendered to the power of Christ and does what it can to draw God’s people away from Him. Humanity has always been walking a spiritual tightrope and that walk has recently become more precarious than ever.

How much more can we take? The COVID-19 pandemic that too many people consider “just another flu” and so disregard safety protocols, a world economy in shambles and now our nation in flames due to the incredibly callous killing of an African-American man on the streets of Minneapolis that has ignited a firestorm throughout the world has left us dazed. The anger and rage of the African-American Community is understandable. We are

broken-hearted, sickened and outraged of yet another African-American man being killed before our eyes. After all, look at the events a few months ago when another young African-American man was taking a Sunday jog and because three self-righteous white men *thought* he fit the description of someone who allegedly committed a burglary, they grabbed their shotguns, got into their pickup trucks to track him down. They found him, confronted him and then killed him. As he lie there dying one of the assailants recorded the killing as another used a horrible epithet to describe the victim. Where was the outrage at that injustice? We have come to a point in our society that needs to be answered by each of us in a spirit of determined conversion. How much more can we take? Enough is enough!

Our history as a country has many proud moments in it but there are an equal number of moments where we ought collectively to hang our heads in shame. These are not issues that can simply be used for political purposes to be bandied about when convenient and then dismissed. The sin of racism is a weapon of satan that confronts us in a real and present danger that must be met head on. As members of the Church we must stand for the more difficult actions of truth and justice instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and still try to

profess respect for every human life from the moment of conception to the time of natural death. We must stand in support of communities that are understandably outraged. Too many communities around this country feel their voices are not being heard, that their complaints about racist treatment are unheeded and that we are not doing enough to point out that this deadly work of satan is antithetical to the Gospel of Life. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, is the site of the "Lynching Museum" which graphically displays a memorial to the 4,400 *known, documented* lynchings of African-American men, women and children in the United States. How many more were there that are not recorded? Those of us old enough remember the riots and civil rights movements of the 1960's protesting inequality on almost every level. I, myself, remember the horrifying reality of segregation in 1966 when I spent several weeks with my uncle, a Franciscan priest, who was serving as chaplain to a Catholic hospital in Meridien Mississippi which ultimately had to close because the nuns who owned and operated the hospital insisted on full integration. The KKK saw to that hospital's demise. Have we gotten any better? A few weeks ago a man in Santee wore a KKK hood to a supermarket as a face mask and then, a few days later, a man and woman in another supermarket wore facemasks

emblazoned with nazi swastika's, the most reviled symbol in human history. To be sure, the riots, the destruction of private property, the burning, looting, shooting, stone and Molotov cocktail throwing seen in many of the recent demonstrations is in no way an acceptable response. Yes, racism exists. It exists in *every* race and culture and is a tool of the devil used to divide God's children from one another and it needs to be eradicated. How is this accomplished? It is not accomplished by pushing God out of society as we pretty much have done. Racism will be eradicated only when we see God in every person as precious children of His creation. While we are at it, let's not jump too quickly to condemn every peace officer with the crimes of a criminal few. Try living without the police who for the past few years have been lauded by all of us as "First Responders" and "heroes" because they come to the aid of people who cannot defend themselves and who put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe and to keep society from coming apart. They are with us in the fight for justice. They should be respected, not derided.

We are walking with a precarious balance on a tightrope in America right now. How we will come out of this will be determined by how we walk with God in our lives and push against the evil one who is trying its hardest

to destroy us. Racism and injustice will be eradicated and peace will be possible only when we come to recognize the presence of God in every human being on earth. Remember the children's song: "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red or Yellow, Black or White, all are precious in His sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world," and we are all God's children. If we don't believe that, if we can't believe that; if we put our politics or politicians, our economy, our race, our culture, our nationality, our personal opinions ahead of God and His teachings --- we're doomed. We're doomed, and we can't call ourselves faithful Christians.

How much more can we take? We're walking on a tightrope. Pick up your bibles and read: John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11-18; 1 John 4:16-21.

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