

Catholic Allies in Truth

IT DOESN'T OCCUR IN A VACUUM

by David Rippe

Newtown, Aurora, Portland - a sudden climate of mass gun violence? At least the media insists it is. And many institutions, including the Church, are inclined to pick up the media's take and run with it.

What could be behind this wave of shootings? Again, the media, leading our thought process, asserts that it's too many guns, too easily purchased. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops agrees: "Call your senators and representatives and urge them to support policies that reduce gun violence (including controlled sale and use of firearms)." Thus, the zeitgeist proclaims we need to crack down on people who buy guns. But is that really the solution? Look at Chicago where supposedly strong gun laws are already on the books. In 2012, 506 people were murdered there. Guns are always readily available to criminals. Law abiding people obey laws; criminals don't.

As an aside, even if all guns disappeared, it would probably not put much of a dent in killings. Federal data still indicate that more people are murdered in the U.S. in blunt instrument attacks than with rifles and shotguns. Not that this is any more reassuring.

But take a look around. The shootings aren't all that is going on in America. While acceptance of gay marriage spreads like kudzu, attempts by pro-lifers to make gains against the abortion industry are stymied again and again. In 2012, the most pro-abortion president in history easily won re-election - a president who has also run the nation's debt to \$16 trillion, mostly through excessive increases in entitlement spending and government growth; a president who has also presided over the appalling figure of 23 million Americans now either out of work or underemployed, and who has attempted to constrain the religious liberty of Catholics and other Christians. That this individual, whose chief tool is the incitement of class envy, currently rides the crest of a 60% approval rating says even more about the cognitive awareness of America than it does about him.

Voters who clamor for a secular agenda and who would re-elect such a leader - who once characterized those who oppose him as bitter people who cling to their guns and religion - should not be all that surprised at the social deterioration they see around them. In public school administration, edu-crats spout self-esteem psychobabble while dysfunctional "students" show respect for their defenseless

teachers by cursing at them. When few object to prime time television fare that normalizes and jokes about recreational sex between unmarried people, the nation's sensitivities have been sufficiently numbed for just about any kind of evil to take root. Violence and contempt for decency are glorified in Hollywood. Not only are pornographic websites now estimated to number in the millions, porn has even begun to encroach on routine TV and Internet advertising. An increasing number of people live together un-sacramentally, men father children without responsibility, the media glorifies "baby-mamas," and in the government/pop culture-induced absence of fathers, families struggle on in poverty. Meanwhile, the morally bankrupt, addictive U.S. society languishes further as state legislatures begin to legalize recreational drugs. Can the legalization of easily acquired poisons (e.g., methamphetamine) be far behind?

America is a mess - a mess that provides fertile ground for the violent incidents we all fear.

It should not surprise anyone that, in such a spiritual void, periodic outbursts of mayhem can erupt practically anywhere - schools, malls, movie theaters. When not attributable to mental derangement, it springs from a rebellion of human nature against self-control and responsibility. A push back against the rules. A defiance of decency. A driving force to destroy all that is good, simply for the satisfaction of watching it crumble, implode, burn.

Mass shootings don't occur in a vacuum. Newtown, Aurora, Portland, Seattle, Blacksburg... didn't happen simply because there aren't enough gun laws or because too many people own firearms. Those are the simplistic straw man arguments sown as propaganda to embosk the real roots of the problem. Murderous events are symptoms. They happen because we have lost our sense of sinfulness; we have scrapped God's commandments and rejected His grace. In our material culture of no-boundaries self-absorption, we have excused sin and coddled miscreants. These days, admonishing sinners is prudish, hypocritical. Toleration has become a hallmark of our time. The media, who virtually ignore or attempt to minimize news on pro-life gatherings and who fulminate with contempt at the mere mention of Tea Party rallies, ennoble the criminal pathology and laziness of the anarchical Occupy Wall Street movement, who ironically refer to themselves as "the 99 percent." But given the president's high approval ratings, perhaps OWS was more correct about that than we previously thought.

Tolerating positive things enhances freedom. Toleration merely for the sake of toleration breeds license. Tolerating the wrong things leads to nihilism. The problem is that few can agree on right and wrong anymore because the boundaries

have been obliterated by the "enlightened" among us. Practitioners of what was formerly anti-social behavior now successfully portray themselves as victims. Those who recognize objective right and wrong and who would uphold the standards of decency are derided as intolerant bigots. Objective right and wrong have not changed; they merely need to be stated and respected.

We blather about peace, about harmony, but we aren't willing to uphold the values that must exist for peace to flourish. Where will our misplaced focus be directed next?

- • Stiff federal punishments exist for anyone breaking an egg of a protected bird species; killing an unborn human infant, on the other hand, is celebrated as a "right" and a "choice."
- • A nation obsessed with childhood obesity remains curiously unconcerned that half of those fat children are growing up with no father.
- • Media and academia continually fuel climate change alarmism, while at the same time stoking and promoting the most opprobrious moral climate the world has ever seen.

Killings, regardless of the weapon of choice, are to be expected when a civilization withdraws from God and seeks fulfillment through alternate realities. We have become too detached to smell the foul primordial soup we have created, where these evils are nurtured. The solution to mass murders - and individual murders, for that matter - is not tighter restrictions on firearm sales. Nor is it smaller capacity magazines or bans of so-called assault weapons. It is a return to spirituality, an awareness of each man's eternal nature and need for redemption.

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