

‘My way’ is not always the right way

Tension is rising in our country and violence is running rampant as a result of folks reaction of not having their way. While our country celebrates freedom of speech and the pursuit of happiness, many disrespectful, violent and angry actions are serving as the gateway response to “having my way.”

Religious freedom and diversity were the founding strongholds of this country that celebrates the gift of democracy. Yet when differences arise in political philosophies, religious ways of thinking and perceiving, rugged individualism says, “let me do it and have it my way!”

The national tragedy in Tucson, the constant bickering among political parties, the outrageous manner of disrespect of the president of the United States, the spitting and jeering at members of Congress during the debate on Health-Care Reform, some of the disrespectful behavior exhibited during the elections lacked decorum and are direct reactions of those assuring that they have a pathway to “have their way.”

The local disruptions in Maryland government, with suspicious activity in mailboxes and mailrooms, gang violence, road rage, shootings and abductions, are symptoms that there are many who are immersed in a “do or die” effort of “having my way.”

Dear people of God, this is a moral and spiritual issue of our time and people of faith cannot stand idle while the world is moved into the intensive care unit awaiting a faith transfusion.

What can people of faith do? We must check ourselves, before we wreck ourselves. We must check ourselves with an examination of conscience and review if we have had any part, large or small, in fueling this energy of disrespect of humanity and self-centered attitude, this “having my way” regardless of its spiritual and moral cost.

We must check ourselves, especially in front of our children, when we speak of differences and opinions. We must check ourselves when we find ourselves on opposite sides of issues, and lace our language and actions with wisdom from above while seeking God’s grace. We must check ourselves when we stand in lines at the

supermarket and exhibit Christian attitude when someone has 12 items of groceries in a 10-items-or-less line. We must check ourselves on the road when someone cuts in front of us. We must check ourselves on the church parking lot, especially after Mass when we are challenged about deep issues within our church and among the very human people of God.

We must check ourselves when the ugly head of racism and materialism starts to rise. We must check ourselves when we are not consistent with our stride of “right for life” embracing the whole seamless garment of life issues. We must check ourselves on immigration, stretching ourselves especially for those who have less among us. We must check ourselves and see the long-term effects on a society that does not have health care for everybody, rich or poor. We must check ourselves regarding the residual effects of the violence that poverty provokes. We must check ourselves and always seek truth, God’s truth. We simply must check ourselves before we wreck ourselves, spiritually and morally.

My dear mother, Margaret “Bobbie” Wilson, used to say that the real mark of maturity is how one acts when not having their way. Let’s flip this ugly script of violence and self-centeredness of “having my way.” Let’s flip the script to become a mature people of faith who walk into the future striving for the good of the “we” instead of the “me” – especially when we don’t have our way.

Let peace and goodness, justice and mercy begin with “me” for the good of the “we.” Let us check ourselves, remembering the words of St. Peter in Scripture: “Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). For this I know, deep down in my heart, we don’t want to wreck ourselves, spiritually and/or morally.

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