



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

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Among my all-time favorite movies, especially for comic relief and escape! is the Naked Gun series. There are so many hilarious scenes, gags, and one-liners. In the second in the series, Naked Gun 2 1/2, the Smell of Fear, the main character, Lieutenant Frank Drebin, is depressed after a break up with his girlfriend and seeks solace in a local bar. There he meets his boss, Captain Ed Hocken. In that scene, Drebin laments, “Is it my imagination or is the whole world crazy?” Hocken responds, “It’s only a small fraction of the population.”

That dialogue embedded in a film filled with slapstick unwittingly poses a very serious question, one literally on everybody’s mind. Indeed, has the world gone crazy? The response, also, has a ring of truth in that evil is mostly done by a small group or even individuals. However, the damage and harm done is enormous. We experience, not just isolated instances of evil, but strings of them. Collectively, they shake our confidence and hope. Why? Why are we experiencing so many bad things?

This past week we observed the feast of the Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. One of the readings that day came from Revelation, the story of the great battle between the devil and Michael. We say the St. Michael Prayer, composed by Pope Leo XIII in 1884, at the end of every Mass. In the commentary on that passage in the Navarre Bible, it asks the question of the origin of the devil. “Once a most exalted creature, according to some Jewish traditions, he became the devil because he refused to acknowledge the dignity bestowed on man when God made man in His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26; 2:7). The devil refused to bow before this image of God.”

There you have it. The devil is jealous of man, and thus will do everything he can to harm us, including using people to do his bidding. October is Respect Life Month. Many associate that with the Church’s stance against abortion. That is true. Respect for life begins in the womb. However, that is only the first step. Look at all the evil and violence around us these days. In every instance, human life is disrespected, beginning with speech and attitudes. The devil will attack anything that promotes family, marriage, procreation, reconciliation, and communication, and will promote anything that denounces or ridicules them.

The solution is actually very simple. All that is required is that we accept the inherent dignity of every human being, from conception to natural death. Most do. It is true that is only a small percentage of the population wreaking havoc. The answer, though, is not to respond with hatred or violence, but love and truth, and to plant seeds. It could be something so small as learning to drive without anger. Like a boxer, the devil is always looking for an opening, a weak spot. Anger is one of those entry points. The more anger we can take out of the world, the better we will be. Maybe like a boxer who can’t find an opening, he’ll punch himself out!

“Now have salvation and power come, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Anointed. For the accuser of our brothers is cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night. They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; love for life did not deter from death. Therefore, rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great fury, for he knows he has but a short time.”