



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 5, 2023

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The Power of Moral Courage

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

- Anonymous

Do you remember your first Covid Christmas, when government officials warned us to sequester ourselves from family and friends, and neighbors tattled on neighbors for noncompliance?

If lockdowns taught us anything, it was the importance of sticking together and finding strength in numbers. Had enough of us refused the tyrannical dictates of those dark days, Deep State despots could never have labeled us nonessential, quarantined us from life and family, forced us to wear face diapers, crippled our economy, and mandated death darts.

Where were the leaders who should have rallied us to push back? Hours after the World Health Organization began the charade by declaring a pandemic in early March 2020, government officials imposed tyrannical lockdowns. Thousands of churches nationwide acquiesced, shutting their doors to worshipers.

The near-unanimous decision of the country's clerics sent a clear message, having little to do with Christ's admonition in Saint Matthew's gospel: "Fear ye not them that kill the body ... rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." Nor had it any kinship with Saint Paul's warning to the Ephesians that we are not wrestling "against flesh and blood ... but against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."

Instead, hiding behind the erroneous label of "unprecedented times," the shameful modern ecclesiastic response stood in stark contrast to historical precedent set by our God-fearing forefathers.

The year 590 A.D. provides a striking analogy. Devastating floods and famine were ravaging Rome when a merciless plague hit the city. Death came within hours of infection, and even the pope succumbed. What did his successor, Gregory I, do? Did he cower in fear in closed quarters in the hope that things would soon return to normal?

No! He ordered a public procession to appease God's just wrath, atoning for the sins that he said had called down these calamities on the people. Moreover, he ordered everyone to participate. Even those ill with the plague joined, *without* masks or "social distancing." Saint Gregory of Tours, who wrote a detailed account of the event, tells us that some died in the streets.

At the procession's end, Pope Gregory said, God granted him an extraordinary vision: Saint Michael the



Wikimedia Commons/Rabax63
Saint Michael the Archangel



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Archangel, standing victoriously atop the pagan mausoleum of Hadrian, sheathing his sword, and by this signaling an end to the plague. The plague did end, and the Catholic Church transformed that place of death into the Castel Sant'Angelo, erecting a statue of Saint Michael on its dome. It stands to this day giving endless thanks to God for the miracle He granted.

Would that contemporary church leaders could boast such manly action, willing to ignore a scoffing world, to brave threats of an oppressive government, to lead their flocks in public acts of devotion and humility, acknowledging that God's permissive will justly punishes sins and allows suffering to lovingly guide His children back to Himself.

Instead, they adopted the worst possible policy: putting a mere germ before God, and caving in to godless dictates. In Dante's *Inferno*, such moral cowards are confined in the vestibule of Hell, doomed to chase a wind-blown banner. Dante's guide, Virgil, explains:

This miserable way is taken by sorry souls of those who lived without disgrace and without praise. They now commingle with the coward angels, the company of those who were not rebels nor faithful to their God, but stood apart. The heavens, that their beauty not be lessened, have cast them out, nor will deep Hell receive them — even the wicked cannot glory in them.

That passage spawned the apt quote (incorrectly attributed to Dante) that “the hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in time of moral crisis preserve their neutrality.”

But while they still walk the Earth, modern churchmen could save themselves from such ignominy by following the playbook of a predecessor, John Hughes, the first archbishop of New York. He earned the nickname “Dagger John,” no less from his fiery personality than from the cross that he drew whenever signing his name.



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Archbishop John Hughes (Wikimedia Commons/Rabax63)

His dogged disposition turned to advantage when anti-Catholic riots threatened his flock in the mid-1800s. The short-lived but formidable “Know Nothing” political party resented Catholic influence in politics and instigated criminal mobs to terrorize so-called papists.

When Daggar John received word that a band of them was headed to New York from Philadelphia, where they had burned two churches and killed a dozen people, he rallied his parishioners and stationed them as armed guards at each parish. He then sent a letter to the New York mayor, a Know Nothing sympathizer, warning him that if a single Catholic property were harmed, his men had orders to turn the city into “a second Moscow.” The reference recalled the 1812 near-complete burning of that Russian city during Napoleon’s occupation, and the Know Nothings stood down.

A less-militant but equally powerful example of Christian clout was the National Legion of Decency (NLD), a grassroots organization that, from the mid-1930s until the early 1960s, held sway over Hollywood by demanding that motion pictures follow a stringent moral code. Films condemned by the NLD were doomed to failure at the box office because Catholics and Protestants alike refused to patronize them.

Why have we capitulated? In return we are losing both culture and freedom, and gaining nothing. We are told that imposing our beliefs on others is intolerance. Meanwhile, we sacrifice ourselves and our children to the false religions of climate change, gender dysphoria, critical race theory, and every other demonic inversion planned by our enemies to subvert the solid foundation of our society. We’re even handing over our God, allowing radicals to label the term “Christmas” as culturally insensitive and politically incorrect.

To our detriment, we have forgotten the power of moral courage. Can we blame the enemy when it is



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we, ourselves, who are handing our freedoms over with barely a whimper? Is there no hill left worth dying on?

History gives us a hint of the solution, for taken as a whole, it is nothing more than a series of repeated cycles: mankind's sins punished by enslavement under an oppressive government, followed by salvific atonement. God always plays the primary role in restoring both spiritual and temporal well-being.

In fact, God Himself provides the DIY formula for taking our country back. In the Old Testament book of Second Chronicles, He advised King Solomon about what to do should He "send pestilence" (such as modern society's plague of leftist locusts). "And my people, upon whom my name is called, being converted, shall make supplication to me, and seek out my face, and do penance for their most wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and will heal their land."



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