

What Is Needed to Make Things Better

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(<https://renewaloffaith.org/what-is-needed-to-make-things-better/>)

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In recent weeks, I have written about the current state of things in our world (see articles like [“Is There Any Hope?”](#) and [“I Weep as the World Rejoices”](#)). The present reality of our world is that things are not as God desires. God’s Will is not always being done. At times this seems to be because of willful (although perhaps not well-informed) choices made by people. At other times, it is because while *“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”* ([Matthew 26:41](#)). There are those of us who desire to follow God’s Will but struggle to do God’s Will in a world where many have rejected God’s Will.

We are not without *hope*.

In fact, hope is the very thing I desire to speak of. No matter how bad things are, there is always hope for *nothing is impossible for God* and He has something greater for us in Heaven.

Pope Francis saw the world needed hope. To bring hope to the world, he made “hope” the theme of the present jubilee year that continues with Pope Leo XIV ([Pope Francis’ Bull of Indiction, “Spes Non Confundit.”](#) Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, May 9, 2024. cf. [my articles related to the jubilee year](#)).

God offers hope but this does not mean He eliminates all suffering. He conquered suffering but He did not end suffering (see my recent article, [“Finding Value in Suffering”](#)).

I have hope in God. However, I struggle to have hope in what goes on in our world. Again, there were events in the past week that saddened my heart. I cannot change the world on my own, but God can make things better *if* we let him work through us.

What saddens my heart this week? There are four things I will mention.

1. Israel launched a major offensive against Iran. Not surprisingly, Iran retaliated. They have exchanged attacks everyday since.
2. There was a shooting of politicians in Minnesota.
3. There have been riots in response to present immigration raids by the government.
4. As I wrote last week in my article, [“Call to Action”](#)), the New York State Senate passed the present bill to legalize assisted suicide in New York State. It is now in the hands of the governor. ([NYS Catholic Conference Action Alert to contact the governor](#))

Why do these things sadden me? Because three of them involve the direct killing of life against the Fifth Commandment while the fourth involves violence and is in response to immigrants not being treated with the dignity that God has given to all humanity and the rights inscribed in our *Declaration of Independence* of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Now, I would like to offer some thoughts towards changing what is going on to be in accord with God's Will.

Israel-Iran Conflict

If one takes a very narrow view of the conflict, Israel started the present attacks last week. In this view, the attacks by Israel are offensive and unilateral attacks. Looking at [“Just War Theory”](#), Israel may have a “just case” in wishing to prevent attacks from Iran with nuclear weapons but since they are offensive attacks, they would not be in accord with the second criteria for just war of “comparative justice.” There was no attack to respond to. Since the attacks are unilateral, one might also ask if Israel has “legitimate authority” to conduct the attacks by themselves. Lastly, one might look at the last criteria of just war, “last resort,” and wonder if other means to eliminate the threat of attack from Iran had been exhausted. After all, there were more nuclear disarmament talks scheduled but Iran withdrew from them after Israel's attacks began.

One also needs to take a step back and realize the present conflict is part of a long division and hatred in the region. Israel can speak of how God gave the Holy Land to them and called them to destroy their enemies (see passages like [Numbers 13](#) where scouts were sent ahead, [Exodus 17:8-16](#) where the Israelites engage in battle, and [Joshua 1:1-8](#) where God promises to be with them as they take over the promised land. At the point, Israel was just beginning as a nation. Now, God calls us to something better, *peace*. Muslims could cite parallel views from the Quran to justify attacking the “infidels.”

Israel could cite [Leviticus 24:20](#), “*fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The same injury that one gives another shall be inflicted in return*” (cf. [Exodus 21:23-25](#), [Deuteronomy 19:21](#)) but Jesus specifically cites these verses and calls us to something different. We just heard in [yesterday's gospel for daily Mass](#) Jesus' call to turn the other cheek ([Matthew 5:38-42](#)). In [today's gospel reading](#) we hear Jesus say, “*But I say to you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father*” ([Matthew 5:43-48](#)). Jesus did not engage in military battle against the Romans. He points us to a better way. He taught us to *love our enemies*.

Does anyone really understand the true origins of the divisions in the Middle East anymore? If we hold to an “*eye for an eye*,” the conflict and hatred could continue *forever*. Hatred cannot bring an end to hatred. Only love can end hatred.

Remember Jesus' words as He began his Sermon on the Mount, “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*” ([Matthew 5:9](#)).

Political Shootings in Minnesota

We presently know that in the shooter's vehicle was found political material and a list of additional political leaders to attack. We presently do not know what led the shooter to carry out the attacks but one might suspect that the political polarization in our nation has a key place in the shooter's thinking (I also wonder about mental health issues – we need both quantitative and qualitative increases in the availability of mental health care). It is time to end the blame game and negative rhetoric that has brought us to the polarization we see today. Negativity breeds negativity. We

need to find a way to dialogue (see Pope Francis' encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#) and my article, [“Seeking Real Dialogue”](#)).

The negative rhetoric and the frequent blaming of others without providing a sound argument for one's own position cannot restore America's greatness because it goes against this “greatness.” We cannot make our nation great as long as we think we are right just because we say so. We must reject the “cancel culture” that calls us to silence those who disagree with us. We need to seek God's Will in all things.

When we see actions of others that do not follow God's Will, we should not condemn them (see [John 8:11](#), [John 3:16-17](#)). There is no hope in condemnation. God's hope is found in truth and in following Jesus as *the way and the truth and the life* ([John 14:6](#)). We need to show them the truth. We need to dialogue with them to help them understand.

In faith, we rely on *hope* and we pray. Prayer is what Archbishop Hebda called for in his [statement](#) following the shootings in Minnesota (Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, [“Statement Regarding Deadly Attacks on State Lawmakers and Their Family Members.”](#) (June 14, 2025).

True prayer flows from hope in God and true prayer is always part of the solution. In true prayer we seek to do God's Will.

We need to change our worldview. We need to take a step back and ask God to see the world as He sees it, not just our little part where we want to get our way.

Immigrant Raids and Riots

I spoke above of the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I also spoke of the dignity of every person. For a fuller exposition of these, I point you to my article from February when the immigrant raids began, [“Treating Them with Dignity.”](#) In [that article](#), I referred to bishops who spoke of the proper need to capture violent offenders but most immigrants are not violent offenders.

As to the present riots, I point to a distinction between riots and protests. When one's rights are being denied, they have a right, at times a *duty*, to speak up in protest. The right to do so in peaceful assembly is guaranteed in the first amendment of our U.S. Constitution.

Peaceful protests can help make our nation better by bringing to light injustice that God calls us to eliminate. However, when well-intended protests become violent, they become riots. Riots allow hatred to takeover. When that happens, the devil begins to win. No one wins when there is hatred except the devil.

I pray that those calling for the immigration raids come to see the dignity of all people, including undocumented immigrants. They come looking for hope. If you do not want them here, then you need to help them find hope in their native land.

Assisted Suicide Legislation in New York State

Until the governor either (hopefully) vetoes the present bill to legalize assisted suicide or signs it, we can hope and pray that she vetoes it. Even if she signs the bill, ***all hope is not lost***. While her signing the bill would be a political loss for our state, it would not end our hope and it would not end our work. If she signs the bill, the spiritual battle for souls ***will not end***. Assisted suicide would then be legal but that does not mean anyone has to “receive assisted suicide.” The moral and spiritual battle will continue.

The most important battle is won when we keep people from choosing assisted suicide. God can make this happen. Are you willing to allow him to work ***through you*** to bring hope to those considering assisted suicide? They consider assisted suicide because they have lost ***hope***. They have allowed the pain to become their enemy. What they need is ***love*** and ***hope in eternal life***. God offers them the hope of eternal life in his love. Are you willing to offer them your love to help them see beyond their pain?

In all four issues I have discussed today, hope is needed. When people are treated with dignity, they can begin to see the hope that God offers. When they are loved, they can see something greater than the suffering of this world. When we end the negative rhetoric, we allow ourselves and others to see what God offers us in life with him, ***hope***.