



# *Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem* © \* *Knights of Malta* \*

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## **Chancellor's Update**

### **Divisive Rhetoric**

Recently in the political world there has been a call to tone down the “divisive rhetoric” describing situations and their proposed solutions. Also happening is lawfare – the use of law and legal process to destroy political and psychological enemies. Whereas warfare is associated with physical destruction of people and infrastructure, lawfare can destroy reputations, bankrupt opponents, seize property and tie enemies up in court. Lawfare can do as much damage to an opponent as warfare. Lawfare practitioners believe that the end justifies the means.

Such activities cause much stress to the average citizen, who wonders, “What is right?” and “What is wrong?”

A similar situation occurred in the sixteenth century after the Protestant revolt. The Church Fathers from the Council of Trent saw the need of a uniform and comprehensive manual for parish priests to instruct the faithful in their duties towards God and sins to be avoided. The Trent Catechism identified some of the main causes of what is happening today – Lying, Hatred, Revenge, Murder.

### **LYING**

Lying is almost an incurable disease. The guilt of the calumniator cannot be pardoned unless satisfaction be made to the calumniated person. A calumniator cannot expect to be pardoned until he has repaired the injury which has been inflicted on the honor or fame of another.

### **HATRED**

He who hates his brother is in darkness, walks in darkness and the darkness has blinded his eyes. Hence arise rash and unjust judgements, anger, envy, detractions and other evils. Hatred is called “the sin of the devil” because the devil “was a murderer from the beginning.”

## REVENGE

Revenge is almost natural to man. The Pastor should earnestly persuade the faithful that a Christian should forgive and forget injuries. Remember Job in the Old Testament. St. John Chrysostom said that if man doesn't forgive, he stains his soul with hatred, malevolence and envy. The pastor should place before the eyes of the unforgiving man that hatred is not only a grievous sin, but also that the longer it is indulged the more deeply it becomes. The man, of whose heart this passion has once taken possession, thirsts for the blood of his enemy. Filled with hope of revenge he will spend his days and nights brooding over some evil design, so that his mind seems never to rest from malignant projects, or even from thoughts of blood. Thus, not without extreme difficulty, can he be induced generously to pardon an offense, or even to mitigate his hostility. Justly, hatred is compared to a wound in which the weapon remains firmly embedded.

## MURDER

The murderer is the worst enemy of his species, and consequently of nature. To the utmost of his power, he destroys the universal work of God by the destruction of man, since God declares that He created all things for man's sake. May as it is forbidden in Genesis to take human life, because God created man to his own image and likeness, he who makes away with God's image offers great injury to God, and almost seems to lay violent hands-on God himself! As to the person who kills (murders), the Commandment recognizes no exception whatever, be he rich or powerful, master or parent. All, without exception or distinction, are forbidden to kill.

It also forbids suicide. No man possesses such power over his own life as to be at liberty to put himself to death. Hence the Commandment simply says: Thou shalt not kill. Considering the numerous means by which murder may be committed, the law admits of no exception.

If we fail to learn from events of the past, in the future be vigilant on the material side and pray and do penance on the spiritual side.

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