

The Dark Night of the Souls

I do not know how many of you are familiar with Saint John of the Cross's book, *The Dark Night of the Soul*. I read it some time ago. It was during that phase of my life when I was misdiagnosed with having a rheumatological disorder instead of what it turned out to be, a neurological disorder. And what a difference being properly diagnosed made. Yes, a definite medical miracle.

Of course, because I am writing this missive, it's obvious I survived.

The people of Ukraine are not just suffering a dark night of the soul. They are suffering through many dark nights of many souls.

I reference again, a quote from my dearest friend, a prisoner of war in one of the most infamous prison camps ever, camp O'Donnell in the Philippines. This was just after the Defenders of Bataan surrendered Bataan on April 9th, 1942. They surrendered not because the imperialistic enemy defeated them. (An imperialist enemy? Sound familiar?) They surrendered because they had no reinforcements, a woeful lack of military equipment and were literally starving to death. And no help came from their country or any other countries. They were truly... abandoned. He details the first few weeks at camp O'Donnell as follows...

The conditions in camp were absolutely horrendous. It was hot and you had this continuous death around you and with the death come this stench you know. There were no latrines just trenches. And there were these huge blue flies four times larger than your house fly. They did not bite, but they just... they just would blow their excreta everywhere and lay their eggs in the trenches, just a crawling mass of millions and millions and millions of maggots in these areas. It is a surprise we all did not just die right there of dysentery in the first few months.

But we didn't.

The ability of man to suffer and be able to survive is amazing! Most animals, I think, would have just turned up their feet in four or five days and died. But not this, not this human person. That will to live in this human person is something terrific in people, and I had that. I had that will to live...

He follows almost immediately with this statement...

*Hey! We are in this thing together and just because I was a second lieutenant over you doesn't mean that I think I'm not a second lieutenant anymore. In two or three days you're gonna be needing my care I'm gonna be needing your care as human beings! That was the most beautiful thing about that... those first weeks in prison camp. **The help that most people gave each other. The tender care, the Love that came out under that unbearable... unbearable situation!***

And so many months, years even, of dark nights of the soul we cannot even imagine were survivable because of Love, women and men's Divine given love, for each other.

I do not wish the people of Ukraine to suffer any more 'dark nights of the souls'. All I can do, as an individual is pray. Yes, some folks say I'm pretty good at praying. But I am no better than anyone else. Everyone can pray as much and as hard as I do.

Life is, after all, a prayer.

I do wish that we do not let history repeat itself. Where tens of thousands become millions who will die or suffer years of oppression and many many more dark nights of the soul.

Because we fail once again to be prepared, to not recognize the evil of imperialism and dictatorship, driven by a leader who sanctions the killing of innocents; children, pregnant mothers, the infirmed and the elderly.

To call him a war criminal does no justice. His actions are the personification of evil and the work of the father of lies. He represents his boss quite well demonstrated by the lies he tells his own countrymen over and over and over... even telling lies to the men and women he sent to wage his evil war

So this Lent *we have a once in a lifetime opportunity.*

To as a people, a church, a nation, and an entire world regardless of an individual's beliefs, *to pray As One without cease.*

For peace and the survival of a fledgling democracy who is proving once again, the will of women and men to live is undefeatable and do so against all odds. That we humans are capable of defeating evil against all odds.

Let's pray it doesn't take years like we've let happen before.

Let us pray that Love wins. It always does in the end.

And it certainly will at the end of all things here, on this home given us by the One Who is All, **The I AM**, when He who is our **Savior** comes the second time.

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