

Dear Friends,

I was listening to Richard Rohr this morning talking about how Western Civilization has trained us to have a dualistic mind: good/bad, black/white, and us/them. The Apostle Paul definitely didn't think dualistically in his letters. He often began his letters by telling people how filled with the Spirit they were, needing nothing, and full of love; and then he would spend the rest of the letter correcting their theology, their behavior, and sometimes even their eating habits. To him, they were both saints and sinners, children of God, fully heirs to the kingdom—and childish, not ready for real spiritual meat, only drinking from the sippy cup.

We are seeing the fruits of dualistic thinking right now in our political realm where all Republicans have to hate any Democrat politician and the reverse is also true. This is being brought to a head in the current deficit ceiling negotiations where the House Leader Representative McCarthy seems willing to crash not just the United States' economy, but also the world's just to make President Biden and liberals look bad. There are lots of other issues tied into this as well. However, when the stakes could be 85 million lost jobs in our country alone, to me, it shows they (many Republican leaders) care more about winning than people.

I really hope we can find our way through yet another political crisis and start moving toward a more peaceful and productive way of running our country and working through our different views and models of being a nation. Those in our country who support neither party are the Independents, and they are a larger group than either party, so we basically have a three-party system in our nation right now. They support some of each party's platforms, but mainly are sick (and tired) of both parties' politics. Hopefully this will draw both parties back into the center to gain the Independents support (or start a real third party).

What does this have to do with religion or faith? How we view the world and what we believe definitely informs our religious and political views. Sometimes religion influences politics and vice versa. If we see the other as the enemy, then to defeat them sometimes you have to drop the atomic bomb to force them to surrender which a debt default would be. It can be justified. We, as humans, too often justify our actions to promote the 'good' we want, even when we know it will hurt people (or the planet). We have to practice love in this world today. Love of God, neighbor, and ourselves, over love of winning, power, and dualistic thinking that only perpetuates our current struggle. As Bishop Michael Curry quoted Jimi Hendrix in a sermon last week at the Festival of Homiletics, "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, then we will know peace."

Peace
Pastor Enno