



God-Given Rights by Joe Sixpack

I've never used this medium to write anything about politics. I believe political opinions have no place in Catholic discussion. There is an exception to that, though. When politics crosses the threshold of Catholic morality, we all have an obligation to speak up... loudly.

Many readers will not see this for a year or more, as these are written well in advance of most subscriptions, but the topic I'm dealing with—although topical and in the news in early 2018—is timeless, because all morality is timeless. And to many readers' dismay, this article has nothing to do with abortion, artificial contraception, or capital punishment. But it *is* about a life issue.

The *Bill of Rights* in the U.S. Constitution enumerates certain inalienable rights. It doesn't grant those rights, but rather only enumerates them, because an inalienable right is granted by God. The U.S. Constitution can't "grant" what God has given all human beings, but only guarantee that the government won't infringe upon those rights. We'll get back to this.

The natural law, and therefore divine law, tells us we *must* defend our own lives and those of others so far as we are able. Yes, I said *must*, because God's 5th Commandment demands it. That is why the framers of the Constitution gave us the 2nd Amendment recognizing our right to keep and bear arms without exception. I know, I know; this is a really hot topic these days, but it's one that should be absent of personal opinion, because this right comes from God.

Why did the framers recognize this particular inalienable right? Because they recognized two things in a social humanity. The first is that tyranny in any form is unconscionable and must be fought... by force, *if necessary*. The other thing they recognized was that all people have a *moral obligation* under the 5th Commandment to defend themselves and others from unjust aggressors.

Before I go any farther, there is one thing that cannot be stated often or strongly enough: **We have the *moral obligation* to use the *minimal* amount of force necessary to stop an unjust aggressor from his aggression.**

Let's note that the 2nd Amendment ends with these words: "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." This amendment and everything connected with it has become hotly debated by most Americans, but this God-given right is just that, and cannot be morally taken by the government nor any person; you cannot take what God gives. The problem of debating this issue (apart from the fact that we're once again flirting with displacing God and

His rightful role) is that virtually everyone in the news in the debate—on both sides—is operating on the basis of emotion without the benefit of reason. So let's look at the issue from a perspective of logic, reason, history, and our understanding of human nature.

The very first gun control measure was in 1923, when the federal government outlawed the ownership of fully automatic weapons. The idea was to keep those weapons out of the hands of criminals. Well, how'd that work out? Not too well. You see, criminals don't care about the law; that's why we call them criminals. While the law worked in that you can't find a gun shop that sells fully automatic weapons, there is still a proliferation of them out there... *in the hands of criminals*. So the law effected who? Only law abiding citizens. Criminals don't care about the law. And so it is with all gun control measures. But let's consider for a moment the small and rare class of people known as former criminals.

A gun control measure that has been enacted in my lifetime is the prohibition of gun ownership for convicted felons. We all know that if a man (or woman) is still a criminal, that law means nothing, and if they want a gun they'll have one. But what about the convicted felon who has paid his debt to society and made up his mind that he will be a law abiding citizen hence forth? What does this mean to him?

A person with a felony record who is now living peaceably under the law is forced to forfeit his God-given right and obligation to defend himself, his family, and his home from unjust aggressors. So obeying the law—a law ignored by criminals—penalizes the former felon. No, any restriction of the 2nd Amendment is wrong. Note that it says the right “shall not be infringed”; not that it “shall not be infringed, except when you can't pass a background check”, or “shall not be infringed, except when you have a felony record”, or “shall not be infringed, except when you want to own a semi-automatic weapon”. It says, “shall not be infringed.” Period.

The folks debating this issue are debating the wrong thing. The issue isn't, and shouldn't be, gun control. There are a myriad of other issues that should and must be discussed. I'm an elderly man, one of the aging Baby-Boomers, so my life experience and memories go beyond the average reader. In all my years—including the turbulent '60s—I don't recall a more violent and inhuman era in America. Why do you suppose that is?

Well, I can tell you *exactly* why that is. Children are raised in fatherless homes, without any religious or moral formation whatsoever. Even those homes where a father is present, there is little or no parental guidance... even in Catholic homes. Lucia of Fatima was right: the last great battle between Jesus and Satan will be for the family. We're seeing that now. Divorce, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, gender confusion, parental malfeasance; these are the things that need to be fixed, not gun ownership. Want to stop mass murders, American violence and the destruction of the family? Then let's place our focus on the family in all we do and say, as well as promote the timeless teachings of Christ's holy Catholic Church. Because that's What We Believe... Why We Believe It.

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