

## What am I (we) becoming?

My Jesuit professor would often quip:

"It is a good idea to frequently ask: *What am I becoming?*"

Asking the question, taking it seriously, might even become a form of prayer, inviting us to reflect, with God's help, on the direction of our lives.

In light of the events in Washington on January 6th, we might well ask: "*What are WE becoming?*"

Our democracy is a sacred gift. The deadly insurrection on Capitol Hill was a disgusting and pathetic assault on our democratic process; a process for which countless men and women have defended by making the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. In the words of the Archbishop of Washington: "Those who resort to inflammatory rhetoric must accept some of the responsibility for inciting the increasing violence in our nation."

*What are we becoming?*

The events that transpired were a shock. They were not completely unexpected.

The violence was not perpetrated by some foreign entity. These were the deeds of Americans. Our nation is divided, our politics polarized. The language on social media is often toxic. There may be shortages of toilet paper. But there is no shortage of people peddling hate.

A friend of mine who works in customer service tells me: "There are days that I dread going to work. When people don't get what they want, they scream. They threaten. There are days I don't feel safe anymore."

Forget road rage, have you ever witnessed a group of disgruntled parents on the soccer field verbally assaulting the coach? I have.

We've gotten to the point when we have a presidential debate a "mute" button is required to silence the ranting. And we wonder why there is pandemic of bullying tormenting our kids.

What happens to a society when the "adults" melt down when they don't get what they want? *"Ground control, we've got a big problem!"*

*"So, what are we becoming?"*

There's an old saying: " We live our faith by joining our hearts in prayer and putting our hands to work."

Perhaps our "prayer" ought to be some thorough soul-searching from the halls of government, to our churches and schools, to our families, right down to our Facebook posts. Our faith can be put to work by promoting civility, mutual respect and justice, whether we're awaiting election results or standing in line at CVS.

Yes, this present, difficult moment can become a bittersweet grace.

Hatred can become as irrelevant as an old "tweet."

We *can* become our better selves.

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