

THUGGERY IS CHIC

It is a myth to maintain that the First Amendment guarantees the right of the people to assemble. It does not. It guarantees “the right of the people *peaceably* to assemble.” The adverb was penned by Madison to disavow claims that the aggrieved have a right to express themselves any way they want. Unfortunately, his admonition is rejected in many quarters these days. Indeed, thuggery is chic.

The year 2020 will be remembered for many things, most of which are not worth celebrating. Of all the ugly events that happened, the non-stop protests that were anything but peaceful are among the worst.

Unlike the Catholic League, which always obtains a permit for its demonstrations (we even had a permit for the display of our nativity scene in Central Park), the Antifa and Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters simply took to the streets, ignoring social distancing norms. They were masters of violence: they killed innocent people, assaulted police officers, burned buildings, ransacked churches, and stole everything in sight. Worse, the mayors and governors allowed them to do so with impunity.

Last spring BLM supporters spray-painted obscenities on the exterior wall of New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Statues of St. Junípero Serra were toppled by left-wing activists in many places, especially in California. This went on for several months.

In June, the Catholic Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis was set on fire. Catholic churches near the University of Mississippi were vandalized. The Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver was trashed. Windows were smashed in Dallas at St. Jude Chapel and at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville. Swastikas and anti-Catholic

scribbling was found on the graves of several Dominican friars on the campus of Providence College.

In July, a statue of Our Blessed Mother was set on fire in Boston and another statue of the Virgin Mary was vandalized in Queens. In Ocala, Florida, a man crashed his minivan into a Catholic church while parishioners gathered for Mass; he then poured gasoline in the church's foyer and set the church ablaze. San Gabriel Mission Church in Los Angeles County was set on fire, destroying parts of the 249-year-old iconic structure. Vandals were charged with a hate crime after they partially disfigured Mission San Jose, a church in Fremont, California.

Also in July, Sacred Heart Catholic school in Gallup, New Mexico was broken into and a statue of Jesus was vandalized. A statue of Jesus was beheaded at Good Shepherd Catholic church in South Florida. "Satanic" and "anarchist" symbols were found on the church door at St. Joseph's Church in New Haven. In August, Bibles were burned in Portland.

Even worse are those who justify the violence.

Two left-wing geniuses, Robin D.G. Kelley, an historian at UCLA, and R.H. Lossin, whose Ph.D. in Communications is from Columbia, both wrote lengthy defenses last June about the violent Antifa and BLM mobs.

Kelley wrote in the New York Times that because "we are in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, looting should not surprise anyone." But the looters stole toasters, not bread. They also helped themselves to pricey sneakers and jewelry, neither of which is edible. No matter, he chided the public for "obsessing over looting."

Lossin wrote her screed in the pages of the Nation, a Stalinist media outlet. "Property destruction is not synonymous with the violence that is being protested," she opines. "Plate-glass windows don't bleed." Neither does her

laptop. But it's a sure bet she would object if a sledgehammer were taken to it. She is also no fan of non-violence. "The notion that nonviolence is tactically more effective...has not only been proven wrong over the past week by sheer numbers; it cannot be historically supported."

It is not just Antifa and BLM who are a menace. Pro-abortion protesters are just as vicious.

The New York Times did a news story in December on those who demonstrate outside abortion clinics. The difference between our side and theirs was stark. A film clip of what happened outside an abortion clinic (euphemistically called a "women's health center") in Charlotte, North Carolina showed a pro-abortion contingent reciting "the lyrics of Cardi B and Thee Stallion's bawdy hit 'WAP,' while an opponent of abortion read the Bible outside the clinic."

I will not print the lyrics to "WAP." Trust me, it is the most filthy song ever written. Singing it while celebrating the killing of innocent unborn babies, however, makes perfect sense: The nature of the protest, after all, is unspeakably obscene.

Our side prays. Their side taunts. That about sums it up.

Left-wing activists could not get away with taunting pro-life protesters, or with smashing Catholic edifices and symbols, if the authorities did their job.

The average American is a good person. Regrettably, too many of our political, economic and cultural elites are not. If they acted more like average Americans, thuggery would not be so chic.