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April 17, 2018

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To me, taxes are a blessing, not a burden.

Rather than agonize over them, we might choose to enjoy them. If you look closely, taxes are part of what makes us happy, not what makes us sad.

On Tax Day think of these 10 ways to guide your prayers of thanksgiving to be able to contribute to a country you love.

1. Taxes are central to our infrastructure.

If there is to be any infrastructure repair, especially regarding large-scale public transportation, taxes will likely pay for it.

Or at least taxes are the best match to assure that public transportation is genuinely public. Somebody somewhere is likely to figure out how to make a profit on "public" transportation, but that will not necessarily yield the green results we need, of moving lots of people in an affordable way. Public transportation, the only legitimate alternative to the automobile, requires public support.

2. Taxes join public responsibility with personal responsibility.

One of the great divisions of the culture wars involves a separation of those who think we are publicly responsible for our various messes and those who think we are privately responsible for them. Environmental solutions will only come from a joint effort of public responsibility tied to private responsibility. We will pay our personal taxes for the public good.

Public and private participation — both, not either — are absolutely necessary as partners.

3. Taxes are a theological representation of what Pope Francis calls integral ecology.

Everything, in his thought, is connected to everything else. Taxes help us belong to the country we love. They are the physical representation of belonging to a country. You might even call them the most patriotic thing you can do.

4. We'll all face hard times at different points. And taxes can help ease the burden.

Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead argued that everyone should have three marriages, even if to the same person each time. What she meant is that relationships evolve.

Some years a country will have to fight a war. Other years a country will have to bail out Puerto Rico or Houston or the Florida Keys, or all three. Taxes provide a large enough scale for such "bailouts" to matter.

An individual, possibly disorganized charity is hardly the best way to get the power turned back on or the children fed. Large-scale relief efforts imply that we care about each other — even as some of us go through hard times. They imply that we are married to each other and that some years some of us will be in more trouble than others.

5. Private charities can help the less fortunate, but are no substitute for public welfare.

Mead's point about marriage applies also to the question of the poor. Most environmentalists understand that climate chaos will impact the poor disproportionately. Taxes help the rich help the poor. They are a great lever for something larger than charity, like "welfare," which is actually a very good word.

Even though under current conditions, taxes are decreasing, and welfare is doing the same, it is doubtful that people who dislike taxes also dislike the poor. They want to find a way to help. Taxes help. No matter our class status, we are also married to each other and that relationship will evolve.

6. Education depends on taxes.

I often meet people who don't want to pay education or local taxes because they don't have children in the schools anymore. That is the epitome of short-term thinking. Who do they think got their children a good education? Taxes share the burden of generations. They represent seven-generation thinking.

7. Socialism is not a bad word.

Take a good long look at European or Scandinavian parks or art or streets or medical systems. You will be astonished at how few of the people who regularly pay very large taxes, in some cases one-third of their income, complain about doing so. They know they live in a good society. They like living in a good society. If that is

"socialist," call me one.

I actually think it is personalist and smart as a person to combine resources in such a way as to make for good systems in which individuals can live. If that is individualistic, call me one.

8. Imagine the artistic possibilities in publicly funding art.

Speaking of art, I wonder if we could create a public fund for artists, say an additional $25 annually for everybody who pays taxes to pay. Imagine the fun that would be? Paying taxes could involve creativity and fun as well. We'd also get rid of the starving artist or the "day job" artist. We might have more wonderful art for a bargain.

9. Damage to the environment, which needs repair, needs taxes.

If you still "hate" paying taxes, please suggest another system for environmentalists. How would you figure out how to pay for repair to the damage of the environment?

10. Taxes make you more secure.

Finally, if you find yourself having a little dread about the future, that we may be one giant climate event or one terrorist attack away from an even more rigid and incompetent government, consider taxes as your friend, your police force, your national guard.

Be glad someone is guarding the nation, and that "someone" is you, through your taxes. You are a contributor to your own security and that of everyone else, as well.

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