

Deal Hudson is Right (Not Just Ideologically!)

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 25, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

It is not every day that I find myself in agreement with Deal Hudson, but he has an essay up at InsideCatholic.com [1] that makes some fine points.

Yes, too often, the charge of "incivility" is used to quash debate and avoid underlying, and important issues. Yes, most social movements, be they good or bad, stem from a certain anger in the population.

Where Hudson is wrong is when he thinks that those who warn against incivility are mostly concerned about not hurting their own cause, that the extremists damage the reputation of more thoughtful social critics. I think there is a genuine, and somewhat misplaced, concern for "tone" in the blogosphere.

Sharp elbows have their place. There are limits of course, but generally, a democracy functions better when debates are sharp.

Any student of history will know that for all the rantings from the Tea Party, our own times have nothing on, say, the election of 1800 in terms of incivility. Ditto the election of 1860. Ditto the election of 1932. The Republic survived those contentious times and even flourished.

I think Tea Party wins next week in the midterms would be a disaster for the country in terms of policy, but not for our democracy.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.insidecatholic.com/feature/understanding-qincivilityq.html>