

Saving Democracy

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We live in a representative democracy; a republic in which power is held by the people and delegated to their elected representatives, senators and president. It is a government by consent of the governed. We exercise our power by giving consent to candidates who wish to represent us by voting. Voting is not an individual power. It can only be exercised as a collective act by a majority of voters advocating for a common cause — the public good.

More important perhaps than the structure and process of our republic, is its moral purpose. It is a system of government created to define and defend human rights. It was created on the principle “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The Preamble to our Constitution declares the purpose of our government is “to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity”

Many today believe our democracy is in trouble because the people we have chosen to represent us do not. And, we do not have the ability to hold

them accountable because we have become a people divided by extreme partisanship. We are no longer able to agree on what is good for us as individuals, as a community, and as a nation.

After witnessing the death and destruction of World War I, William Butler Yeats described his anguish in the following quote from his poem, "The Second Coming."

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

How can we stop things from falling apart? How can we hold the center that holds us together as citizens in a democracy?

