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EXPRESSIONS by Father Ed

## Worldwide Rebellion

While Americans may lament the state of affairs in our own country, Europe is experiencing similar problems. Austria just completed a roiling presidential season in which the two major parties were eliminated from the final rounds of voting. A moderate candidate from a lesser known party barely beat a xenophobic, anti-immigrant challenger. Britain went to the polls last week to decide whether to stay in or exit the European Union. The prime minister and the chancellor of the Exchequer ( the head of the National Treasury) staked their political careers on the decision. The former mayor of London and now member of Parliament, Boris Johnson, has used the issue to advance his own political fortune, hoping to become prime minister. The topic generated so much controversy that a member of Parliament was assassinated. Nationalism, in this instance, may prevail but also could be very damaging in the long run, not only disrupting relations with its largest trade partner, the European Union, but also threatening its own stability. Scotland almost certainly would break away and perhaps even Wales, Northern Ireland would be isolated from its neighbor, the Irish Republic. There would no longer be a Great Britain! Moreover, the success of the so-called Brexit (Britain's exit from the European Union) could also encourage other members, like Poland and Hungary, to do the same, scuttling the whole idea of a unified Europe. Admittedly, the European Union is partly to blame for this situation. It has badly managed the economic and refugee crises. Lacking a central coordinating authority, the important decisions were made by the dominant nations, leaving the smaller and weaker ones feeling frustrated and betrayed. Trust and loyalty unfortunately have been lost.

Consistent governmental corruption and its chronic dysfunction were the direct causes of the election a bombastic neophyte as President of the Philippines. The people were tired of waiting for progress and were willing to gamble on inexperience and facile promises, hoping for immediate solutions. This is almost always a certain recipe for disaster, particularly in a country which faces serious issues of climate control, economic disparity and inequality, political corruption. and religious dissension. The Arab Spring started with similar reasons. The elite enjoyed all the benefits. The ordinary citizen just became finally rebelled. Sadly, the revolution just made everything worse, Syria was somewhat different. Education was highly promoted but good-paying jobs were scarce. Government and business were controlled by a cluster of families and one religious sect. The path to success was blocked for the ordinary person. Oppression and lack of opportunity inevitably produce revolution but progress is not guaranteed. There are no quick fixes; only the naive, the idealistic, and the doctrinaire believe they are.

America is evidencing the same political turmoil. There is a palpable sense of anger and resentment, coupled with a radical desire for change. The middle has fallen in. Progress sometimes starts at the bottom but it also needs wise and visionary leadership, not just the clamoring of dissatisfied crowds or populists. The middle-class in America feels squeezed, provoking an anti-immigrant reaction. The immigrants, of course, are not the problem, just the scapegoats. A worsening economic inequality, poor education, and even a nativist sense of entitlement are the real issues. So is corporate greed interested only in profits, and ineffectual, partisan political governments. No one is concerned about the little guy.