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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

“Some gifts are big others are small, but the ones that come from the heart are the best gifts of all” Tinku Rozaria

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND:

In 1845 a fungus like disease started killing off the potato crop in Ireland, resulting in what came to be called, “The Great Hunger”. Over the next few years more than one million Irish died and an additional million emigrated, reducing Ireland’s population by more than 20%.

In the United States, starting a few years earlier, the government dispossessed the Choctaw Indian Nation of their lands, primarily in Mississippi. The Choctaw were forced to move to land in Oklahoma during a period called, “The Trail of Tears” during

which thousands of Choctaw died. Not long after their resettlement under miserable and impoverished conditions, the Choctaw's leaders learned of the unfolding tragedy in Ireland. They took up a collection in 1847 and raised \$170 dollars which they sent, little as it was, as their contribution to help the Irish, a gift that has never been forgotten, even 170 years later. In fact, just a couple of years ago a sculpture, "Kindred Spirits" was erected in Midleton, Ireland commemorating that heart felt gift.

Recently, the Navajo and Hopi Nations, which now include the Choctaw have been devastated by the corona virus (CV) and a Go Fund Me campaign has been started. To date \$3 million has been raised, with the ever grateful Irish contributing more than \$700,000- a wonderful story.

THE PANDEMIC IS OVER -REALLY?

That is not a bad joke, it's reality for a lot of people, and not just those who have had Covid 19 and survived.

Interesting article in the paper recently on the history of pandemics over the last 2,000 years. Pandemics end in one of two ways – medically or socially. Medically, when the incidence and death rates plummet and, socially, when “the epidemic of fear about the disease wanes.”

Most pandemics have an original animal host and therefore are never entirely eradicated. As an example, the Bubonic Plague is still around, carried by the fleas that live in the fur of brown rats. Today Bubonic Plague infestations are also endemic among Prairie Dogs in the Southwest.

One of the few examples of total disease termination is that of Small Pox, which does not have an animal host. It is a human to human disease for which there is a very effective vaccine – result? –elimination of Small Pox.

Gina Kolata, the author of this article, goes on to write about the “social” aspects of these pandemics. In 2014 there was an epidemic of fear in Ireland. More than 11,000 people had died in West Africa from Ebola. No cases had

been found in Ireland, “but the public fear was palpable.” A black man walking down the street in Dublin would be studiously avoided. “When a young man arrived in the emergency room from a country with Ebola victims no one wanted to go near him; nurses hid and doctors threatened to leave the hospital.” A Dr. Murray did care for the patient, who did not have Ebola, but advanced cancer. In the aftermath of this incident Dr. Murray said, “If we are not prepared to fight fear and ignorance as actively and thoughtfully as we fight any other virus, it is possible that fear can do terrible harm to vulnerable people, even in places that never see a single case of infection...” Such was the case in Ireland – extreme anxiety, no disease.

Ms. Kolata goes on to recount a number of history’s great pandemics. We worry about the statistics with Covid 19 (CV), but how about the pandemic that began in China in 1331, killing half the population before moving on to Europe where one third of the population died. And then, 1918, about which we have heard much, but the fatalities are staggering with

world wide deaths estimated at 50 to 100 million.

What appears to be happening now is that a good portion of the country is viewing Covid 19 as being at its “social” end, even though at quite some distance from its “medical” end. “People may grow so tired of the restrictions that they declare the pandemic over, even as the virus continues to smolder in the population...”

Aside from the article, it seems to me that many have done the calculus, consciously or not, factoring in that 35% of deaths are people in nursing homes; blacks are dying from the disease at the rate of 40.9 people to every 100,000, while whites are at 15.8 per 100,000 and then there are the millions of older Americans – not in nursing homes- who have co-morbidity conditions. Bottom line, If you are a white male or female in your teens through 50s, you’ve got to feel pretty good, you want to see everything opened up; for you, the pandemic is over, albeit only “socially” speaking.

It is my hope that the, “I’m gonna live forever” people, just mentioned, don’t turn this into a THEMdemic. According to Dr. Fauci, pushing ahead too fast is not going to create a, “smoldering” virus, as noted above, it’s going to be an unmitigated disaster. We need some time for the “medical” end to catch up with the “social” end.

A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE:

Our fellow reader, Joe Knoll, forwarded this piece sent to him by a friend.(which I have further edited.) As a preamble, the write up is about a hypothetical person being born in 1900. I’ll make it more personal than that. I came along later in my parents’ lives and it just so happens my father was born in 1900. The thing that always amazed me about the era in which he lived was that, while the automobile was invented by Karl Benz in Germany in 1886, automobiles were not available in America until 1908. Similarly, the first plane didn’t take flight until 12/17/1903. By the time my father passed away in late 1969, man had landed on the moon- wow!

So what were the vicissitudes endured by someone born in 1900?

In 1914 World War 1 started and by 1918, 22 million had perished in the war. Later in the year, the Spanish flu epidemic hit and 50 to 100 million people die. (my father was in the Navy at that time and had to sleep on deck of his destroyer because all bunks were filled with the sick- daily burials at sea).

In 1929 the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25% and the world's GDP drops 27%.

By 1941, World War II is raging (my father takes leave of his job and rejoins the U.S. Navy as a Lt Commander). 75 million perish in the war.

Small Pox continues as an epidemic until the 1940s having killed 300 million people since the start of the century.

In 1950 the Korean war starts and 5 million perish, and in 1955, a 20 year conflict starts in

Vietnam, killing 4 million. In 1962 the Cuban Missile crisis happened bringing us to the brink of nuclear war. (I was a first Lt. in the Air Force in Minot, ND, and our B-52s were in the air heading both for Cuba and the USSR, before Khrushchev thought better of it and turned the missile carrying ships around. That was not a unilateral concession as many of us were led to believe. Secretly, Kennedy made a huge concession on our military capabilities in Europe that the soviets deemed a threat.)

Then, in 1968, the pandemic no one even mentions today. 100,000 died in the U.S. and 1,000,000 world- wide, but not a single barber shop, pool hall or school was closed.

While interesting to reflect on, we all live in the moment, and Covid 19 is our clear and present danger. Be safe, be well.

Your faithful scribe,

PB

