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* *Knights of Malta* *

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Chancellor's Update

Leviathan or Subsidiarity

The word 'leviathan' (lē-vī'-uh-thuhn) occasionally appears in scholarly articles, but since it is not a household word, most people don't know what it is or simply guess at its meaning. At best, they view leviathan as a bloated bureaucracy. The word originates from Hebrew in the Old Testament, where it is mentioned as a sea monster in the Book of Job, chapter 40 and described in chapter 41. Contemporary meanings include any huge marine mammal, as the whale; a ship of huge size; a totalitarian state having a vast bureaucracy; and something large or formidable. God's conversation with Job in the book of the same name follows.

“Canst thou draw out the leviathan with a hook, or canst thou tie his tongue with a cord?
Canst thou put a ring in his nose, or bore through his jaw with a buckle?
Will he make many supplications to thee, or speak soft words to thee?
Will he make a covenant with thee, and wilt thou take him to be a servant for ever?
Shalt thou play with him as with a bird, or tie him up for thy handmaids?
Shall friends cut him in pieces, shall merchants divide him?
Wilt thou fill nets with his skin, and the cabins of fishes with his head?
Lay thy hand upon him: remember the battle, and speak no more.
Behold his hope shall fail him, and in the sight of all he shall be cast down.

“I will not stir him up, like one that is cruel: for who can resist my countenance?
Who hath given me before that I should repay him? All things that are under heaven are mine.
I will not spare him, nor his mighty words, and framed to make supplication.
Who can discover the face of his garment? Or who can go into the midst of his mouth?
Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about.
His body is like molten shields, shut close up with scales pressing upon one another.
One is joined to another, and not so much as any air can come between them:
They stick one to another and they hold one another fast, and shall not be separated.
His sneezing is like the shining of fire, and his eyes like the eyelids of the morning.
Out of his mouth go forth lamps, like torches of lighted fire.
Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, like that of a pot heated and boiling.
His breath kindleth coals, and a flame cometh forth out of his mouth.
In his neck strength shall dwell, and want goeth before his face.
The members of his flesh cleave one to another: he shall send lightnings against him, and they shall not be carried to another place.
His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil.
When he shall raise him up, the angels shall fear, and being affrighted shall purify themselves.
When a sword shall lay at him, it shall not be able to hold, nor a spear, nor a breastplate.
For he shall esteem iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

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The archer shall not put him to flight, the stones of the sling are to him like stubble,
As stubble will he esteem the hammer, and he will laugh him to scorn who shaketh the spear.
The beams of the sun shall be under him, and he shall strew gold under him like mire.
He shall make the deep sea to boil like a pot, and shall make it as when ointments boil.
A path shall shine after him, he shall esteem the deep as growing old.
There is no power upon earth that can be compared with him who was made to fear no one.
He beholdeth every high thing, **he is king over all the children of pride.**"

Does this description sound eerily familiar, perhaps as someone in high office, or as the fourth branch of government, the bureaucracy? Does huge government contradict the practice of subsidiarity? Subsidiarity can exist only until the bureaucracy closes all the loopholes by prohibitive regulations, confiscatory fees or outright bans. A position within the bureaucracy like an ombudsman either doesn't exist or yields no positive results.

Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* warned about such scenarios. "The State which would provide everything, absorbing everything into itself, would ultimately become a mere bureaucracy incapable of guaranteeing the very thing which the suffering person – every person – needs: namely, loving personal concern. We do not need a State which regulates and controls everything, but a State which, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from the different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need."

In the previous century another Pope, Pius XI, in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, wrote, "...just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so, too, it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable, and it retains its full truth today. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them."

In our own time, for example, a man declared dead by the Social Security Office was denied his payments, and all his efforts to prove his viability were useless until a major radio station broadcast his plight to its listeners and made the right contact within the bureaucracy. More recently a bureaucrat, also known as the food policeman or a government agent, replaced a box lunch at school for a child because that bureaucrat determined that the lunch provided by the mother was not nutritious. Such an action demonstrates that the state, rather than the parents, knows what is best for the children.

As we warned in the March 2007 issue of *Chancellor's Update*, "If this trend is not reversed, parents will be simply surrogates who serve at the pleasure of the state, rather than being stewards appointed by God in raising their children to serve in His kingdom."

Can the end result of Leviathan be avoided? Yes, if more people recognize the evil and coldness of Leviathan, and instead turn to the loving God, perhaps unnecessary pain and sufferings of God's creatures can be avoided.

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