

Inquiring Minds: Becoming Philosophical

Issue #42 January, 2017 "Adversity is the mother of progress." Mahatma Ghandi & [other quotes-](#)

[Intent](#) [Back Issues:](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [11](#) [12](#) [13](#) [14](#) [15](#) [16](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#) [20](#) [21](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) [28](#) [29](#) [30](#) [31](#) [32](#) [33](#) [34](#) [35](#) [36](#) [37](#) [38](#) [39](#) [40](#) [41](#)

TWO MILD AND MODERATE PUNDITS

[David Brooks](#) and [Mark Shields](#) are my paragons for moderate conservative and moderate liberal columnists, respectively. Both are willing and able to discuss issues (PBS News Hour) in the pursuit of truth and what's right for the country and the world.



David Brooks



Mark Shields

They are informed, soft-spoken, nuanced, tolerant, and respectful of each other's viewpoints even when they differ. Usually each can find points of agreement in the other, will acknowledge these, and move the conversation further down the road. Their expertise tends to make them more humble and open.

We can all learn from them as well as from the class, bearing, and deliberateness of the outgoing president--whether we agree with his policies or not. As we have seen, being a little PC is not as brutal as its opposite.

UNITY WITHOUT DIVERSITY IS CONFORMITY; DIVERSITY WITHOUT UNITY IS CHAOS

The above quote is one of the few I remember from our philosophy class where the professor had embarked upon the painful task of trying to teach us how to think with a philosophical (i.e., critical) mind. Coming out of the pre-Vatican II's more authoritarian and medieval Catholic institution, this was not an easy task since we seminarians were not used to thinking for ourselves due of our age and sheltered environment. It was like expecting the USSR to easily accept and assimilate the

democratic capitalism of the West after its collapse in 1989. Even though the people wanted to, it was not going to happen easily--either in what was once the soviet block or in the Catholic Church. For many, if not most, it did change--for which I am ever grateful.

Yet political systems, be they countries or religious institutions, often push back when progress is not as successful as once thought. According to the [National Catholic Recorder](#), St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park lost its progressive rector-president and all of its Sulpician faculty over an alleged dispute on implementing accreditation requirements. Others think this is an attempt of conservative Archbishop [Salvatore Cordileone](#) to staff the seminary with more conservative professors. The Sulpicians have been training priests for 118 years. This may not be political, but if so, it is another example of conservative pushback, which may be a part of the ebb and flow of history, if not progress.

MORE EVIDENCE FOR THIS PHILOSOPHY

Social psychologist [Jonathan Haidt](#) in his book [The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion](#), confirms in studies and quotes philosophers [Bertrand Russell](#) and others saw opposite philosophies as are complementary and interdependent as the yin and the yang.

We need both, often in a shifting or alternating balance. [John Stuart Mill](#) said that conservatives and liberals are like this: **"A party of order of stability, and a party of progress or reform, are both necessary elements of a healthy state of political life."**

Both liberals and conservatives need to complement, respect, and maybe even compliment each other while staying vigilant and keeping each other honest. -- *Best, Joe*