Shortly after last month's inauguration, I received an anonymous post containing clippings of my projections published last fall warning of the consequences of Bush's impending election to a second term. Those clippings arrived covered with a variety of rude epithets including 'sore looser'(sic).

Since then the triumphant Bush administration has amply fulfilled those dire forecasts: from its extended tax-cuts for the well-to-do to its assaults on Social Security, Medicaid, and now Medicare. Its proposed $2.57-trillion budget will cut so many domestic programs to children, seniors, veterans, farmers and the poor, by $20 billion dollars next year, it has been aptly called the War on Workers. Indeed, everything about our current political and economic system seems designed and geared to extract wealth and power from those who have little enough of either and transfer them to those who have far more of each than they know how to use wisely or humanely.

What is the purpose of government? If, as once supposed by many of us, it is to redress injustice and attend to the needs of its people, then I and the vast majority of the American electorate who declined, passively or actively, to endorse Bush's election are indeed and will continue to be 'losers' as this administration moves steadily toward disabling and dismantling much of what once made this a country caring, compassionate and concerned for the welfare and well-being of all its citizens not just the fortunate few.

Alternatively it appears to others of us that for many in government, its purpose is above all else, to perpetuate itself, most especially, the ascendency of those currently in power at whatever cost to the public. But the government is not the nation, is not the people, is not the citizenry. We, that majority of the electorate that did not prevail, are not so much 'sore' as deeply saddened that the dictum of the philosopher, Joseph de Maistre - "Every country has the government it deserves!" - is seemingly as relevant today as it was two centuries ago.

There is abroad a variety of bumper stickers each reading "God bless America". I am reminded of the story of the Anglophone addressing French troops on the occasion of their return to the trenches. Wishing to ingratiate himself with them, but lacking familiarity with the language, he stretched for a cognate, "May you all be blesse's!" Certainly America has in recent years been sufficiently blesse', by ourselves, our own inappropriate actions and inactions, as much as by the willful intentions of zealots, foreign and domestic.

Perhaps our bumper wisdom would better be modified to read, "God help America", with it understood that the prayer is to become a better nation
to our own people and a better neighbor to the rest of long-suffering humanity everywhere.

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