

Prison Survival

January 20, 2018

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008) is one of the few truly outstanding writers of the 20th century because he is not godless but came back to God thanks to his sufferings under the totalitarian tyranny of Communist Russia, which lasted from 1917 until 1989. His major work is the *Archipelago Gulag* in three volumes, for which he drew extensively on his own experience, when he lived from 1945 to 1953 inside the Communist archipelago of prison camps spread all over Russia. He survived the experience, and his writings include hints or serious advice on how to survive in such modern-day totalitarian prisons. One hears that the Globalists have already built prisons across the United States in which to shut up enemies of the Globalist State, who will surely include convinced Christians. The following seven-point recipe for survival was drawn from the *Archipelago Gulag* and presented recently in France:–

* *At the **preliminary interrogation** , do not try to deceive or trick the interrogators when for a week you have been given the bare minimum of food and sleep for survival. Rather play the idiot from start to finish, e.g. “I don’t know,” “I can’t remember.” In any case, do not fool yourself, it is the interrogators who write up the interrogation – the Party is their conscience, and they do not want to lose their jobs.*

* *Once **inside the prison** , lead any kind of life of the mind sufficiently intense for no kind of suffering to be able to knock your mind off balance.*

* *Get into your head as fast as possible that your past life is over and done with , even life itself. Once you have nothing more to lose and are convinced of it, and have made up your mind that cost what it may, you are going to stick to the line you have determined upon, then you are no longer afraid,*

automatically you find the right answers and how to answer, they can no longer impose on you, and if you have to die, you do so with dignity and a clear conscience. Here is the moral strength that they are afraid of and which they do all they can to break, for instance by raising false hopes of your receiving a pardon.

** Possess nothing, be detached from everything, and you will have the calm and freedom of mind to judge serenely of people and circumstances. Rely on your memory alone to call up everything you know of man and human nature.*

** Give up any desire to organise your own life, in order to preserve your peace of mind.*

** Believe nobody, distrust everybody: inside the gulag, nobody does anything for nothing.*

** Finally, stick close to decent fellow-prisoners against the crooks and informers, taking justice into your own hands, if necessary. For indeed one of the most remarkable discoveries on your journey through this scene from Hell is that your worst enemies are not the prison guards, but . . . your fellow-prisoners. The law of this jungle is, today it's you that kicks the bucket, tomorrow it's my turn. All that you can do is to strike first, even if you get knifed in return . . . in brief, make yourself respected if you do not want to be exploited.*

As for the use of physical force in self-defence, the Church teaches that it must be proportional to the attack threatened. But Solzhenitsyn's main point is the renunciation of all earthly hope, the detachment from all possessions, the calm of mind, the conscience at peace, in brief that inner moral strength which transfers the fear from oneself to one's adversaries. Here Catholics are universally recognised to be winners, who have a prayer life by which they live close to God. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our

faith" (I John V, 4).

Kyrie eleison.