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### ***Brick Wall or Spider Web?***

The Russian war on Ukraine continues to have broad impact on our world, including right here in our own country. It's saddening, sickening, frightening, and anxiety-producing to think of the plight of the Ukrainian people, whose lives are most directly impacted by the acts of Russian military aggression.

It's also more than frustrating to consider the positive results of many possible solutions, recognizing that the strength of each suggested remedy is always accompanied by its own unique weakness.

Sometimes the problems we face, whether relatively insignificant or life-threatening, have surprising solutions, often from the hand of God himself.

Recently I read a story with such a solution. It's about a World War II incident. Though I'm not sure of its authenticity or actual origin, one source gives credit for the story to Sarah Montez and Father Hugh Duffy. Here's the story:

*After intense fighting against the Japanese on Okinawa during World War II, a Marine got separated from his unit amid the explosions, smoke, and chaos of battle.*

*He was alone in the hills in dangerous enemy territory. The sun was setting, and the stranded Marine heard the approach of Japanese soldiers. So he took refuge in one of the many caves on the ridge.*

*As the minutes passed, he realized the Japanese were searching methodically, cave by cave, for any American soldiers. With grim resignation, he realized his own death was imminent and inevitable. It was only a matter of time before the enemy would approach his cave and find him there.*

*But the Marine was a Christian, so he prayed to God: "Lord, if it be your will, please protect me. Whatever your will though, I love you and trust you. Amen."*

*As he prayed, he observed a spider building a web over the crawl space of an entrance to the cave. He scoffed on the inside.*

*“Ha! What I need is a brick wall and what the Lord has sent me is a spider web,” the Marine thought. “Well, I guess the Lord isn’t going to help me out of this one.”*

*He remained extremely still and quiet as he listened. The enemy was getting closer. He readied himself to make a last stand.*

*But to his surprise, the Japanese soldiers passed by his cave and didn’t search its interior.*

*Then he realized what had happened and rejoiced in glee. The spider’s web was a sign to the Japanese soldiers that no one had entered the cave. A man entering the cave would have cleared away the web with his body. It didn’t occur to the enemy that the web was weaved after the Marine entered the cave.*

*“Lord, forgive me,” prayed the young man, chuckling at his earlier assumption that God wouldn’t defend him. “I had forgotten that with you a spider’s web is as strong as a brick wall!”*

*He remained hidden in the cave until the area was clear and he could find and rejoin his fellow Americans.*

*Join me in this prayer: Lord of the universe and Savior of the world, look down with favor upon our fellow human beings in Ukraine. According to your mercy and holy will, spare them from the harm and danger inflicted by Russian atrocities. Whether with a brick wall or a spider web, protect the individuals and families in harm’s way and restore their country as a haven of blessing and a place of peace. This we pray in the precious Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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