

huge dividends to society as a whole. When people can walk without fear in their neighborhoods, they enjoy more freedom and more security. And besides, businesses move in, the local economy grows, and property values increase. Once we accept that social linkage is an inescapable fact, we can act in ways that benefit society as a whole. Here again, the common good is enlightened self-interest.

The good of the commons.

gains mutually acceptable. In a famous two-person experiment, one person is handed ten \$1 bills and is asked to divide them into two shares. If the other person agrees to the division, each receives his

the same principles of government.Ž Three quarters of a century later, Abraham Lincoln concluded his First Inaugural with a desperate plea to the South: •We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection.Ž In the end, of course, the •mystic chords of memoryŽ to which Lincoln appealed proved weaker than did differences of interest and principle, and also the sentiments of anger and fear. The United States barely survived the ensuing ordeal; many communities do not, and their common good dissolves as an effective force.

But in 1787, the dominant reality was Jay•s, not Lincoln•s. Taking the presumption of one united people as granted, the Preamble went on to sketch the content of the common good the Constitution was created to foster. The words that follow •in order toŽ specify the key elements of that good: a more perfect union, justice, domestic tranquility, the common defense, the general welfare, and the blessings of liberty. In principle, all were to share in these goods, and all were to benefit from them. (The gap between this principle and actual practice is one of the central drivers of American history.)

Note that the Preamble defines a distinctive understanding of the common

The common good, to repeat, is no guarantee of social and political harmony. Our constitutional common good establishes a framework of ends and means about