



Thursday 21st October 2021

Thursday of the twenty-ninth week in Ordinary Time Year 1

Gospel

Lk 12:49-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

I have not come to bring peace, but separation.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

Reflection by Fr John Purnell

Today's Gospel is a bit sobering. In his opening words, Jesus tells the disciples: *"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!"* Jesus continues talking about the baptism with which he would be baptised and the anguish he would experience in this process. He also warns his disciples that he has not come to establish peace on earth but rather division. He says that a household of five people will be divided. Father and son will be divided against each other as will a mother and daughter, and mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law. What difficult words these must have been for the disciples to hear. Were they confused? Or were they simply frightened by Jesus' words?

What is the message Jesus is trying to convey to the disciples (and to us)? Is he trying to open our minds and hearts to the reality of our world and the reality of our human condition?

In today's world, every morning we see and hear multiple stories of division and violence: in families, cities and countries. Perhaps the most frightening stories are the acts of violence and destruction that take place in our own country: our cities, our neighbourhoods and perhaps within our own families.

What is the message Jesus is trying to convey to us? Is he trying to frighten us? Or is he simply hoping to awaken us? Is Jesus trying to motivate us to live peacefully, lovingly,

cooperatively and respectfully with each and every person on earth? Even the individuals we may not like or agree with?

Today I invite you to think of a person that you struggle with.

It may be someone who has hurt you or angered you or it may be a person you simply don't like or one who drives you right up the wall.

Now, quiet yourself and imagine that person in your mind for a moment or two. Then surround that person with love, peace and joy. Stay with this image or thought for a couple of minutes.

You have now given this person a loving gift today.

They may not consciously recognise what you have done. However, their "spirit" will know that someone has gifted and graced them today!

Once again for this week continue to be alert and attentive. Perhaps, just perhaps, you may not realise it but you may have received a similar gift!

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