



## Jesus: A Cause of Division.

FRIENDS, today's Gospel passage is a troubling one to be sure; we are familiar with Jesus praying his prayer for unity, that we will be one with him just as he is one with the Father. What could he mean when he says, **"Do you think I have come to establish peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."**

### A House Divided



The sad fact of the matter is that any one of us can look at our own families and see members cut off from Christ. Whether by their own choosing through ignorance of Church teaching, disagreement with that teaching—or possibly the way some teaching may have been carried out in their experience—or as a result of the sins committed by leading members of the Church; we all have family members who have been led astray. Jesus tells us, **"From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."**

However, this division goes deeper than that which we see within our own families. We can look around at the people in the pews and know with some certainty that even we who are present in this celebration of the Mass, are not at the same place in our faith practice, nor in our overall understanding of the teachings of our faith. This is not to say we should be looking around trying to determine the state of soul of our fellow parishioners, for Jesus also said, **"Stop judging and you will not be judged. ... Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?"**

Fraternal correction done in love is a very good thing. So properly understood, Jesus's admonition to stop judging is more like a command to be careful about calling someone out

for their failings and misdeeds unless we have first made an accounting of our own sins. Even then, calling out a fellow Christian should only be done in charity, that is, in love. We must have the intention of helping them on their journey to heaven. And it doesn't stop there—we must be prepared to receive the same from our fellow Christians who desire to help us along our journey to sainthood.

I know of people who knew me when I had little to no regard for Jesus, his teachings and his Church, let alone how my behavior could have impacted and even scandalized someone who might be working very hard to achieve their own personal sainthood. I thank God I am no longer that person, but I am also a long way from that promised eternal reward for being a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

I can look around me and see people who have truly dedicated their life to Christ. Sadly, some of these people are not Catholic but are of another Christian denomination. I say sadly because it is in the Catholic Church that Jesus has revealed the fullness of the truth of the Gospel. This in no way limits God's ability to call non-Catholics to a heavenly reward, but it does give one pause to think what might that person achieve as a member of the Catholic Church?

People from other churches go on mission trips, and have their own food pantries and other means to help people in need. What do we have? Sure, we support the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry, but what about those who have fallen on hard times and need financial assistance to help with rent, or car repairs, or the myriad other things someone might need to help keep their head above water?

### Join Jesus in His Prayer for Unity

A great schism occurred in the Church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century when the Eastern and Western Church split; another great schism occurred in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Catholic Augustinian priest Martin Luther nailed his anti-Catholic complaints to his church doors. Such division is very much what Jesus was talking about! It is what he prayed to guard against. But free will and fallen human nature being what they are, it seems mankind simply cannot choose the righteous path when left to our own devices. As a vine grower and dresser, this pruning of branches is also the division that Jesus was talking about.

If we will not bear the fruit of good and holy works, we can expect to be cut off from the Church, the Body of Christ. Brothers and sisters, I urge all of us to do everything in our power to repent *every time we fall* and determine to live our life for Christ and store up treasures that will be known only when we pass from this life into the eternal life promised by Christ. We should not take chances as the laborers hired at the last hour did. We do not know the day or the hour...