

The 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time August 18 2019

## Introduction

The gospel we just heard is a very unsettling reading because of the picture of the Prince of Peace bringing discord and division, is different from what we expect.

This experience is not from “ long ago and far away ”. It is experienced by people today from Evangelical, Jewish, Mormon, and Muslim families, who choose to become Catholic. Even today when some people tend to take Religion lightly, serious loyalty to Christ makes them uneasy, if not hostile.

This gospel shows us another side of Christ, not the peaceful shepherd but the Christ of light and flame. When Jesus says that he came to light a fire on the earth, He didn't mean, of course, that He came to start forest fires. This fire is the fire of conviction, of commitment.

Do we have the conviction about the Lord like Jeremiah in today's first reading who opposed the sins of a whole nation and suffered persecution. How deep is our conviction?

The fire Jesus wants is the fire of loyalty and commitment because Jesus did not come to bring an easy peace by sweeping problems under the rug and having us look the other way. He came to bring spiritual fire, a holy fire, to undo the power of evil in our world and in ourselves and remake the face of the earth. It is when I am baptized, do I become an official member of Christ's church, do I join that campaign .

We can join it by educating our children including myself in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and by speaking gospel truth to the people with whom we live and work. We can join it by insisting on honesty and fairness in business, politics and government. We can join it by restoring a moral conscience to our nation whether we oppose the evil of abortion, the corrosion of sexual license, the cancer of what is called the "rip off" society with its pervasive atmosphere of planned deception.

This is the public side of the campaign, the spiritual firestorm of moral truth Jesus came to let loose, to undo the effects of evil, to renew the face of the earth. It is a campaign that every generation of Christians, including

ours here today, needs to fight. It is a struggle for the future and soul of our society today.

There is also a personal side to the campaign .The fire of faith and conviction gives our personal life energy, direction and definition. Because our society's values are confused, ours do not have to be. Because our culture is morally adrift, we do not have to be. Because some people are unsure about right and wrong, about what makes for deep human fulfillment, we do not have to be. Because some people are indifferent to the dignity of human life .We do not have to be.

## CONCLUSION

Let the fire of my faith in Christ, my conviction about the Lord, clarify my life and light the way for others.

AMEN.