

Daily Homily
Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time: Monday
12 July 2021
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Jesus is harsh. This Gospel selection stings. No doubt.

When we think “Jesus,” we probably do not immediately think of the “sword” or “division” or being “set against” another. We certainly do not think that Jesus will cause this in families. However, this does happen. Perhaps it happens in most families.

At some point a self-centered, me-myself-and I child/teenager will say to their parents. “I don’t want to go to Mass today.” Division. Sometimes the child will even use that defiant card, “I will not go to Mass,” as the sword to push parental buttons and to be a brat.

At some point those parents send their high school graduate off to college. Sunday rolls around. This adult decision to go to Mass is placed on the doorstep of this late-teen individual. If the response is, “No.” That “No” seeps in deeper and deeper and how easier and easier it becomes to treat the Lord’s Days as if it were just another day, or worse, a Friday, in college life. That “No” becomes a sword slicing through family values, slicing through years of Catholic formation and education, slicing through 2,000 years of men and women living and dying for a Tradition we inherit today that is beyond measure, that is downright priceless.

And it is not even just children and teens, how many husbands and wives come together to Mass? No judgement should be passed of course, no one knows the reason why one is there and the other is not. However, does the presence of one and the absence of the other set one against the other?

We see it in RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) all the time. Someone is becoming Catholic. Well, someone in their Protestant or Jewish household is bound to be unhappy about this. And sometimes the one who is already Catholic but finishing their initiation Sacraments as adults becomes so zealous for the faith that it can be off putting to the family members who went through everything as children.

And what about the issues of our times? The Church offers truth while so many ask, with Pontius Pilate, “Truth? What is that?” Even in what the Church offers to the issues of our day and age – name any of them – it is a cause for division.

And why, to what end?

Two things: perspective and integration.

Perspective. Blessed Pier Giorgio says, “If you have Christ as your center you will reach your goal.” Jesus says that if we have anything else at the center of our life, even if it is family or husband or wife, or other things like wealth, job, pleasure, prestige, if we have these as our god (small “g”), they will eventually disappoint and fail us. If we have the one God, living and true, at our center, everything else will fall into place. This includes family, job, husband, wife, honors, and pleasurable times of joy. Perspective.

Integration. It means to allow the things we do and the things we believe to go deep. It means to allow our faith and our Tradition to be consistent throughout all the areas of our life. We cannot come to Mass

and listen to Sacred Scripture, God's Word proclaimed and then go home and never listen to parents, children, or coworkers with dignity and respect. We cannot consume the Body of Christ and then on the way home from church be less than the Body of Christ and lash out at someone who cuts us off on the road. Our faith needs to seep into every cell in our body. Integration.

If we put all into perspective and integrate this faith of ours, within ourselves we will find a sense of peace and wholeness and holiness. When trials or persecutions or arguments happen because of a lack of perspective and a lack of integration, well, Jesus' words on the sword and division and being setting against another will come to pass.

However, the perspective that he offers and the integration that can be found is just so rewarding.