

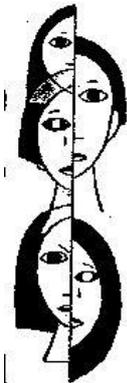
SUNDAY REFLECTION– 18 August 2019

20th Sunday of ORDINARY TIME

Gospel: Lk. 12:49-53

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

He was a professional man! He had some experience in healing people's wounds! He had learned his art by watching other doctors mend broken limbs, learned his art by listening to their wisdom. It was a matter of great pride to him to watch his patients improve, or at least be more comfortable as they lived with their illness.

But now, he came to realize, there was something missing! He had healed the bodies of many people, men and women, but at the same time often observed that many of his patients were still unhappy, resentful, critical, negative, morose even! Another kind of healing was needed.

And so, the man we have come to know as St Luke sat down one day to collect into one book all the stories he had heard about Jesus the great healer, who, so it was said was able to heal peoples souls as well as their bodies.

He had first to work out who was going to be reading the book he would write. Who was his audience? Who would buy his best seller!

And so, Luke abandoned some of the stories he had heard about Jesus because he felt they were irrelevant to the lives of his readers; on the other hand, he includes some stories that others had left out!

It seems clear that the people in his lifetime who were going to read his book must have been having family troubles of their own, and that's why he included here these words of Jesus about fathers and sons being at odds with each other; about in-laws not seeing eye to eye with each other; about mothers being in conflict with their daughters, and families fighting with their in-laws!

We know, of course that conflict between people in one family isn't exactly a new thing, and that it was clearly a social problem at the time St. Luke wrote his stories. And so it is today!

Conflict! Conflict everywhere you look! Hong Kong and China; Egypt! Syria, between Palestine and Israel, between America and Russia. But our own family conflicts can be painful and cause enormous distress, especially the conflict that happens between people you might reasonably expect to get on well together, as St. Luke observes in the Gospel.

There's the conflict that goes on inside of us too! The conflict that happens when we are not at peace with our own soul; when war breaks out inside of us and we're not sure what side we are fighting on! On one day, we feel protected by an

army that is generous, kind, understanding, welcoming and tolerant, and then the next day we are invaded by another army, the army that is mean-spirited, intolerant, bigoted, and critical.

There are days when we can rise above ourselves and see the world as God views the world, deal with people as God deals with people, and then on another day we shrink our world view and become self-centred and self-absorbed.

It's 'being at peace with our own souls' that's often so difficult! The memory of the mistakes we have made – the wrong, the silly, the immature, even the destructive choices we have made in the past can act like a dog that barks away all night stopping us from getting a peaceful sleep.

Being at peace with one's soul requires some discipline! It needs to be cultivated.

Pope Paul VI said: "If you want peace, then work for justice!!" In almost every conflict, whether it's between nations, between cultures, between religions or between people, or even just within ourselves, injustice has been there! Conflicts will not end until that injustice has been overturned and made right! The world will never be at peace; nations will never learn to live in peace with one another; human beings, even within the one family, will never be able to live in peace with one another until we learn to live with God's life; to see with God's eyes; to hear with God's ears and to touch with God's hands.

And each of us, too, within the sanctuary of our own souls must also learn to be more forgiving of ourselves, more accepting of ourselves and more proud of the person that God has chosen to call "Beloved".

Prayer of

the

Faithful



1. That the Church may be set on fire with the flame of a deep concern to bring the Good News of Jesus' inclusive love to all.

2. That those who have lost the fire of their faith may be reignited by presence, love and faith of the community around.

3. That we who are gathered here may be set on fire with the love of Christ as we recognise and serve him in our neighbour,

4. That all Christian Churches may be set on fire with a deep passion to work untiringly toward unity in Christ.

To ponder:

We must do what God did: destroy the disorder that corrupts life and prepare the world to be a fitting dwelling place for human beings.

Carlos Mesters O.Carm

I have need to be on fire.

I have icebergs to melt.

William Lloyd Garrison

